

# Thinking About College?

So, you're a junior or senior in high school and you're thinking about going to college. If that's the case, you need to do something about it, and the sooner the better. For you freshmen and sophomores, there's no rush just yet. You could start now and there's no real harm in looking, but really, shouldn't you get a few high school courses under your belt first?

For those of you who should be starting, consider taking the ACT and/or SAT fairly soon. At or toward the end of your junior year, collect application information from those schools you are interested in. During the summer between your junior and senior years is a good time to visit the schools of your choice.

This isn't always possible if you live more than several hours driving distance away, but maybe the family has a summer trip planned and it just happens to be at a location near a preferred college. Is it possible to hitch a ride with a parent, grandparent, aunt, or uncle who is going on a business trip to a place close to the campus? If so, you might want to see about taking a tour then. This is a time when colleges are expecting you. They provide tours for potential incoming students. They can also connect you with current students who'll meet with you or talk on the phone or via e-mail. This is a good way to learn about a school.

At the start of your senior year, you'll need to stay on top of things. Many deadlines will come and go during the year, so you should be taking notes now.



September	February
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finish sending your college applications.</li> <li>Check to be sure you're on target for meeting your high school graduation requirements. Your guidance counselor can help.</li> <li>If necessary, re-take the ACT and/or SAT tests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember to apply to colleges with rolling admissions or late deadlines.</li> </ul>
October	March
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) starting October 1. The earlier you submit your FAFSA, the better.</li> <li>Check for financial aid deadlines at the schools that interest you. Don't be late and ask if there are any supplemental forms needed!</li> <li>Are you interested in early admissions or early action at a college? Check with your school for deadlines and apply on time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay attention to any "requests for information" you receive from the college admissions or financial aid offices. You should reply as quickly as possible.</li> </ul>
November	April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be quick in responding to requests from the college admissions offices.</li> <li>Seasons Greetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the offers you've received and compare your financial aid packages. Decide on which school you want to attend and notify them.</li> <li>DON'T decline other offers yet! Wait until you receive confirmation from your first choice.</li> <li>Once you have received confirmation, let the others know you will not be attending their school.</li> <li>Deposit to your school by May 1.</li> </ul>
December/January	May
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit college applications for regular admissions now.</li> <li>Make sure your letters of recommendation have been sent to the colleges where you have applied.</li> <li>Check to see if your high school transcripts are being/have been sent to interested schools.</li> <li>Search for scholarships and apply.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Double check on your high school transcripts. Be sure they get to the school you selected.</li> </ul> <p>Congrats on your graduation, and enjoy the summer!</p> <p><i>During, but before summer's end, you'll want to follow up with the financial aid office to be sure all is in order. You don't want any last minute surprises! Pay attention to information you'll receive from the school. Check on dorm check-in dates/times. Attend orientation if at all possible.</i></p> <p><b>GOOD LUCK!</b></p>

## Federal Student Aid FAFSA

### Tips for Filing the FAFSA

A completed FAFSA application is an important first step in determining your financial aid package at any college or university. The FAFSA is used to determine your eligibility for federal grants, work study, and loans. It is also commonly used to determine state and private foundation aid eligibility. Completing a FAFSA is easier than ever. Here are some tips:

- File your FAFSA as early as you can for the year you will be attending school. Why? Because some federal and private student aid programs have limited funds and the earlier you apply, the better your chances of receiving an award.
- The FAFSA is now available in October. Make sure you check with the financial aid offices of the schools you are interested in to meet their financial aid deadlines.
- The FAFSA gathers your financial information. Follow this link to see a full list of the financial documents you will need to complete the application: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out#documents>
- The easiest way to fill out a FAFSA is online (although you can file a paper copy). Follow this link to start your FAFSA: <https://fafsa.gov/>
- If filing online, create a FSA ID. This user name and password will enable you to sign the FAFSA electronically and will confirm your identity when you need to access your financial aid information online. Follow this link to create your FSA ID: <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>

Get real-time help when filing out your FAFSA. If you have questions as you fill out your FAFSA, various "Help" choices are available including a "Chat with Us" option offered during business hours. The "Frequently Asked Questions" drop-down menus are also very helpful. Find Help-related information here: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out#get-help>

Contact NHHEAF for local support. The New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) offers a wide variety of information on planning and paying for college. You can find their website here: <http://www.nhheaf.org/index.asp>

You can find NHHEAF's FAFSA support information here:

[http://www.nhheaf.org/index.asp?page=pay\\_fafsatips](http://www.nhheaf.org/index.asp?page=pay_fafsatips)

Visit the "I am College Bound" website here:

[http://www.nhheaf.org/index.asp?page=events\\_college\\_bound](http://www.nhheaf.org/index.asp?page=events_college_bound)

Good luck, and don't forget, you have to file a FAFSA every year you are in school to be eligible for federal financial aid!

This information was updated October 2016 by Jan Fiderio, NH Department of Education, Division of Higher Education, Research and Studies.