

Time to start planning for college!

TIMELINE TO COLLEGE

- Open a bank account for your college savings and contribute to it regularly.
- Maintain good grades.

7TH GRADE

- Think about what extracurricular activities you would like to do while you're in high school. Extracurricular activities are a great way to learn about time management, and colleges like to see that you're involved.
- Find out what classes you can take in 9th grade and develop a plan of study for high school.
- Keep saving for college.

8TH GRADE

- Get to know your high school guidance counselor.
- Keep your grades up- all of your grades now count toward your GPA. Your freshman grades count just as much as your senior year grades!
- Talk to your teachers and counselors about taking AP and honors-level courses.
- Create a resume and keep it updated it with awards and honors, school and community activities, and volunteer work.
- Keep saving for college.

9TH GRADE

- Start studying and preparing for the ACT or SAT.
- Begin taking AP or honors-level courses.
- Look into taking dual enrollment courses next year.
- Begin thinking about the types of colleges that interest you or what college features mean the most to you.
- Continue to focus on your grades and keep up with your extracurricular activities.
- Keep saving for college.

10TH GRADE

- Seriously focus on your grades this year and take challenging classes. Colleges put a lot of focus on your junior year grades and the classes you choose to take.
- Think about what you want to study in college and take career and interest assessments on CollegeforTN.org.
- In September, register for the October PSAT exam.
- Check in regularly with your school counselor and teachers for guidance on college.
- Begin going on campus visits and meet with admissions offices. If you interview with an admissions office, send thank you notes after your interview.
- Register for and take the ACT and/or SAT. Tennessee offers ACTs for all HS juniors.
- Practice writing.
- Think about what teachers you would like to write your letters of recommendation.
- Keep saving for college.

11TH GRADE

12TH GRADE

ALL YEAR

- Keep your grades up- avoid "senioritis"! Many colleges require you to send an updated transcript during your spring semester. And you need to keep your grades up to graduate!
- Keep saving for college, but be prepared to spend some money for application fees (between \$15 and \$60 per college).

AUGUST

- Make a list of colleges to which you want to apply and visit the websites of those colleges to make sure you know what's required to apply and be admitted, such as minimum ACT or SAT scores, GPA, or required high school classes.
- Register for and take the ACT or the SAT if you haven't taken either of them yet or want to retake the test.

SEPTEMBER

- Check on application due dates early in the fall semester. Many colleges have early action or early decision deadlines between October 1 and December 1.
- Give recommendation forms to teachers and counselors. Use stamped, college-addressed envelopes and be sure you've accurately filled out every section.

OCTOBER

- Participate in College App Week in the fall and begin to submit your applications.
- Apply for the Tennessee Promise last-dollar scholarship by November 1, especially if you plan to attend a community college or a Tennessee College of Applied Technology.

NOVEMBER

- Submit as many of your college applications as you can.
- Research scholarships and begin to apply for them.
- Calculate the cost of the different schools you're interested in and talk to their financial aid offices to determine how much each school will cost.

DECEMBER

- Make sure your official test scores, such as the ACT and SAT, have been sent to the colleges to which you are applying.

JANUARY

- Complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before February 15th. If you or your parents haven't filed taxes yet, use estimates based on last year's tax returns. You can update your FAFSA once you file your taxes.
- Ask your high school to send transcripts to the colleges to which you are applying.
- If you applied for Tennessee Promise, attend the first of two required meetings with your partnering organization. (These meetings will be held in January or February.)

FEBRUARY

- Complete all of your scholarship applications.
- Contact the colleges to which you applied and make sure they have everything they need from you, both for your application and for financial aid.

MARCH-APRIL

- Update your FAFSA information once you've filed your taxes.
- You should start to receive most of your decision letters in March and April. Compare the colleges to which you were accepted and their financial aid and scholarship offers.
- If you applied for Tennessee Promise, attend the first of two required meetings with your partnering organization. (These meetings will be held in January or February.)

MAY

- Make a decision on where to attend college and notify that college!
- Have your high school send your final transcripts to your college after spring semester grades are finalized.
- Contact your college to check on deadlines for tuition, fees, and paperwork, such as health records.

College. You can get there from here.

COLLEGEFORTN.ORG

