

# Complete College Planning Checklist for The Class of 2012 and 2013!

---

We want to provide you with a **FREE** college planning checklist that starts at the beginning of a college bound student's junior year. However, students can start working on any agenda that may be appropriate for where they are in their college planning.

Counselors should provide the following timeline to college bound students. When accurately followed, this planning checklist will practically guarantee the student's college planning efforts to be a success. **Remember, proper planning is the best weapon against the high cost of college!**

---

## Junior Year – Fall

- Start thinking about your college major or career interests.
  - Consider taking the PSAT. It's usually offered every November. It's a good way to practice for the SAT tests, and it serves as a qualifying exam for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation's scholarship programs.
  - Begin your college search by using our FREE online college search and determine what it takes to get into the college(s) of your choice. Pay attention to GPA and test score requirements, as well as fees and deadlines. Your list should contain approximately 4-8 schools you are seriously considering.
  - Check into whether the application can be submitted online, or request paper applications and information from chosen colleges.
- 

## Junior Year – Spring

- Take campus tours online or in person to further narrow your list of colleges to match your personality, GPA, and test scores. Cfsionline.com has FREE online campus tours
  - Register for the March SAT and/or the April ACT tests. Find out from each college the deadlines for applying for admission and which tests to take. It is a good idea to take the SAT and/or ACT in the spring to allow you time to review your results and retake the exams in the fall of your senior year, if necessary.
  - Talk to teachers about writing letters of recommendation for you. Think about what you would like included in these letters and politely ask your teachers if they can accommodate you.
  - Use local resources to estimate your eligibility for aid. Use this information to see what your college costs will be at the colleges you are considering **BEFORE YOU APPLY!** This will save you time and money.
  - Take the SAT or ACT test.
- 

## Junior Year – Summer

- Continue to take campus tours online or visit campuses in person and look into college programs that let you visit the campus overnight.
- Begin completing online applications, without submitting them. Focus on the essay portions of these applications, deciding how you would like to present yourself. Don't forget to mention your activities outside of school.
- Begin searching for scholarships. Pay attention to deadlines and requirements. Apply for all of the scholarships whose requirements you meet.

- Review your applications, especially the essays. Ask family, friends, and teachers to review your essays for grammar, punctuation, readability, and content.

---

## **Senior Year – Fall**

### **September**

- Mark your calendar for college fairs and visits from admissions representatives.
- Meet with your college funding advisor or high school counselor to develop a college admission plan.
- Check your transcripts to make sure you have all the credits you need to get into your college(s) of choice.
- Register to take or retake the ACT or SAT. **(For testing information for the ACT or SAT visit [cfsionline.com](http://cfsionline.com))**
- Create a schedule of admission and financial aid deadlines.
- Make a final list of schools that interest you and keep a file of deadlines and required admission items for each school.
- Give any recommendation forms to the appropriate teachers or counselors with stamped, college-addressed envelopes, making certain that your portion of the forms are filled out completely and accurately.

### **October**

- Take or retake the SAT and/or ACT tests. Have the official scores sent by the testing agency to the colleges/universities that have made your final list of schools. Register for December or January SAT Reasoning Test and/or SAT Subject Test, if necessary.

### **November**

- Submit your college admission applications online or complete, photocopy and submit paper college applications.
- Follow-up to ensure that letters of recommendation are submitted.
- Obtain and complete any other forms that may be required by your target colleges.

### **December**

- If you are not working with a college planner then contact the college's financial aid office to see if financial aid programs exist on a state or campus level. You might have to fill out additional forms or applications.
- If you haven't done all of the necessary research by now to lower your total out of pocket expenses, you should be seeking professional advice before you submit all of your forms.

---

## **Senior Year - Spring**

### **January**

- Complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) as soon as you can on or after Jan. 1. If you are required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to file a federal income tax return, you will need your family's prior year income tax information. Keep a copy of this information because you may need it later to verify your information. If you haven't filed your taxes yet, you can estimate your income and tax information and correct it later.
- Be sure that you have submitted all required forms: the college admission application, the FAFSA, any private scholarship applications, and any state or campus forms required for financial aid programs outside the federal student aid programs.

### **February**

- Watch for your **Student Aid Report (SAR)**, which you'll receive electronically if you entered an e-mail address on the FAFSA, or by mail if you did not provide an e-mail address. The SAR is the result of your processed FAFSA that contains your **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**. Your college will use the EFC to determine your eligibility for federal student aid.

### March/April

- Receive admission notification(s).
  - Compare your financial aid awards to **cost of attendance**.
  - Make a final enrollment decision and submit the enrollment deposit, if requested.
  - Notify any colleges that have accepted you but that you have chosen not to attend.
  - Sign and return any additional financial aid forms required by the college you will attend.
  - Use your completed federal tax returns to make any necessary corrections to your FAFSA.
- 

### Senior Year - Summer

#### May

- Take any applicable Advanced Placement (AP) exams.
- Send final grade transcript to your chosen college.
- Contact the college's financial aid office to check the status of your financial aid award.

#### June

- Complete any remaining financial aid forms.
- Plan for college orientation, transportation, and housing. Finalize college transportation and housing for the fall and GO TO COLLEGE AND SUCCEED! For those who follow this “**College Planning Checklist**”, college planning will be a breeze. Although this checklist will assist you greatly with college planning, It will not address or solve your biggest college planning concern. For example, **How to Beat the High Cost of College!**



***FREE Strategies, Advice, and Tips with  
College Planning & Financial Aid 24/7:***

**Call the Alabama Financial Aid Advice Line 24/7**

**1-800-717-7793 Opt. 1**

**Listen Bi-Weekly for Financial Aid Advice & Strategies.**

**CALL TODAY! IT'S FREE!**

---