

2. Research

4. Decide

Learn as much as possible about colleges to discover if they are right for you. Go beyond just finding out whether they offer your major. Empower yourself by collecting the necessary information to make knowledgeable decisions. Fortunately, learning about colleges has never been easier—information is just a click away.

Some questions to get started:

- How much does it cost to attend and do you qualify for financial aid? (The online Net Price Calculator for each school is a good place to start, but contact the admission/financial aid office too.)
- What types of financial aid are available?
- What resources are available? How do the colleges support students with learning differences or those with physical challenges?
- What activities and clubs are available?
- What are your housing options?
- Does the college have a career guidance and placement office? Pre-professional advising (pre-med, pre-law, pre-vet, etc.)?

Your counselor can help you think of many, many more questions to consider.

And if you can...visit the college or university for a first-hand experience.

Resources:

Financial Aid: www.studentaid.ed.gov

Campus Safety: <http://ope.ed.gov/security>

General Information:

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>

www.collegeresults.org

<http://nsse.iub.edu>

www.nationalcollegefairs.org

Research...

Spring 11th Grade through Fall 12th Grade

Once you hear back from the admission offices, it's time to make your decision! It is a big decision and an important one. Take your time, carefully evaluate all of the information, and make the college choice that is best for you.

No college can require you to commit to attending prior to May 1, National College Decision Day, with the exception of Early Decision or NCAA athletic scholarship programs.

If you have received financial aid offers, compare them carefully. Determine exactly what your out-of-pocket cost will be to attend each school.

Attend prospective student events.

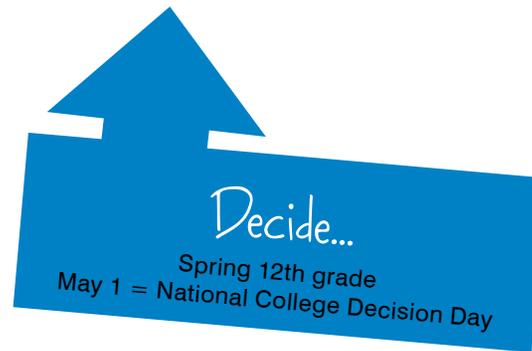
Talk to your family, your counselor, and those you trust.

You should never submit an enrollment deposit to more than one school. It is an unethical practice that may result in your acceptances being withdrawn by the colleges.

Once you have decided, notify the colleges you aren't attending and request to have your applications closed.

If you have been offered a spot on a college's wait list, learn what you need to do to be an active member.

Be sure that you have a school to attend if you aren't offered admission off the wait list.



Overwhelmed by the college admission process?



Manage your college research and application process in four steps.

Break it down:

Prepare, Research, Apply, and Decide

1. Prepare

- **Talk** – Talk with your family, your high school counselor, friends, coaches, and anyone else who is a positive role model about your future hopes, dreams, aspirations, fears, and desires.
- **Learn** – Learn how to study and take the most challenging courses that are available and appropriate for you. A strong academic performance in high school demonstrates to colleges that you're ready for the academic challenges ahead.
- **Participate** – Get involved in a few extracurricular activities you really enjoy and commit to them. Strive to become a leader in those activities. For example, start writing for the school newspaper in ninth grade and work your way up to editor by senior year. Life on a college campus is about more than classes, and colleges want students who enrich the experience for others.
- **Plan** – What do you need to do between today and when your college applications are due? How can you make yourself a viable candidate for the college or university of your choice? Are you taking the necessary courses? What standardized tests are required?

3. Apply

Applying for admission to a college is not as intimidating a task as you may think. Yes, you'll need to complete forms online; gather information about yourself, your family, your activities; and, most likely, you'll need to write a personal statement. However, it is all very doable. Your counselor is there to help—ask.

Some things to remember:

- Don't miss deadlines—submitting an application for admission or financial aid after the deadline may automatically make you ineligible.
- Fill out the FAFSA and/or additional financial aid forms. Financial aid procedures can differ from school to school. No application for admission can be due prior to Oct. 15.
 - You need to be the sole author of your application—complete it yourself. You may ask for advice, but the words need to be yours.
 - No college should ask you where they rank on your list. You aren't obligated to tell a college where else you are applying.
 - You should never feel pressured into applying to a college—admission officers are there to tell you about opportunities and give you accurate information.



Prepare...

9th Grade
10th Grade
11th Grade
Fall of 12th Grade

Apply...

Fall of 12th Grade

Different application plans have different requirements and obligations.

Be sure you understand them:

Early Decision – If you apply Early Decision, you're committing yourself to attend that college if admitted. You file the application early in senior year and are notified of the college's decision around the end of the fall semester. You may have only one active Early Decision application filed at a time.

Early Action – You apply to the college during fall of your senior year and the college notifies you well before their Regular Decision deadline. You are not obligated to attend the school. You may submit Early Action applications to multiple colleges.

Single Choice Early Action or Restrictive Early Action – This is the same concept as Early Action, but the colleges that use this form restrict your ability to apply Early Action or Early Decision to other colleges.

Rolling Admission – A college makes its admission decision soon after an application is received. Decisions are released on a "rolling" basis.

Regular Decision – A college has a specific deadline by which all applications must be completed. All of the applications are evaluated before notification letters are sent to applicants.