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# College Advising Essentials

VOLUME 4



Handouts



Resources



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# Supporting a College-Going Culture

## 10 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE AT YOUR SCHOOL

- 1 Dedicate part of the counseling office to college resources, with information on scholarships, financial aid, applications, and specific colleges.
- 2 Schedule frequent conferences with each student individually (regardless of academic level) to monitor future plans.
- 3 Lead group sessions on college-related issues such as writing essays, getting recommendations, preparing for tests, applying for financial aid, and planning for careers.
- 4 Repeat these sessions as parent nights, using translators if necessary.
- 5 Engage parents by providing knowledge and debunking myths about available college-related options.
- 6 Hold a majors and career day, presenting different areas of study, career paths, and employment forecasts for graduates.
- 7 Host a college fair with representatives from several kinds of educational institutions: local community colleges, technical schools, large public universities, and smaller private liberal arts colleges.
- 8 Give students and parents a newsletter that has relevant and timely college information. You can also post the newsletter on your website.
- 9 Create a college-of-the-week profile, complete with pictures.
- 10 Celebrate successes:
  - Compile a graduate directory of alumni and colleges they attended.
  - Announce student acceptances publicly.
  - Invite local college graduates to speak.

### INSPIRE THE BEST IN EVERY STUDENT

A college education provides a life of options. Provide your students with these opportunities by making your high school a place where college is the next step for everyone.

A college-going culture helps all students set and achieve high goals. It generates these important values:

- Appreciation of academics
- Desire to succeed
- Drive to attend college and become a lifelong learner

### ENCOURAGE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

**Educators in college-going cultures send strong consistent messages that every student is college material.** One way to do this is to encourage all students to enroll in college preparatory courses.

It's never too early to begin building a rigorous academic structure. The introduction to challenging coursework must begin at the middle school level for students to have the best chance of success in college.



# Communicating College Information

Communicating regularly with students and families can help keep them on track throughout the college application process.

There are many ways you can communicate important messages to students and families while they're navigating the college admissions process. Many counseling offices use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to send quick notes or reminders. These can be geared toward students, parents, or both.

College planning newsletters outline the steps students should be taking each month and can be posted on your counseling website or sent through the school's communication network. Whatever method you use to share information with your school community, include items such as:

- Important upcoming events
- Admission test registration dates
- Deadlines for key points in the application process
- College fairs
- Visits from college reps
- Financial aid seminars

Interpersonal communication through face to face or even virtual events may help students and families understand all the aspects of the college application process. Consider organizing events for your school community such as:

- College Application Bootcamp
- College Essay Writing Workshops
- Athletic Night to discuss NCAA eligibility
- Parent Coffee(s)
- College Admissions Panels

Take advantage of the time you and your colleagues have with students within the school day. You can communicate information to students in several ways, such as:

- Classroom or group guidance lessons
- Essay writing built into the ELA curriculum using prompts for both colleges and scholarships
- Grade-level meetings
- Junior interviews
- Individual student meetings

You might also want to highlight topics and opportunities for students, such as success stories and activities to get them psyched for college. Examples include:

- Summer programs, camps, and internships
- National and school award announcements and ceremonies
- Recognition of student achievements outside of school
- Outstanding news about recent local high school graduates
- College admission success stories

## GOOD INFORMATION IS KEY

Give your students the tools to plan for and implement their own college admissions process. Students need to understand early on that they're responsible for their own applications, although you're available to guide them.

# Applying to College: Your Counselor's Role

When it's time to fill out college applications, your school counselor plays a central part. You're the one in charge, though. It's up to you to ask your counselor for whatever you need. Help your counselor help you.

## What Your Counselor Can Help You Do

Your counselor sends important parts of your application—such as your high school transcript—to colleges. That's not the only role your counselor plays in the college application process. Here's all the things your counselor can help you do:

### Find Colleges

Your counselor can help you create a list of colleges to research that's based on your interests and on the characteristics of each college. When it comes time to narrow down your list, your counselor can help you categorize schools into reach, match, and safety colleges.

### Understand Requirements

Because colleges have different application requirements, your counselor can tell you what each college's requirements are. Most colleges require an essay. Many ask applicants to send scores from an admission test, such as the SAT® or ACT®. There are many test-optional schools that use these scores for scholarship consideration and course placement. Your counselor can also help you register for these admission tests.

### Send Your Transcript

Your counselor can guide you through your school's process for sending your transcript to the colleges you are applying to. In many cases, the counselor will send it for you. In some cases, your school may have other school officials who will send your transcripts. Check with your counselor to find out the process at your school.

### Get Recommendations

Your counselor may be asked for a recommendation letter from colleges you're applying to. Even if not directly asked for a recommendation by colleges, your counselor can be your best bet, as long as they know you well enough to speak about your strengths and character.

## MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME WITH YOUR COUNSELOR

College application season is an especially busy time for high school counselors. Help your counselor help you by staying on top of the application process. Here's how:

**Be early.** If you start researching colleges, collecting ideas for application essays, and making requests for recommendation letters well ahead of time, you'll make it easier for your counselor to give you timely answers when you need them.

**Be organized.** Figure out your own system for keeping track of application components and deadlines.

**Be responsible.** Your counselor can assist you in many ways, but this is your project and your responsibility. It's up to you to ask your counselor for what you need. Schedule appointments when you need to talk.

**Be prepared.** When you do meet with your counselor, have a list of questions ready. Know what you want to discuss.

# 20 Questions to Ask Your School Counselor

Your school counselor is one of your best resources as you plan for college. Your counselor has information about admission tests, college preparation, and education and career options.

Here are some basic questions to start a conversation:

1. What courses do I need to take to be ready for college?
2. How should I schedule my courses so I'll complete them?
3. Which elective courses do you recommend?
4. Which AP courses should I consider taking?
5. When is the PSAT/NMSQT® going to be given?
6. How should I study for the SAT®? Is it given at school, or do I need to go somewhere nearby?
7. Do you have any college planning sessions scheduled?
8. What websites or resources can I use to begin my college search?
9. What activities can I do at home and over the summer to get ready for college?
10. What kinds of grades do different colleges require?
11. Are there any college fairs at this school or nearby?
12. What colleges do graduates of our school go to?
13. Can you put me in touch with recent grads at colleges on my wish list?
14. What are the requirements or standards for the honor society?
15. Can you help me start exploring careers?
16. In case you're asked for a recommendation, can you meet with me to discuss things colleges should know about me, such as my interests and goals?
17. What special scholarships or awards can I work toward?
18. Can I look at my transcript to see if everything is as I think it should be?
19. What forms do I use to apply for financial aid? Where can I find them online?
20. How does our school compare to others in terms of test scores and reputation?

## REALITY CHECK

Your school counselor may be the most accessible person on the planet or may be juggling a thousand students and barely know your name. In either case, remember that the person who has the biggest stake in your academics is you. It's up to you not to miss opportunities—or deadlines. Take charge of yourself.

# Types of Colleges: The Basics

Is a college the same thing as a university? What does “liberal arts” mean? Why are some colleges called public and others private? Here are the basic types of colleges.

## PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLEGES

**Public colleges** are funded by local and state governments and usually offer lower tuition rates than private colleges, especially for students who are residents of the same state.

**Private colleges** rely mainly on tuition, fees, and private sources of funding. Private donations can sometimes provide generous financial aid packages for students.

## FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES

These are businesses that offer degree programs that typically prepare students for a specific career. They tend to have higher costs, which could mean graduating with more debt. Credits earned may not transfer to other colleges.

## FOUR-YEAR AND TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

**Four-year colleges** offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor’s degree. These include universities and liberal arts colleges.

**Two-year colleges** offer two-year programs leading to a certificate or an associate degree. They include community, vocational-technical, and career colleges.

## LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

These colleges offer a broad base of courses in the liberal arts: literature, history, languages, mathematics, and life sciences. Most are private with four-year bachelor’s degree programs that can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

## UNIVERSITIES

Universities often are larger and offer more majors and degree options—bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees—than colleges. Most universities consist of several smaller colleges, such as colleges of liberal arts, engineering, or health sciences. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees that prepare you to transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor’s degree. They also offer other associate degrees and certificates that focus on preparing you for a specific career. Community colleges are often an affordable option with relatively low tuition.

## VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL AND CAREER COLLEGES

Vocational-technical and career colleges offer specialized training for a particular industry or career. Possible programs of study include the culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene, and medical-records technology. These colleges usually offer certificates or associate degrees.

## ARTS COLLEGES

In addition to regular coursework, arts colleges and conservatories provide training in areas such as photography, music, theater, or fashion design. Most of these colleges offer associate or bachelor’s degrees in fine arts or a specialized field.

## SINGLE-SEX COLLEGES

All four-year public colleges, and most private colleges, are coed. But there are some private colleges that are specifically for men or for women.

## RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED COLLEGES

Some private colleges are connected to a religious faith. The connection may be historic only, or it may affect day-to-day student life.

## SPECIALIZED-MISSION COLLEGES

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) focus on educating African American students. Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) are colleges where at least 25% of the full-time undergraduate students are Hispanic. HBCUs and HSIs may offer programs, services, and activities targeted to the underrepresented students they serve.

# 2 Paths to a Degree and a Career

## Liberal Arts Majors and Career-Oriented Majors

Some college majors focus on preparing students for very specific careers. For example, a nursing major gives you the technical skills and knowledge you need to work as a nurse and prepares you to pass the licensing exam for that career. We call majors like these career-oriented majors.

Another road to a career is a liberal arts major. “Liberal arts” is an umbrella term for many subjects of study, including literature, philosophy, history, and languages. Students who major in these subjects don’t build technical skills for a specific profession, but they still learn valuable career skills. An example of a skill acquired in a liberal arts environment would be the ability to communicate effectively and solve problems creatively.

### CAREER-ORIENTED MAJORS

**Range of subject matter.** If you choose a career-oriented major, you’ll probably take the majority of your courses in your major. That’s because you’ll have to take several required courses.

**Course requirements.** Career-oriented majors have more course requirements than liberal arts majors. For example, an engineering major would probably have to take several math, physics, chemistry, and other lab science courses from freshman year on.

**Career planning.** Once you choose a career-oriented major, your career path is well mapped out. Note that some careers, like engineering, require so much specific knowledge that students often start preparing in high school.

### LIBERAL ARTS MAJORS

**Range of subject matter.** If you choose a major in the liberal arts, you’ll probably take classes in a wide range of subject areas, which can include English literature, history, sociology, economics, and philosophy.

**Course requirements.** Your eventual major within the liberal arts curriculum will be the subject area you take the most classes in and eventually earn a degree in. For example, you may major in—and earn a bachelor’s degree in—history or English literature.

**Career planning.** Some liberal arts majors don’t have a specific career in mind when they choose their major, but some do. Many future lawyers, for example, choose a liberal arts education as undergraduates—majoring in subjects such as political science or English—and then go to law school for advanced study.

## Both Types of Majors Prepare Students for Careers

### CAREER OPTIONS

Here are a handful of popular liberal arts majors and a few careers they can lead to:

- English: editor, marketing executive, writer
- History: archivist, museum curator
- Foreign languages: foreign service officer, translator, interpreter
- Political science: community organizer or activist, lawyer, policy analyst
- Psychology: market researcher, social worker, therapist

Some career-oriented majors include:

- Radio and television broadcasting
- Culinary arts
- Paralegal studies
- Mechanical engineering

WHERE TO  
LEARN MORE

Read more about any college major in our **Major and Career Search** on [cb.org/bigfuture](https://collegeboard.org/bigfuture). You can also search for colleges offering majors of interest in **College Search**.



# Sizing Up Colleges: Big vs. Small

## ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

As you begin your college search, one of the first decisions you need to make—and one that helps narrow your list—is what size college you want to attend. U.S. colleges offer many options, from small colleges with fewer than 1,000 students to large state universities with more than 35,000 students. What's best for you depends a large part on your personality and academic goals.

## THE BIG COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

Do you picture yourself at a Big Ten university that offers everything from televised sporting events to countless degree programs? Are you itching to break free of the high school fishbowl and enjoy the anonymity that comes with being one of thousands of students? Then a big college might be a good fit for you. Here are some of the benefits associated with big colleges.

- Wide variety of majors and courses
- Well-stocked libraries
- Variety of housing opportunities
- Well-funded sports programs
- Wide range of academic choices and student activities
- Distinguished or famous faculty
- State-of-the-art research facilities

### Things to Consider

- To succeed at a big college, it's best to go in knowing what subjects or general areas you're interested in. Students who do best at large colleges tend to be go-getters who take advantage of the many opportunities available.
- Introductory classes at a large college may contain hundreds of students. Some students find this environment exciting. Others feel overwhelmed.
- Another point: If you're attracted to a college because of its famous faculty, find out how many classes are actually taught by the professors, not by their teaching assistants.

## THE SMALL COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

Do you enjoy personal attention from teachers and advisers? Then a small college may be just what you need. Some students find that a smaller setting is a better fit. There may be fewer facilities, but there are also fewer students to compete with. Here are some of the benefits associated with small colleges:

- Small class sizes
- Hands-on learning opportunities
- Individually designed majors
- Strong advising system; advisers know students well
- Strong sense of community
- Professors, not teaching assistants, teach most courses
- Opportunity to get to know professors well

### Things to Consider

- Small colleges don't offer as many majors as big colleges; however, some of them let you design your own.
- Courses at small colleges are usually taught by professors, not teaching assistants. The professors may even know your name and areas of interest.
- Be aware that small colleges don't have the research facilities of large universities. If you're hoping to be a research assistant, find out what kind of work and facilities are available before you apply.
- Although you'll find a robust social life at most small colleges, you'll find less in terms of big sporting events and the variety of events.

## START YOUR SEARCH

Whether you're considering a big university, a small college, or something in between, look carefully at the options and see what's most important to you. Keep in mind that college size is one of many factors to consider as you build your college list. Visit [cb.org/bigfuture](https://collegeboard.org/bigfuture) to begin a college search.

# Campus Setting: Rural, Suburban, Urban

One of the steps in finding the right college for you is deciding what type of campus setting you prefer. Rural, suburban, and urban campuses have different advantages. The key is to find which setting lets you make the most of your college experience.

## Which Is Right for You?

### RURAL CAMPUSES

Rural campuses are located in the country, often near farms and wilderness areas, and usually near a small town. Here are things to consider about rural campuses:

- Most rural campuses are self-contained, with a majority of the students living on campus. This can increase a college's sense of community.
- Rural campuses can provide access to outdoor learning opportunities, particularly in fields like agriculture or environmental science.
- Many rural colleges bring entertainment to their students and provide free events. Comedians and bands may perform on campus during college tours.
- Most rural colleges provide on-campus transportation options, such as buses, for students.
- The landscape of rural campuses can vary widely. A rural campus in Ohio, for example, will be much different from a rural campus in Alaska.

### SUBURBAN CAMPUSES

Suburban campuses are in small cities, large towns, or residential areas near cities. Here are things to consider about suburban campuses:

- Suburbs often combine some of the best features of urban and rural areas.
- Suburban campuses usually offer access to nearby cities and to outdoor activities.

- Suburban colleges are frequently self-contained, which can create a strong sense of community.
- Suburban colleges often have connections to the towns where they're located. This can provide opportunities such as jobs and entertainment.
- Public transportation may be available in addition to a college's transportation options.

### URBAN CAMPUSES

Urban campuses are located in cities. Here are things to consider about urban campuses:

- Some urban campuses are spread throughout a city while others are self-contained within a city.
- Many urban colleges offer off-campus learning experiences. This may mean a chance to explore the work world through cooperative classes and internships.
- Urban colleges tend to attract culturally diverse students.
- Students can find entertainment options—such as museums, concerts, and plays—on and off urban campuses.
- Cities usually offer substantial public transportation options.



# First-Generation Students

## Counseling First-Generation Students About College

### WHO ARE FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS?

First-generation students can come from families with low incomes or from middle- or higher-income families without a college-going tradition. Some have parents who support their plans for higher education; others are under family pressure to enter the workforce right after high school.

Often these students don't know what their options are regarding higher education. They may have fears about going to college and misconceptions about college and its costs. These students may come from families who speak languages other than English at home or from cultures outside the United States with different education systems.

### Strategies for Working with First-Generation Students

- 1. Reach out early.** Identify your first-generation students as early as possible so you can talk with them and their families about college and what high school coursework will prepare them for college.
  - a.** Talk to them about taking AP® and honors courses to prepare for college-level work.
  - b.** Make sure they take a solid, challenging course load to meet requirements for college admission—even if they're not yet sure they'll go.
  - c.** Encourage them to take the PSAT™ 10 or the PSAT/NMSQT® in 10th grade.
- 2. Extend the scope of your counsel.** When working with these families, cover the basics of self-assessment, college, and careers. First-generation students may never have been encouraged to assess their talents and weaknesses with a view toward higher education. They're also likely to have had little exposure to the complex college planning process and have minimal knowledge of what education requirements are needed for certain professions.
  - a.** Help first-generation students understand how their interests and abilities can connect to higher education and career options. Conduct early aptitude assessments.
  - b.** Talk to them about which career paths these might point to. Probe. If a student is considering becoming an architect, ask the student what architects actually do and how much education they need.
  - c.** Be honest with them about where they are in their education and what they should focus on.
- 3. Involve the family.** Working successfully with the families of first-generation students may take different strategies. You'll encounter a wide range of attitudes about college, from supportive to obstructive. You may have to make a case for the value of higher education.

**4. Provide focused help with college search and selection.** When discussing college options with these students, take time to describe the different types of colleges. You may have to explain terms such as “liberal arts college.”

Be aware that some colleges seek to enroll first-generation students. Identify these. Pass the information on to your students.

Watch for (and pre-empt) students’ preconceptions that they can’t afford college at all, or the reverse—that they’ll easily get full scholarships. Discourage any fixations on “name” colleges. Focus on finding a good fit for each student.

Make sure students know that in addition to public universities, private colleges may be financially feasible, thanks to grants and financial aid. Use net price calculators to show them how to see if a college is affordable.

Encourage students to visit colleges. Organize school-led trips, if possible. Make sure they take advantage of college fairs and information nights.

**5. Provide focused help with college applications.** First-generation students from families with low incomes may qualify for waivers of test fees as well as college application fees. Make sure they’re aware of this early on.

**6. Provide focused help with financial aid application and packages.** Offer assistance in how to fill out the FAFSA®, important deadlines, and reading financial aid award letters.

**Explain what college will be like.** Talk with your students about what college will be like. They may feel more adrift than most first-year college students: In addition to the usual student concerns such as how to register or what courses to choose, first-generation students may be grappling with learning a new language or navigating an unfamiliar culture. Tell them that there are support systems on campus and that the tuition and fees they pay give them access to these services at no additional cost. Encourage them to seek out on-campus resources and programs.

**7. Work with other organizations.** Develop relationships with community access groups and outreach organizations that provide academic help to young people.



# Waitlisted and Rejected Students

## How to Help Students Handle Disappointments

Students who have been waitlisted or rejected by a college rely on you for insight and direction on how to proceed with their college enrollment plans. Offer them the guidance they need to enroll successfully at a college that's a good fit.

### ADVISING WAITLISTED STUDENTS

The handful of seniors who discover that they've been waitlisted—neither accepted nor rejected—may present the biggest challenge. Do you give them hope and tell them to stay on the waitlist? Or do you advise them to move on?

The waitlist is the college's safety net: If a number of accepted students decide not to attend, the college can fill their spots. This way, the incoming class will still be at capacity. Most students who are accepted to a highly selective college will attend, so where does this leave the waitlisted student?

A student eager to attend a particular college may decide that it's worth the time, effort, and anxiety to stay on the list. Just make sure they know that fewer and fewer colleges are accepting applicants from their waitlists.

#### What you can do

Once your students have had a chance to come to terms with being waitlisted, take the following actions:

- Guide your students to focus on the real choices—the places that have sent acceptance letters.
- If your students **do** want to stay on the waitlist:
  - ♦ Explain that colleges usually don't admit from the waitlist until the May 1 decision deadline has passed.
  - ♦ Encourage the students to prepare to attend another college by completing the required forms and sending a deposit. (If a student is accepted from the waitlist and decides to attend the waitlist college, this deposit is forfeited.)

- ♦ Advise your students to write an email to the school with any additional information that will support their application. They should include that they plan to attend if accepted.
- ♦ You can submit a letter on behalf of your student, or they can ask a teacher to do so.

### ADVISING REJECTED STUDENTS

In some ways, it's easier to help students who have been rejected outright. Although they have some decisions to make, they're not in a state of limbo. They know they have to seek an alternative to their first-choice college.

#### Understanding the decision

Admissions officers at selective colleges readily admit that as many as two-thirds of the students they reject are fully capable of succeeding academically at their institutions. Unfortunately, it's often a matter of too much demand for too few places. Understanding this reason for rejection can help students and their families better handle their disappointment.

#### What you can do

The following suggestions may help students handle a college rejection:

- Listen to them; let them vent and acknowledge their feelings of disappointment.
- Help them refocus by reminding them that it's not the college but the college experience that really matters.
- Point out that the experience they get at a different college that's a good fit may end up offering better opportunities.
- Explain that many factors other than what college a person attends lead to success in the real world.
- Lift their spirits by letting them know that you think the college that refused them is missing out on a great student.

- Explain that admissions trends are subject to variability and reflect institutional priorities; a rejection isn't a personal indictment.
- Be enthusiastic about the other colleges students have applied to, emphasizing that they, too, are good fits.
- Encourage students to consider offers they've received from other colleges and to select a college that excites them.
- Remind them that a focus on their academic work should continue into college.

### **Planning a transfer**

Although you want your students to be excited about the college they end up choosing, remind them that they can try to transfer to the desired college after a year or two. Explain they can take steps now to make this easier. Advise them to:

- See if the desired college accepts transfer credits for courses taken at the college they'll attend.
- Be sure that the college they attend is a good fit academically.
- Enroll in courses in which they can excel.
- Take challenging courses.
- Work hard to get the best grades possible.
- Send updates of leadership opportunities and activities pursued.

### **The parents' role**

Let parents know that it's OK for them to feel disappointment too, but they should keep their emotions in check. Help them to understand it's important to show their child support rather than their own feelings of anguish.



## AT A GLANCE

# Fee Waiver Benefits



SAT® fee waivers do more than just waive test fees. Make sure your students know about all the ways fee waivers can make the college application process more affordable.

### WAIVED

## SAT Registration Fees

- Eligible students in grades 11–12 can register for **2 free SAT administrations**.
- If a fee-waiver-eligible student takes the SAT as part of SAT School Day, they can still register for **2 free SAT administrations**.

### WAIVED

## Non-U.S. Regional Fees

- U.S. students who test abroad won't pay any regional fees for tests they register for with a fee waiver.

### WAIVED

## Subject Test Registration Fees

- Eligible students in grades 9–12 can take up to 3 SAT Subject Tests™ for free on two separate test dates, for a total of up to **6 SAT Subject Tests at no cost**.

### WAIVED

## Late Registration Fees

- If a student uses a fee waiver for an SAT or SAT Subject Test date and misses the regular registration deadline, they **won't have to pay a late fee**.

Applies to administrations in the U.S. and U.S. territories only.

If you indicate that an 11th-grade student is eligible for fee waivers during the PSAT/NMSQT® invoicing process, you'll unlock all the above fee waiver benefits for that student.

**Remind students to check their College Board online account to accept their benefits.**

Once a student uses a test fee waiver, they automatically get these additional benefits:

### FREE UNLIMITED SCORE SENDS

Eligible students **never pay a fee to send scores to colleges**—from any SAT or SAT Subject Test administration.

### FREE SAT ANSWER VERIFICATION REPORTS

Eligible students get up to **2 free Question-and-Answer Service or Student Answer Service reports**. These reports show students details about how they answered each question on the SAT.

### FREE COLLEGE APPLICATIONS


Eligible students can apply to over 2,000 participating colleges with the college application fee waivers they'll see in their College Board online account.

### FREE CSS PROFILE APPLICATIONS

Eligible students can apply for financial aid online for free from hundreds of participating colleges.

## A SUGGESTED TIMELINE

# Fee Waivers in Action

 This step unlocks all fee waiver benefits.

### Junior Year



#### FALL

Student takes PSAT/NMSQT. **Counselor indicates that the student is eligible for fee waivers.**

OR



#### WINTER

Student uses first SAT fee waiver to register for an SAT. **Counselor provides fee waiver codes/cards to eligible students.**

OR



#### SPRING

Student participates in SAT School Day. **Counselor indicates that the student is eligible for fee waivers.**

#### SPRING

Student uses **fee waiver** to register for up to 3 SAT Subject Tests.

### Senior Year

#### FALL

Student uses second **SAT fee waiver** to register for another SAT.

#### FALL

Student uses **fee waiver** to register for up to 3 more SAT Subject Tests.

#### FALL

Student uses **college application fee waivers** to apply to participating schools.

#### FALL

Student uses **unlimited free score sends** to send test scores to colleges.

#### FALL

Student submits **free CSS Profile™ application** for financial aid at participating schools.



# A Guide to SAT Fee Waivers

SAT® fee waivers are available to low-income 11th- and 12th-grade students in the U.S. or U.S. territories. U.S. citizens living outside the country may be able to have test fees waived. SAT Subject Test fee waivers are available for students in grades 9–12.

## How to Get a Fee Waiver

If you think you're eligible, your school counselor or a representative of an authorized community-based organization will help you get a fee waiver.

## Are You Eligible?

You're eligible for fee waivers if you say "yes" to any of the following:

- You're enrolled in or eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Your annual family income falls within the Income Eligibility Guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.
- You're enrolled in a federal, state, or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., Federal TRIO programs such as Upward Bound).
- Your family receives public assistance.
- You live in federally subsidized public housing or a foster home, or are homeless.
- You're a ward of the state or an orphan.

## How to Register Using a Fee Waiver

If you're registering online, enter the following information:

- The 12-digit fee waiver code
- The name of a high school counselor or another authorized person
- The way you qualified for the waiver

If you're registering by mail with a fee waiver card, make sure it includes this information, and send it along with your paper registration form. Be sure to complete the fee waiver information in the form's Payment Information field.

## WHAT FEE WAIVERS COVER

Free Tests and Feedback

- 2 free SAT exams, with or without the essay
- 6 free SAT Subject Tests™
- 2 free Question-and-Answer Service (QAS) or Student Answer Service (SAS) reports

## FREE COLLEGE BENEFITS

- Unlimited score reports to send to colleges
- Waived application fees at participating colleges
- Free CSS Profile™ applications to apply for financial aid from participating schools

## OTHER BENEFITS

- Fee reductions for score verification reports
- No non-U.S. regional fees for free tests (if you're a U.S. student testing abroad)
- No late registration fees for free tests (if you're in the U.S. or U.S. territories)

## How to Access Your Fee Waiver Benefits

You only have to be identified once as fee waiver eligible. If you used a fee waiver for the PSAT/NMSQT or SAT School Day, the first time you log into your College Board account after test day, you'll see a pop-up asking you to accept your fee waiver benefits. Once accepted, the benefits are available in your account. If you registered for an SAT weekend exam using a fee waiver code, your benefits will be available in your College Board account after test day.



# Counselor's Year-End To-Do List

The end of the school year is the perfect time to take steps to get off to a good start in the fall. Here are some things you can do to help ensure a smooth transition—and put your mind at ease this summer.

## 1 Ensure transcripts and accommodation requests are submitted.

- a. Ensure students' transcripts to colleges, universities, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center are submitted as needed.
- b. Check that the SSD Coordinator uses the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Online Disabilities Accommodation Management System to submit accommodation requests for College Board tests for the next academic year.
- c. Consider using 9th-grade Section 504 plan and Individualized Education Program (IEP) annual reviews as a basis to submit the requests and set up each of those students for access to all College Board testing.

## 2 Review student attendance and credit status.

- a. Check for students in danger of losing course credit because of absences.
- b. Meet with these students for a pep talk; remind them that losing academic credit this year may mean schedule scrambling next September.
- c. Share important attendance pattern data with appropriate school personnel.
- d. Share summer school information with students who may need to complete coursework.

## 3 Take stock of your rising seniors.

- a. Make sure your students have the course credits they need to graduate and be considered by the colleges of their choice.
- b. Create a list of rising seniors in danger of failing or have attendance issues—or other social or emotional difficulties—that may be a cause of concern.
- c. Check that student-athletes are on track to meet the NCAA academic requirements in addition to state and local academic requirements. See [NCAA Eligibility Basics](#) for more information.

## 4 Make an early decision and early action list.

- a. Find out which of your juniors plan to apply to college early and will have to meet application deadlines in early fall.
- b. Make a note on your calendar to schedule a meeting with them soon after the new school year begins.

## 5 Identify students who may need special attention next year.

- a. Make note of new students or students with special circumstances such as Section 504 or IEP plans.
- b. Review report cards and identify students with failing grades, erratic attendance, or other concerns.

- 6 Get feedback from your students.**
- a. Create a simple questionnaire about your counseling services, and ask your students to fill it out before the school year ends.
  - b. Use the results to gain insight into what works—and what doesn't—and to give you fresh ideas for the fall.

- 7 Improve your process.**
- a. List your successful programs, procedures, and techniques on one side of a sheet of paper.
  - b. List areas that need work on the other side.
  - c. Use the results to help you set goals for next year.

- 8 Organize your desk.**
- a. Clean up your files and paperwork.
  - b. Arrange your room, computer, and other resources so you can make the best use of them.

- 9 Plan summer learning and career activities.**
- a. Schedule summer visits to colleges for tours and research.
  - b. Look into professional development activities such as classes and workshops.
  - c. Browse professional sites from home—many online reports and studies are free.

- 10 Make a to-do list for the fall.**
- a. List the 5 most important tasks you need to accomplish the first week of school.
  - b. Keep it handy so you can review it on your return from summer break.

- 11 Take some time for yourself.**
- a. Plan some relaxation for yourself so you can be recharged for the fall.
  - b. Enjoy your summer vacation!

**12 Other**

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# Resources

## **bigfuture.collegeboard.org**

Students and parents are provided a wealth of information regarding postsecondary education planning at this website. Topics range from the college search to the financial aid process. Videos from students and counseling professionals provide insightful advice.

## **sat.org**

This website provides information regarding the SAT<sup>®</sup> Suite of Assessments. Included on the site are descriptions of the assessments, important dates, practice questions, and much more.

## **satpractice.org**

Access free, world-class test practice for all students through Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy<sup>®</sup>. Students can practice for the SAT using Khan Academy online tools, including diagnostic quizzes, full-length practice tests, interactive problems, and personalized practice recommendations. Students will also receive instant feedback on their answers so they can see their progress and make the most of their study time.

## **studentaid.ed.gov**

This is the comprehensive U.S. government site that covers all information related to financial aid. It also has a "Prepare for College" section that details the financial benefits of attending college, explores career options, and provides academic and financial aid checklists.

## **collegeboard.org/counselors**

In addition to providing registration links for our in-person counselor workshops, this website also provides registration links for all webinars offered during the school year. The webinars are specifically designed for counselors and cover college advising topics such as the college application process, writing letters of recommendation, financial aid, advising special student populations, building your counseling program and leadership, and much more.

## **collegeboard.org/counselor-community**

Join our online counselor community, and engage in helpful dialogues with other counseling professionals. Learn about professional development and tools and resources to develop sustainable solutions that expand educational access and opportunity for all students.

## **nacacnet.org**

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) is an organization of more than 15,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. This site provides excellent resources for counseling professionals, students, and parents.

## **schoolcounselor.org**

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, career, and social/emotional development so they can achieve success in school and be prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA provides professional development, publications, and other resources, research, and advocacy to professional school counselors around the globe.

**Note:** Material in this volume is adapted from the *College Counseling Sourcebook, 7th Edition*.