COLLEGE NOW

YOUR FUTURE. **OUR MISSION.**

Site: North Olmsted HS
Date: 11/12/26
Duration: 45 min

Welcome!

26-27 College Planning Night

Our Mission

To increase access and completion of higher education by providing integrated college and career advising, financial aid counseling, scholarships and retention programs that empower student success – strengthening the region's talent pipeline and economic prosperity.



COLLEGE NOW

https://collegenowgc.org/

26-27 Advising Dates

Please visit cngc.org/NorthOlmsted to make an appointment.

- **Friday, 11/13/2026, 8am-3pm**
- **Monday, 11/16/2026, 8am-3pm**
- **Friday, 12/4/2026, 8am-3pm**
- **Friday, 12/11/2026, 8am-3pm**
- **Friday, 1/8/2027, 8am-3pm**
- **Friday, 1/15/2027, 8am-3pm**
- **Friday, 1/22/2027, 8am-3pm**
- **Friday, 2/5/2027, 8am-3pm**
- **Monday, 2/8/2027, 8am-3pm**
- **Monday, 2/22/2027, 8am-3pm**
- **Friday, 2/26/2027, 8am-3pm**
- **Friday, 3/5/2027, 8am-3pm**
- **Monday, 3/8/2027, 8am-3pm**

COLLEGE NOW

Today's Agenda

- Career Exploration
- College Selection and Visits
- Standardized Testing: ACT/SAT
- Financing Your Education!
- Class Level Checklists
- Get Started on the Common Application
- Upcoming Events
- Getting Help from College Now

Choosing a Career & Major

Career Exploration – Looking at Strengths, Interests, Values and Skills

Online Exploration: Self Assessments, Job and Career Info, etc.

College Now Greater Cleveland

NAVIANCE by HOBSONS

CliftonStrengths

you science

BigFuture

Ohio OhioMeansJobs.com

Experiential Exploration and Education:

- Sports
- Clubs
- Volunteer Work
- Summer Programs
- Research
- Job Shadowing

Cleveland Metroparks

CCPL

MetroHealth University Hospitals

Youth Opportunities Unlimited

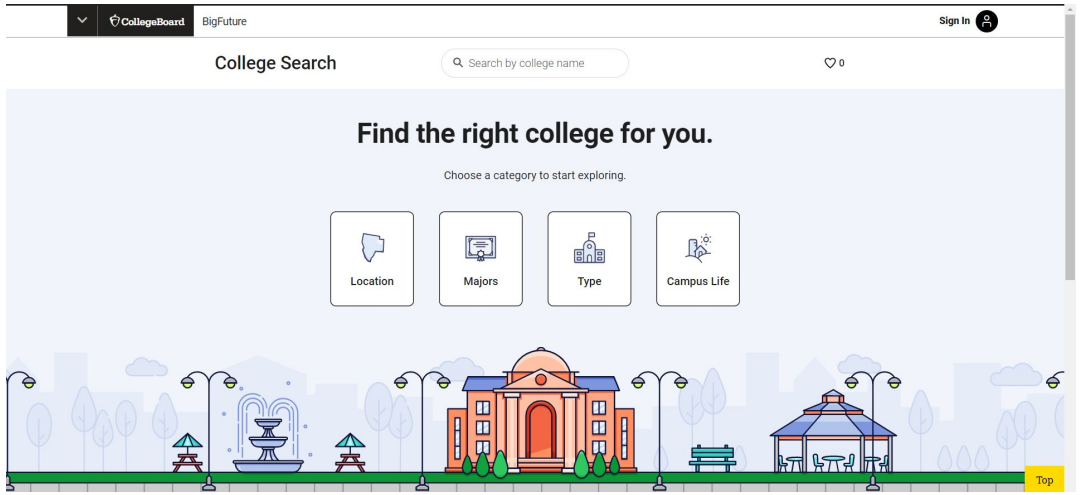
NASA

Cleveland Clinic

College Research

Big Future

Explore Careers, College and, learn how to pay for college!



Visit as many colleges & universities as possible

(In-person & Virtual)

Your student can create a CollegeBoard account now & begin searching & planning for college!

NAVIANCE by HOBSONS

appily

What Are Colleges Looking For?

Academics



Schools are looking to see that your students are continually challenging themselves and moving upwards in terms of complexity. This is called a “rigorous curriculum”.

Standardized Testing

This is slowly coming back into use by schools. Even if a school says “test-optional”, sometimes individual programs require test scores. Many schools also use test scores as a determinant of scholarships, honors colleges, and class placements.

Holistic Admissions

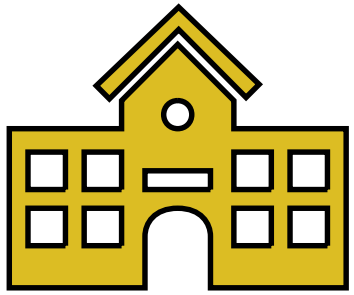


Where and how does your child spend time out of the classroom? Sports, clubs, hobbies, work, family contributions? This helps the school understand your student as more than grades and test scores. It show what makes them tick, what their values are, what their interests and goals may be.

College Visits

Things to Consider When Looking at College:

- Admissions: GPA, testing?
- Distance from Home
- Urban, suburban, rural
- Student/Faculty Ratio
- Campus Activities
- Diversity of student population
- Cost per year, aid available
- Major/Academic Program



Questions to ask while visiting colleges

1. What is the average class size?
2. How many clubs/ organizations are offered on campus?
3. What is student life like on campus?
4. What is the surrounding community like?
5. How diverse is the campus?
6. Do you have an honors college?
7. Am I allowed to bring my car on campus my freshman year?
8. What makes your college stand out from others?
9. What do students do when they are not in class?
10. What does your college do or have on campus to ensure safety?

ACT & SAT Testing

Fall 2026 & Spring 2027 Testing Dates

ACT

www.actstudent.org

Test Dates (Registration Deadline):

December 12, 2026 (November 6)

February 27, 2027 (January 22)

April 10, 2027 (March 5)

June 12, 2027 (May 7)

July 10, 2027 (June 4)

SAT

www.collegeboard.org

Test Dates (Registration Deadline):

December 5, 2026 (November 20)

March 6, 2027 (February 19)

May 1, 2027 (April 16)

June 5, 2027 (May 21)

What is Test-optional?

Your student can submit their test score if they want & think it would make their application stronger (check the middle 50% of scores)

Colleges will look at test scores (if provided) to take into consideration for merit-based scholarships- but can still qualify for merit-based scholarships based on GPA!

Honors Programs- Submitting a test score will help the colleges!

ACT®

achieve more

SAT®

Schools Requiring Test Scores – 2026-27 **subject to change

1. All US Military Academies
2. Ohio State University – Columbus Campus
3. Auburn University
4. Georgia State Schools (UGA, Georgia State, Georgia Tech, etc.)
5. Purdue University
6. Florida State Schools (UCF, USF, FIU, FAU, plus more)

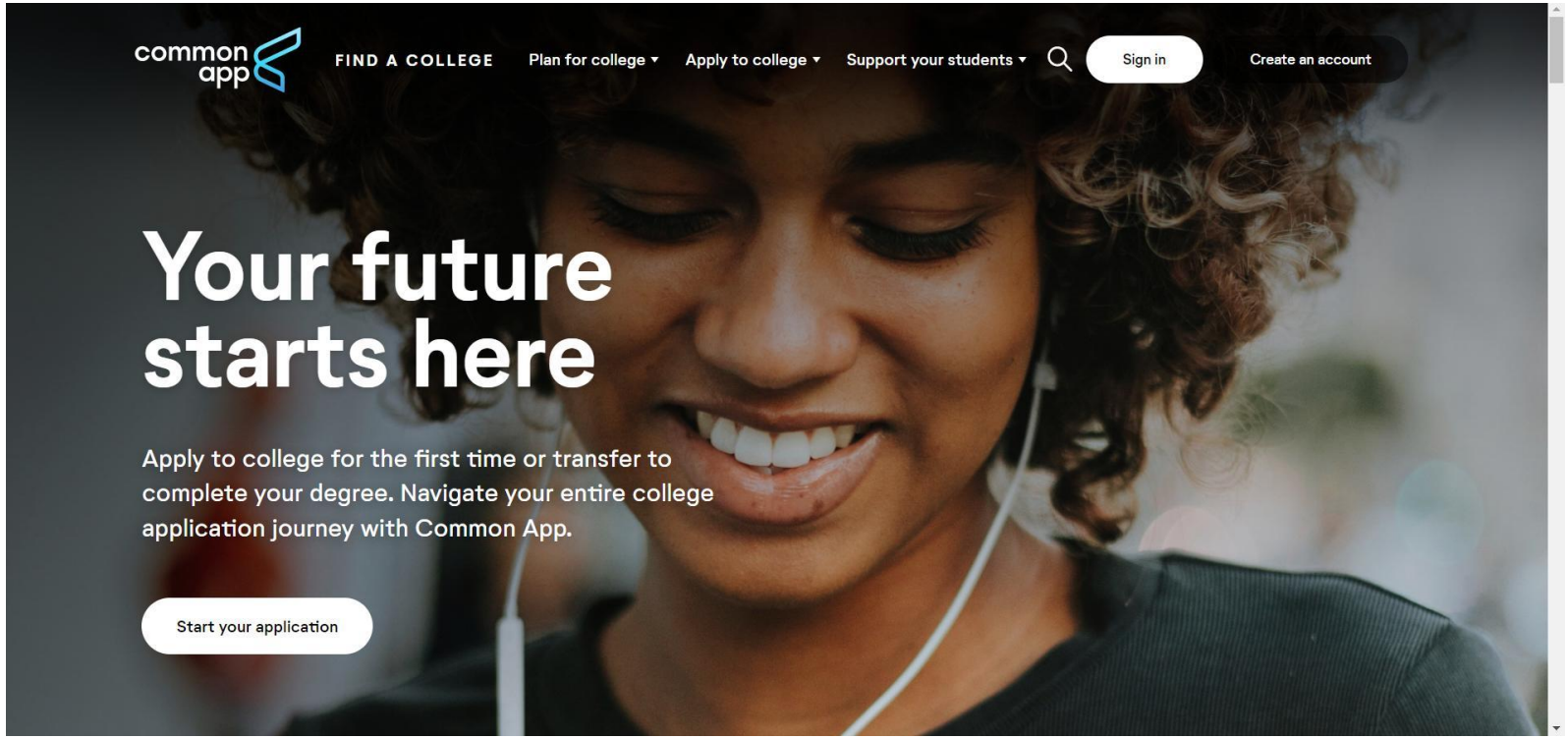
Many other schools (highly selective colleges and others) use tests for admissions and scholarships

Also required: Yale, Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth, Penn

Fall 2028: Princeton, Notre Dame

Common Application

Opens on August 1 annually



In August, a student can:

1. Create an Account
2. Start the Application
3. Write the Essay

The Student needs to wait until September to ask for transcripts, etc.

Neither High School Guidance Offices nor College Admissions Offices are ready to receive items before then!

Common Application (Common App)

The Common Application automatically fills in sections of college applications, making it easier for students to apply to multiple schools.

Benefits of the Common App

- Apply more quickly.
- Avoid filling out the same information multiple times.
- Receive updates on mobile devices.
- Easily manage application requirements and deadlines.

Cost of Common App

- While students can use the Common Application for free, some individual schools still charge an application fee, even if you use the Common App to apply to them.
- However, prospective students who can demonstrate financial need may request fee waiver forms in the profile section of the application- supporting statement from a counselor or financial aid officer may be required.



Types of College Applications



Early Action

This is a way to get an earlier admissions decision (usually December) from your top schools, You can apply to multiple colleges with this designation.

Early Decision

Only choose Early Decision if you are *absolutely* sure you want to attend a specific college. Opting to not attend can have negative consequences as it is a binding contract. If you're not sure, opt for Regular Decision or Early Action.

Regular Decision

This is a good choice if you're not 100% sure where you want to attend just yet. You also should choose this option if you want a bit more time to complete your application or if you'd like to retake your ACT or SAT a few more times.

Rolling Admissions

This is a good option if you find another school you'd like to apply to after completing Early Action applications. You can also choose this route if you finish your application early and the college gives you the option of rolling admissions, so you can find out quickly if you were accepted.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING FOR THE COSTS OF COLLEGE

- Curate your list!
- **Discuss costs NOW.**
- To loan or not to loan...

Some resources:

Net Price Calculators at School Websites

https://myintuition.org/

Research salaries, etc. on future earnings:

https://www.bankrate.com/loans/student-loans/average-college-graduate-salary/

https://www.bankrate.com/loans/student-loans/do-college-students-have-realistic-salary-expectations/

https://ohiomeansjobs.ohio.gov/home

Money Does Not Grow On Trees

But we can help you find it in other places so you can reach your goals!



Gift Money

Grants and Scholarships



Earned Money

Federal Work Study



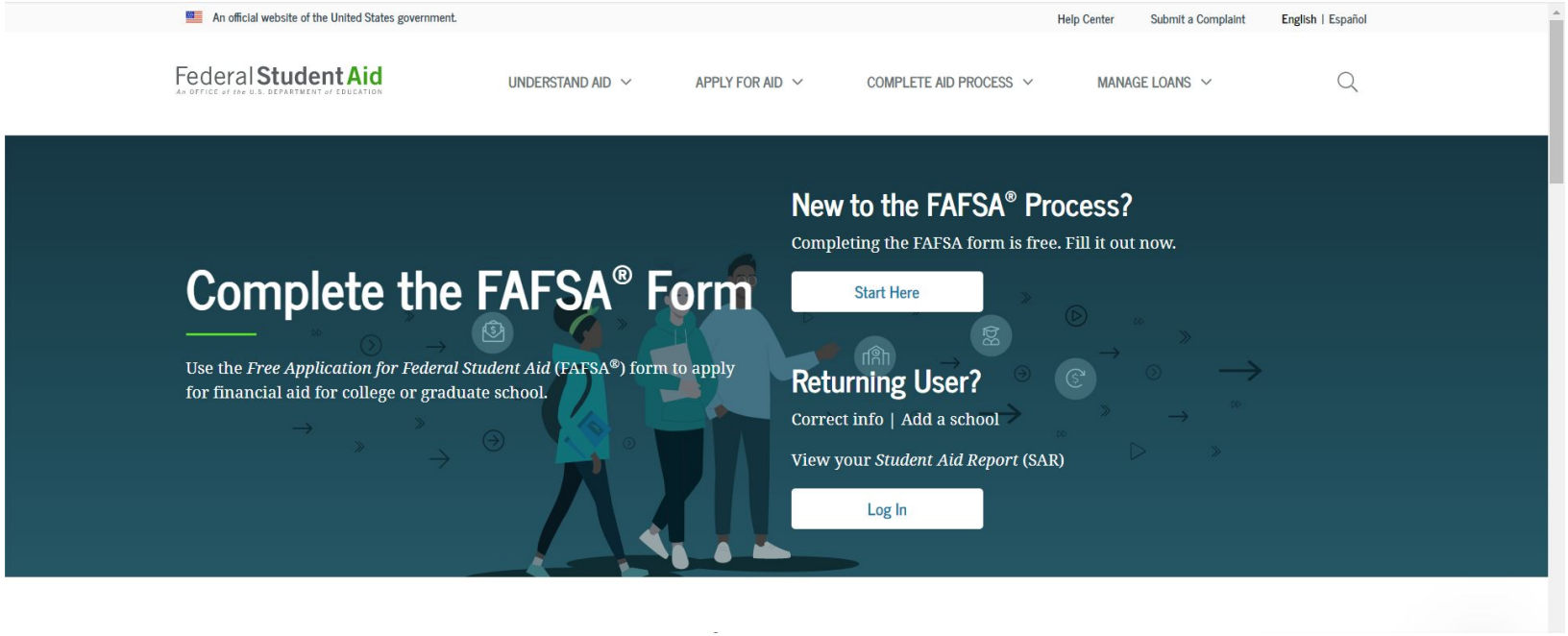
Borrowed Money

Loans

The FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Now Open!



Contact your College Now Advisor to book an appointment

The FAFSA

➢Students need to complete the FAFSA **every year** that they are in college

➢**When is it due?** Now open – sooner rather than later, as some aid depends on timeliness. Generally students should apply to schools first, then do the FAFSA right afterwards.

➢**What if I don't think it is worth it/we won't "qualify" for aid?**

- ❑ Many schools require the FAFSA to be done in order to award merit aid
- ❑ It is also the "application" for federal student loans

➢**What information is included?**

- ❑ Student Demographics
- ❑ Parent Demographics
- ❑ Student Dependency Status (independent vs dependent)
- ❑ Student Financials
- ❑ Parent Financials
- ❑ Student school choices/options

Tips for Scholarship Searching

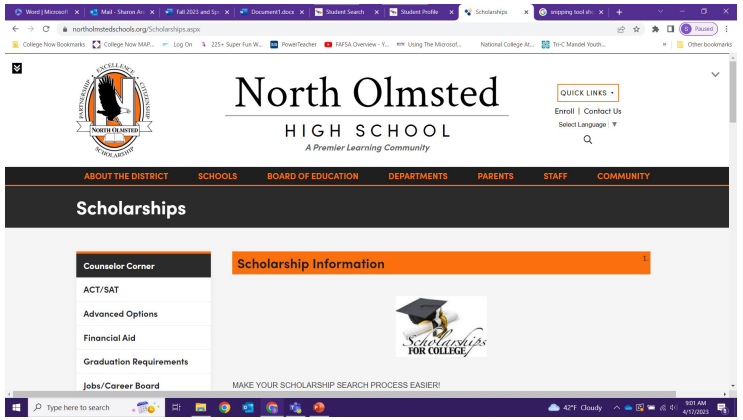


➢**Think Local!**

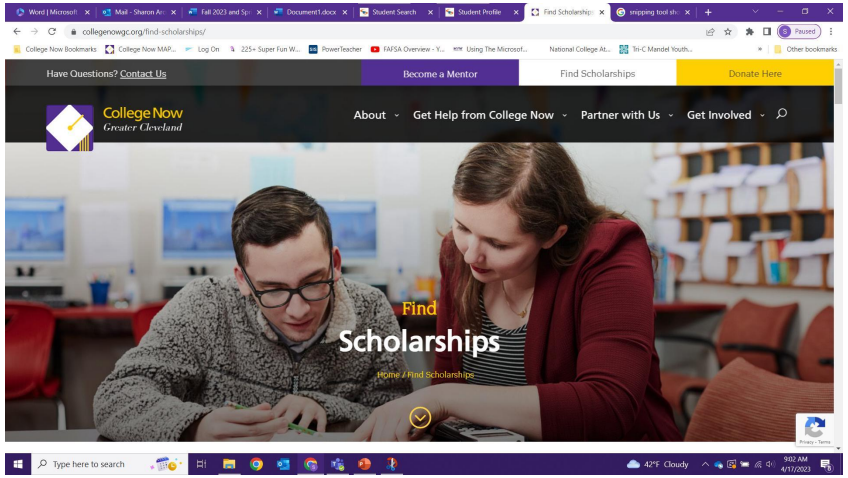
- Ohio
- North East Ohio
- Cleveland
- North Olmsted
- North Olmsted High School

➢**Dig deep at the schools where you are applying**

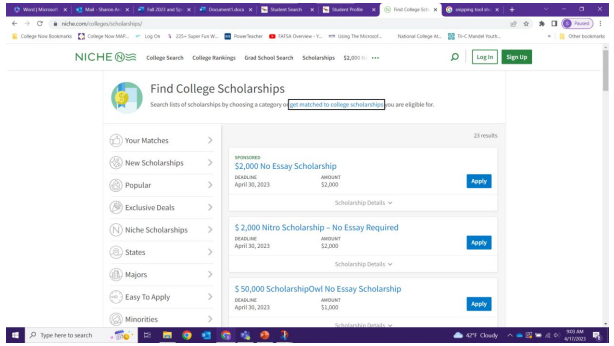
Where Can My Student Find Scholarships?











Junior Year Checklist

College Now
Greater Cleveland

August/September

- ☐ Meet with your guidance counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate.
- ☐ Join a club at school, if you have not already done so.
- ☐ Get a job, volunteer, or join a club in the community.
- ☐ Start developing a resume.

October/November

- ☐ Take the PSAT in school.
- ☐ Attend a college fair.
- ☐ Register to take the ACT or SAT (or both!).

December

- ☐ Look into scholarships that you may be eligible for (now or next year).
- ☐ Identify what is important to you when looking for colleges.
- ☐ Take the ACT or SAT.

January/February

- ☐ Begin studying for the in-school ACT or SAT.
- ☐ Go on a college visit.
- ☐ Ask your counselor about summer opportunities on college campuses.
- ☐ Participate in impact!. (College Now after school program)

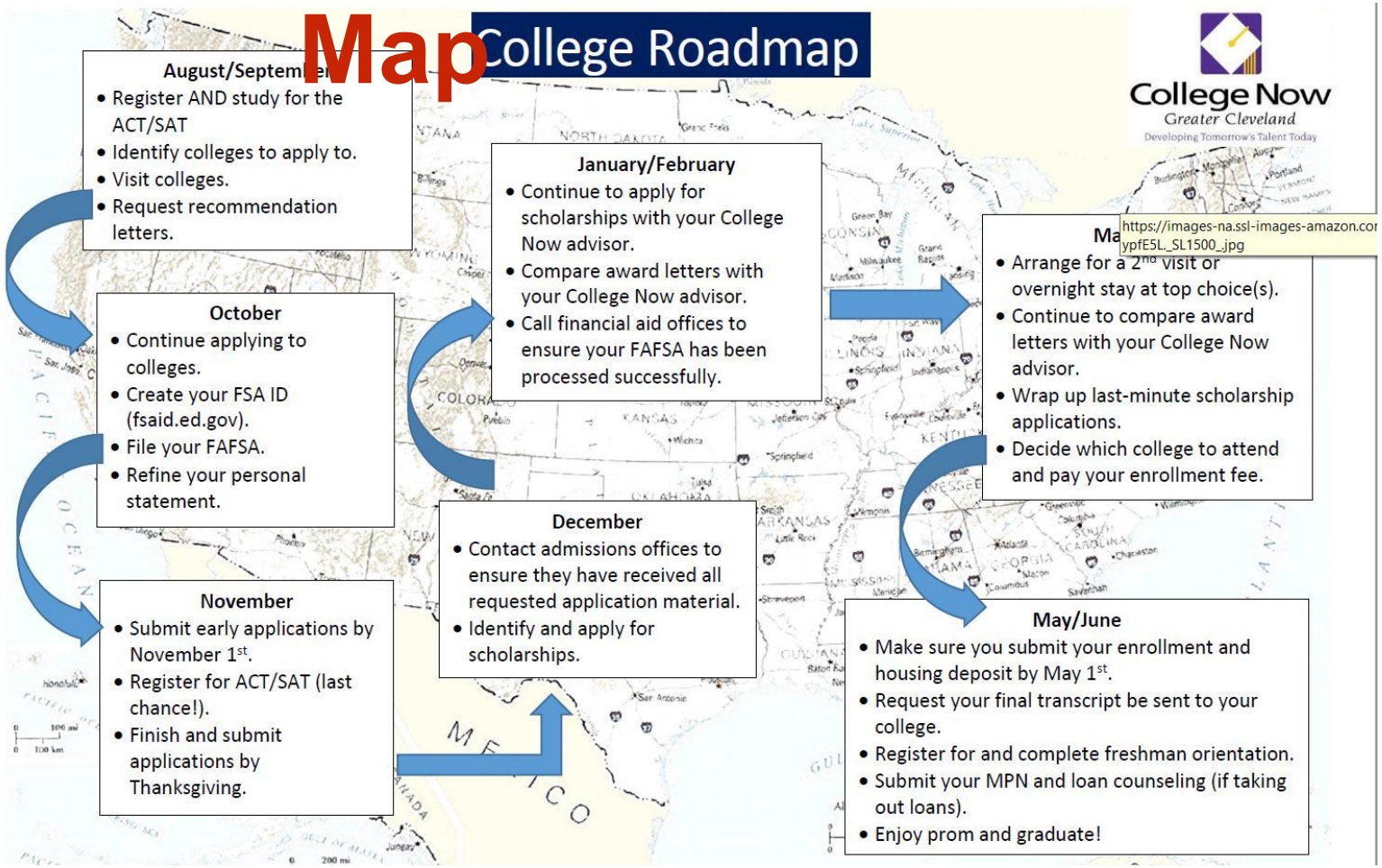
March/April

- ☐ Meet with your College Now advisor to begin searching for colleges and careers you may be interested in.
- ☐ Take the in-school ACT or SAT.
- ☐ Make a list of teachers and/or community leaders you may want to ask for a letter of recommendation.
- ☐ Go on a college visit.

May-July

- ☐ Develop a list of up to ten colleges you may be interested in applying to next year.
- ☐ Identify and apply for summer internships or jobs.
- ☐ Register to take the ACT or SAT.
- ☐ Develop a draft personal statement, that can be used on college and/or scholarship applications.
- ☐ Attend an Entrance Exam Prep Boot Camp (offered by College Now)

Senior Road Map



CUYAHOGA VALLEY CAREER CENTER

Career and Trad School Options

Cuyahoga Community College



POLARIS CAREER CENTER

