

# Welcome to College Planning Night!

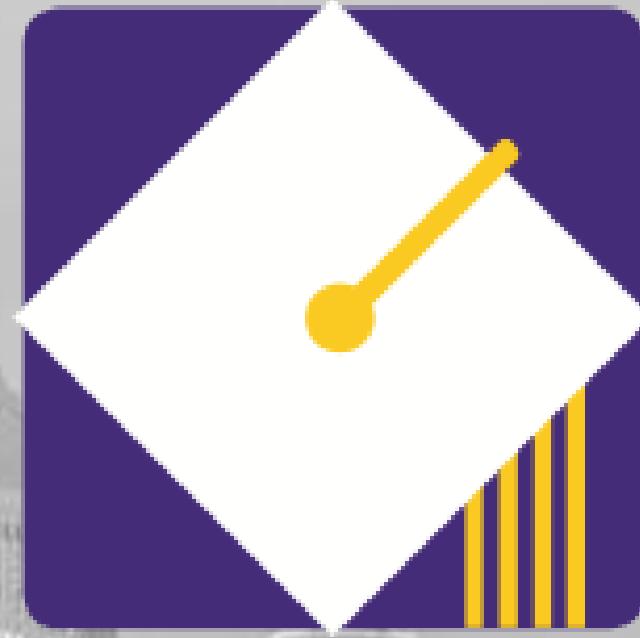
Please use the QR Code to register your attendance at this evening's session.

**Student** – “I’m here for me” tab  
**Family Member** – “I’m here on behalf of a student/ someone else” tab



**College Now**  
Greater Cleveland





# College Now

*Greater Cleveland*

College Planning Night:  
Fall 2025

# Today's Agenda



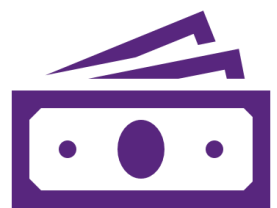
Career Exploration



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



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# Choosing a Career & Major

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

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



CliftonStrengths



**Experiential Exploration and Education:**

Sports

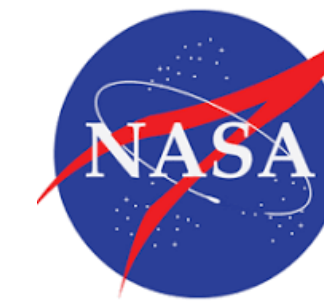
Clubs

Volunteer Work

Summer Programs

Research

Job Shadowing

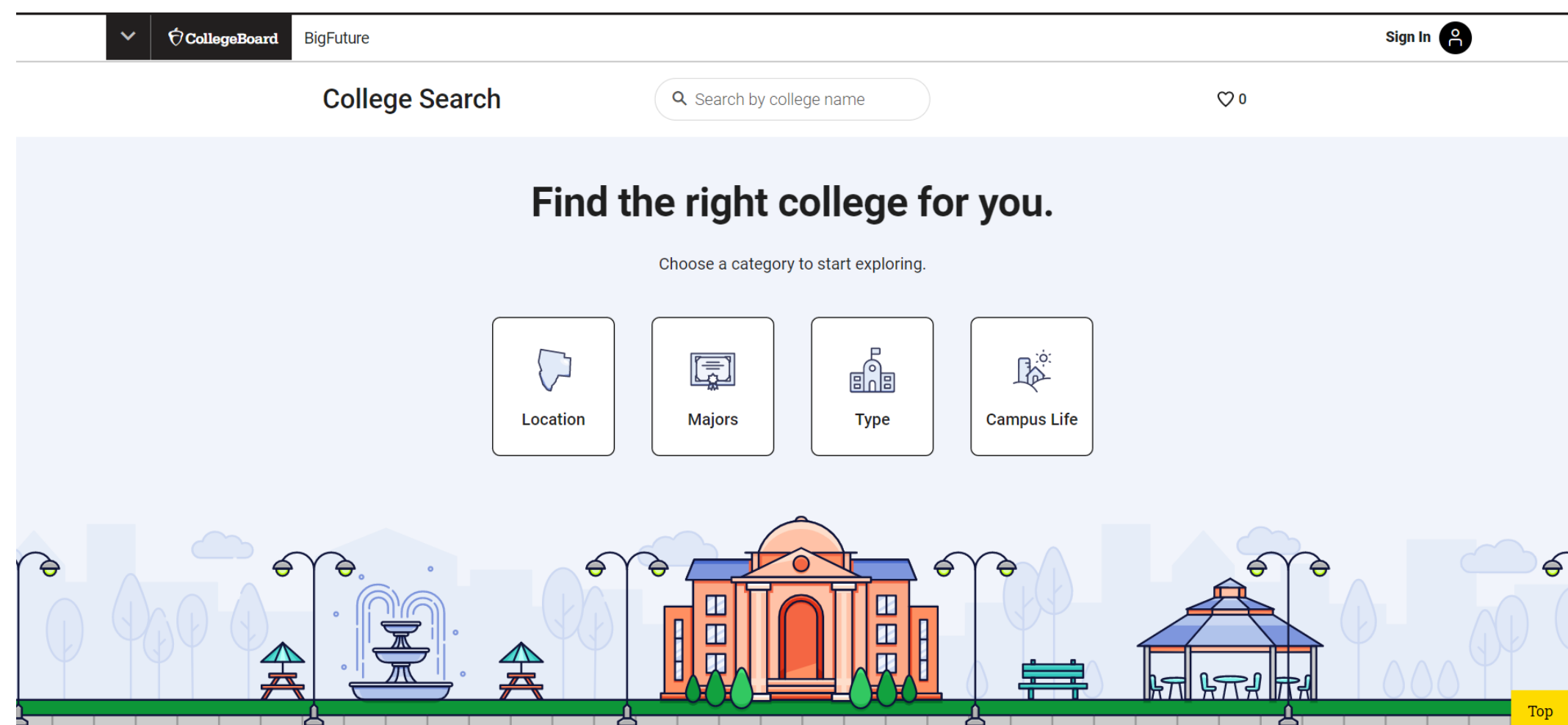




# College Research

## Big Future

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



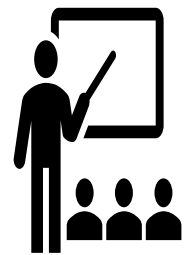
**Visit as many colleges & universities as possible  
(In-person & Virtual)**

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



# 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

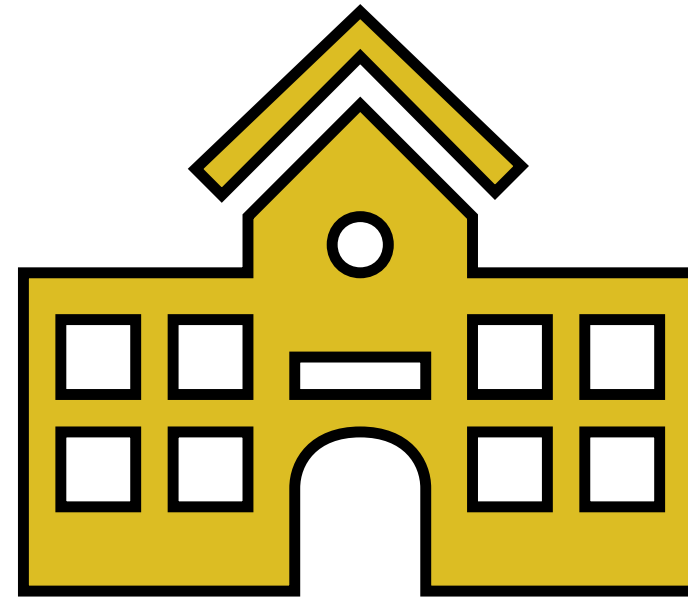


Where and how does your child spend time out of the classroom? Sports, clubs, hobbies, work, family contributions? This helps the school understand your student as more than grades and test scores. It shows what makes them tick, what their values are, what their interests and goals may be.

# 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 2025 & Spring 2026 Testing Dates*



[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

## **Test Dates (Registration Deadline):**

December 17 (November 7\*)

February 14, 2026 (January 9)

April 11, 2026 (March 6)

June 13, 2026 (May 8)

July 11, 2026 (June 5)



[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

## **Test Dates (Registration Deadline):**

December 6 (November 21)

March 14, 2026 (February 27)

May 2, 2026 (April 17)

June 6, 2026 (May 22)



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# 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!

The ACT logo features the letters "ACT" in a bold, black, serif font. A red swoosh underline is positioned beneath the letter "A". A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the upper right of the "T".The SAT logo consists of the letters "SAT" in a black, serif font. Above the "A" is a blue speech bubble containing the words "achieve more" in white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned to the upper right of the "T".

# Schools Requiring Test Scores – 2025-26

**\*\*subject to change**

► <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/find-your-fit/what-colleges-require-SAT>

1. All US Military Academies
2. Ohio State University – Columbus Campus
3. Auburn University (starting Fall 2027)
4. Georgia State Schools (UGA, Georgia State, 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**

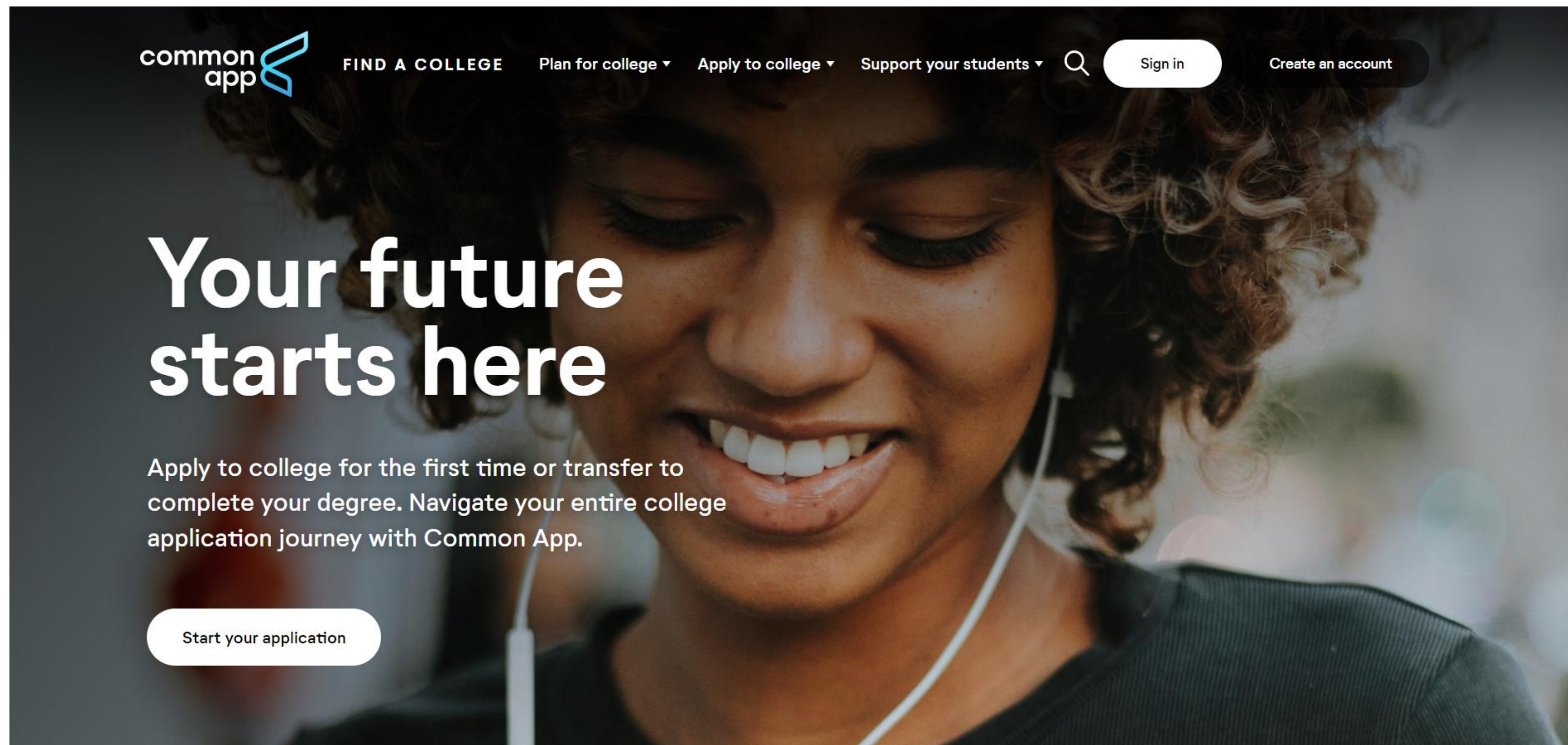


# Common Application

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!



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# 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!

Some resources:

**Net Price Calculators at School Websites**

► **Discuss costs NOW.**

<https://myintuition.org/>

► To loan or not to loan...

**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>



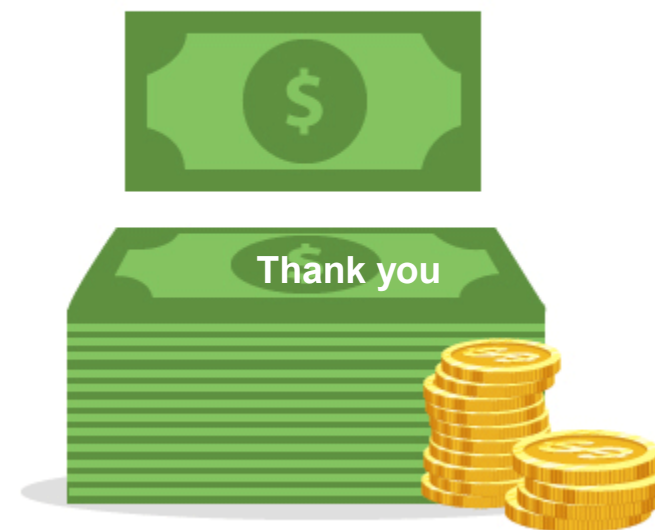
# Money Does Not Grow On Trees

*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

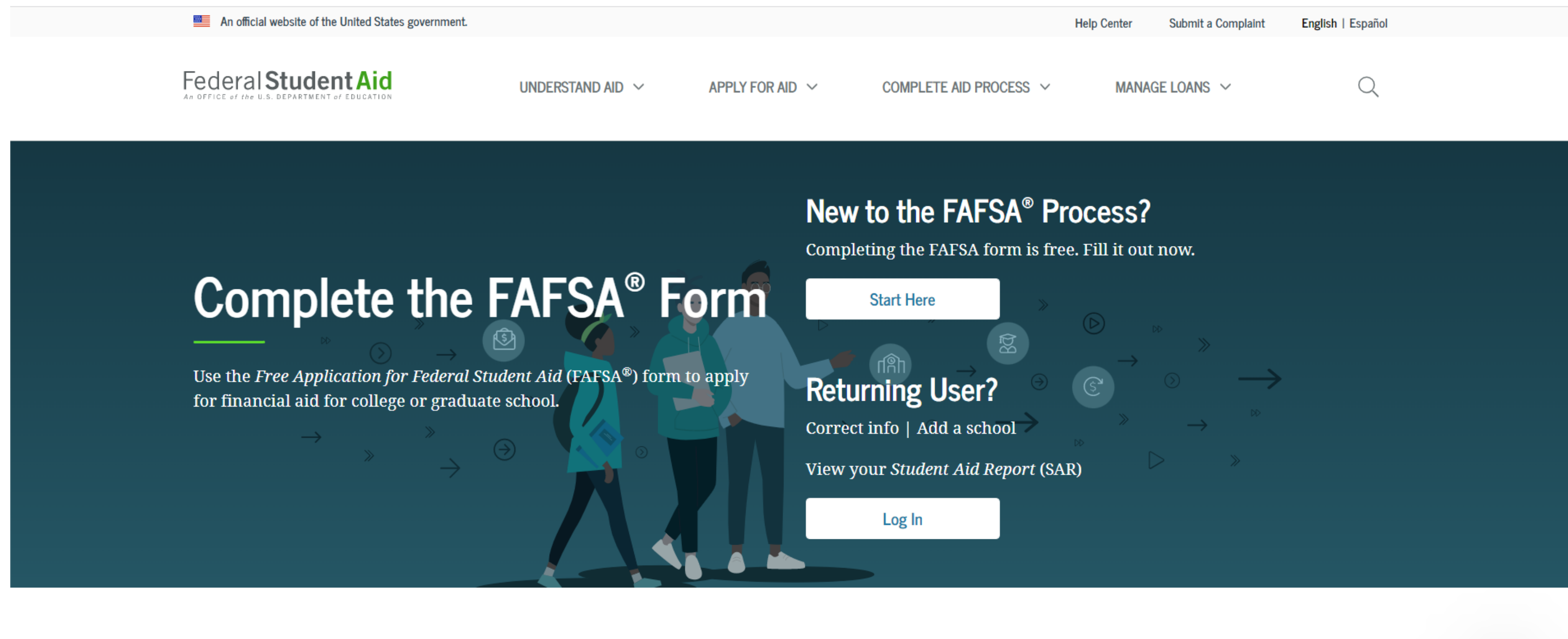


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# The FAFSA

*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*

**Opens  
October 1**



**Contact your  
College Now  
Advisor to  
book an  
appointment**



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# The FAFSA

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

➤ **When is it due?** Any time after October 1 – 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!

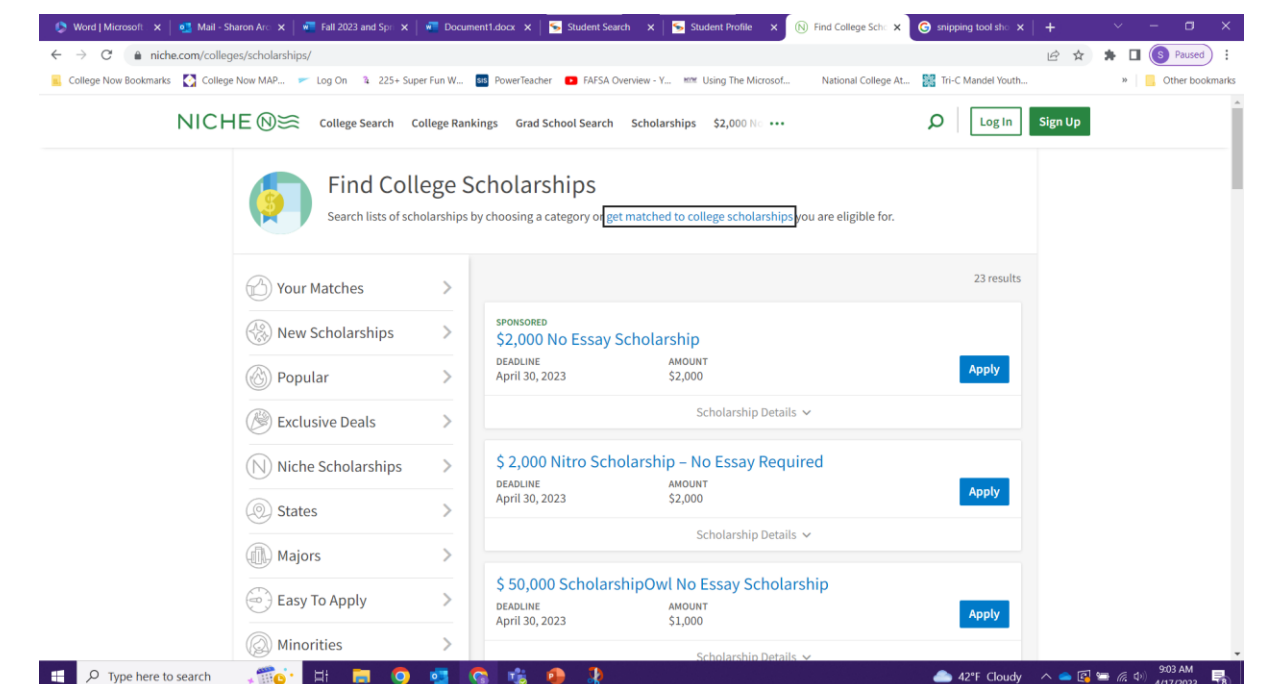
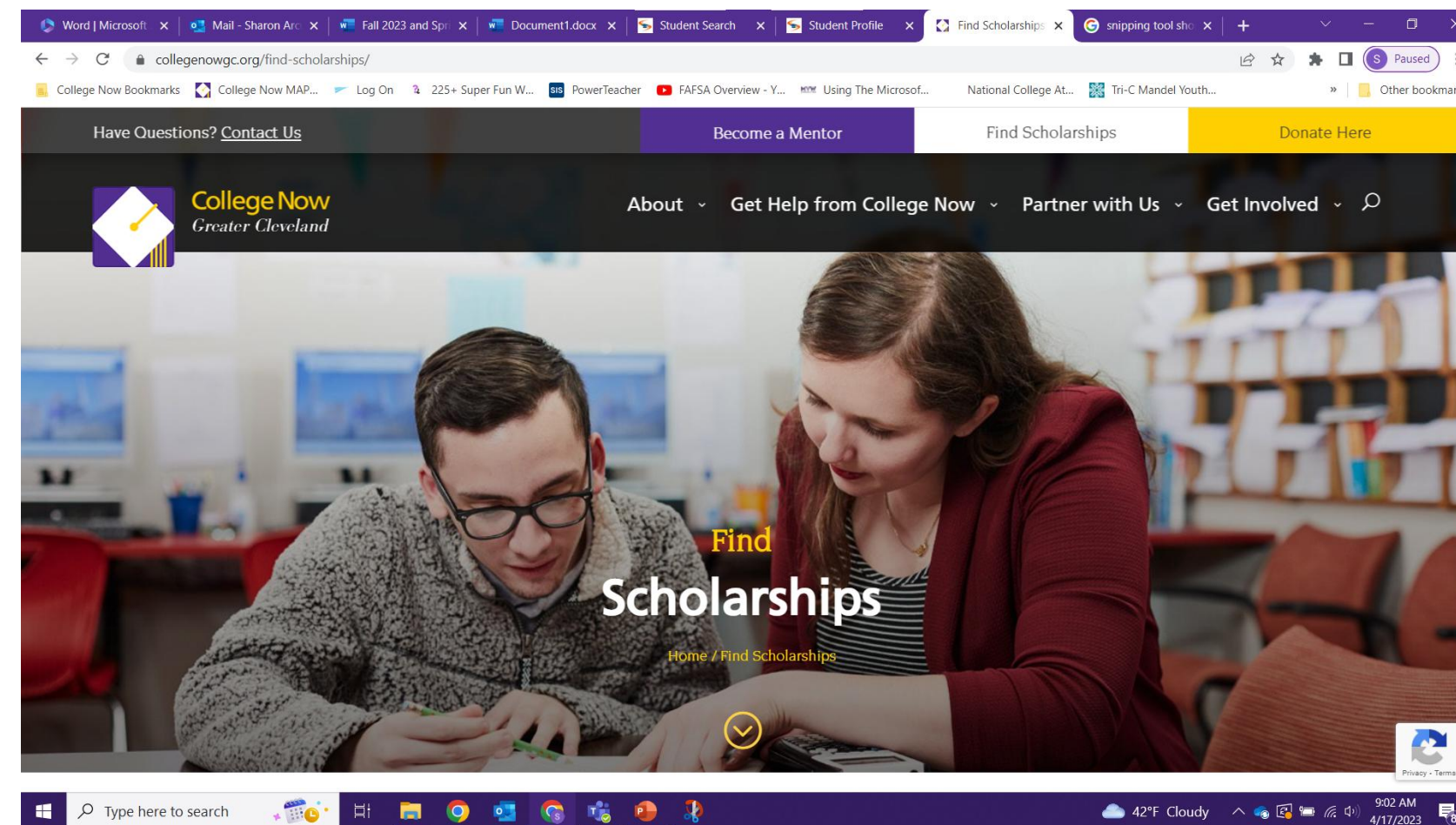
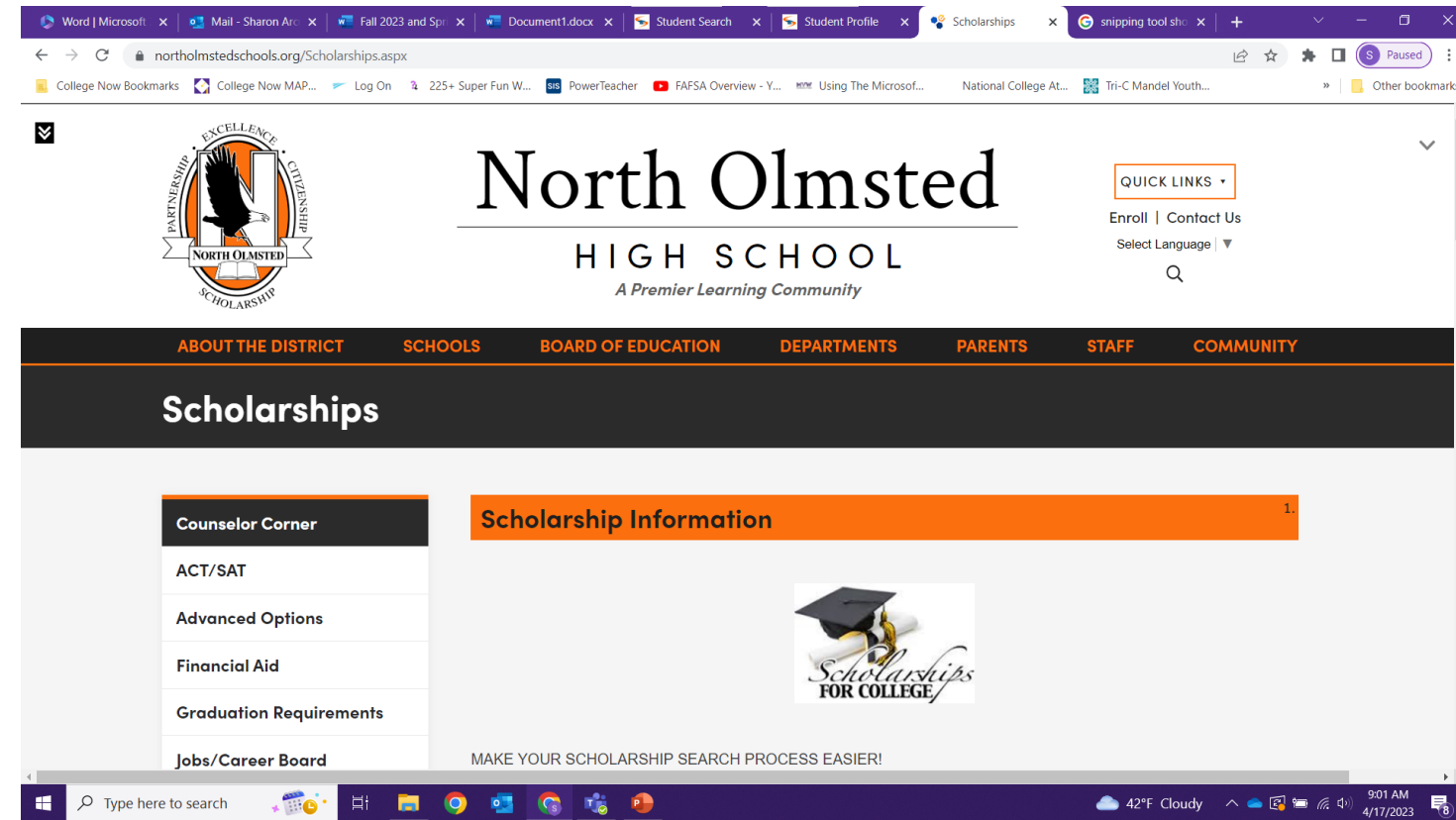
- ❖ Ohio
- ❖ North East Ohio
- ❖ Cleveland
- ❖ North Olmsted
- ❖ North Olmsted High School

## ➤ Dig deep at the schools where you are applying






# Where Can My Student Find Scholarships?





# Freshman and Sophomore Checklists

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Preparing for High School & Post-Secondary Success  
9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

Freshman	Sophomore
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a meeting with your Guidance Counselor to prepare for High School success</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Naviance login (or other College and Career Tool)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin to prepare and practice for the PSAT using Khan Academy</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the PSAT 8/9 (October)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Take advantage of tutoring opportunities</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin to develop healthy time management and study skills</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to calculate a Grade Point Average (GPA)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review 1<sup>st</sup> quarter grades and develop a plan to improve or maintain grade before the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> semester</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Familiarize yourself with organizations, clubs, and/or sporting groups at your school or in the community</li></ul> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review 1<sup>st</sup> semester grades, and evaluate GPA</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete Career Interest Profiler in Naviance or other College and Career Tool</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your Guidance Counselor to discuss enrollment in college prep/credit programs such as Advanced Placement, and College Credit Plus</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Participate in extracurricular activities at school or in the community</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore summer enrichment programs, career shadowing opportunities, internships, or volunteer opportunities</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin to think about your skills and interests and how those relate to careers, majors, and colleges</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Start developing a list of your awards, honors, and extracurricular activities</li></ul> <b>Summer:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Visit a college campus and/or a college fair</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Participate in an enrichment program, career shadowing opportunity, internship, volunteer opportunity</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a SMART goal for next school year</li></ul>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Semester:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule a meeting with your Guidance Counselor to ensure that you are on track for high school graduation, and taking courses that will prepare you for post-secondary education or career tech</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Utilize Khan Academy to prepare for the PSAT</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Take the PSAT (October), and review results to identify areas where improvement is needed</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin to research and familiarize yourself with college admissions requirements</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider shadowing a professional in your career interest area</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Get involved: continue to participate in extracurricular activities, and volunteer in your community</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a resume, using the list you have created of your accomplishments, awards, honors, and activities</li></ul> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Semester:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review 1<sup>st</sup> semester grades, and evaluate cumulative GPA</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Compare cumulative GPA with admissions requirements for institutions you are interested in</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> While continuing to participate in extracurricular activities: work towards moving into a leadership position in the activities you enjoy most</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Read news reports, articles, and books and practice your writing skills</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use Naviance or other College and Career tool to begin researching colleges, develop a list of at least 5 schools you are interested in</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Revisit your SMART goal for the year, determine if you are on track to meet your goal</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Investigate summer opportunities</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Finish the school year strong!</li></ul> <b>Summer:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin preparing for the SAT and/or ACT</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Visit a college campus and a college fair</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Participate in an enrichment program, career shadowing opportunity, volunteer opportunity, or job</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin saving money for college (if you have not already started)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a SMART goal for the next school year</li></ul>

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# Junior Year Checklist



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## 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

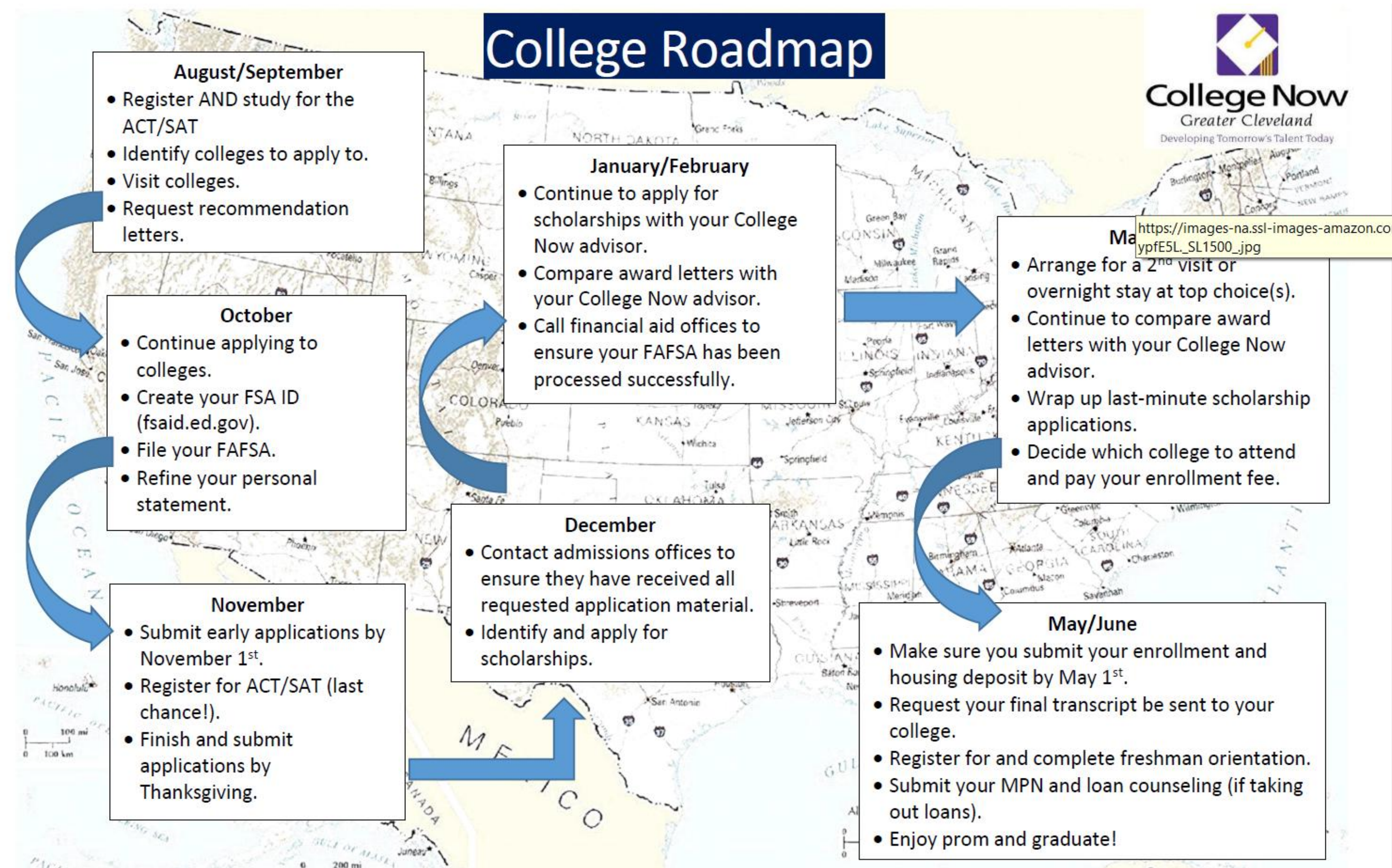
- ☐ Develop a list of up to ten colleges you may be interested in applying to next year.
- ☐ Identify and apply for summer internships or jobs.
- ☐ Register to take the ACT or SAT.
- ☐ Develop a draft personal statement, that can be used on college and/or scholarship applications.
- ☐ Attend an Entrance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



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# Senior Road Map





# Senior Month by Month Checklist

## September

- Register for the October ACT/ SAT. (act.org/sat.collegeboard.org)
- Review previous ACT/SAT scores with College Now for resources and services to increase scores.
- STUDY! STUDY! STUDY! For the ACT/ SAT.
- Create a list of 10 Universities/Colleges to visit, consider and evaluate. Ensure your list includes the essential 3 categories. “Safety, Match, & Reach”
- College Now can help you determine which schools may be the best fit for you. (Tool: nces.ed.gov)
- Visit with your high school counselor to make sure that you have the credits you need to graduate and have completed all required testing.
- Create a resume. College Now can share outlines and worksheets, to draft a professional resume. linkedin.com
- Recommendation letters: Ask early & Ask strategically. Who can best describe your community service, academic success, and passion for your major/career.? Your College Now advisor can share outlines, worksheets, examples and resources for stellar recommendation letters.
- “Senioritis” is contagious! Don’t let your grades or attendance slip. Higher grades & attendance help show Universities/ Colleges you are serious about attending.

## October

- Create your FSA ID. (record and store somewhere, i.e. your phone) (fsaid.ed.gov)
- College Now can help you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) navigate the often complex and confusing Free Application For Student Aid (FAFSA). Accurate & Early can mean thousands more! [FAFSA OPENS OCTOBER 1st!](#)
- Start early drafts of college applications. Be mindful: Universities/Colleges early November deadlines or Early Action.
- Research additional/private scholarships for incoming freshman at the Universities/Colleges you are applying.
- Begin early drafts of personal statements for scholarships.

## November

- Nov. 1st Early Applications deadlines begin
- Register for the December ACT/SAT. (act.org/sat.collegeboard.org)
- Continue to refine applications for winter deadlines. Ensure accuracy, instructions and details are followed. Write and re-write your essays. Once you feel you have completed your best work, have a qualified English and grammar professional review.
- College Now may be able to help with application fee waivers
- Verify your FAFSA and Student Aid Report (SAR) College Now can verify FAFSA is processed successfully. Errors and inaccurate data can potentially reduce awards and slow down processing.

## December

- Contact the admissions’ offices to ensure that they have received the application, essays, references, transcript, test scores and any other requested documents.
- Continue to submit additional admissions applications.
- Continue to apply for scholarships: “early, often, and many”

## January/ February

- That's all folks! End of college application season!
- Early Offers begin to arrive. Your College Now Advisor can help you compare offers using The College Now Award Letter Tool.

## March/ April

- Arrange for a second visit or an overnight stay at the top 3 accepted Universities/Colleges.
- Compare final Financial Aid Award Letters. Awards can be NEGOTIATED and College Now has 50 years of experience championing for high school seniors.
- Many Scholarships begin to close, but a few great opportunities are still available to meet your gap in funding

## May/ June

- [MAY 1st:](#) Housing and matriculation deposits due. Refundable in limited instances ( typically \$400 cash or credit) Avoid late, incomplete housing applications or partial payments.
- Verify your high school counselor sent final transcripts.
- Register and attend a Freshman Orientation.
- Submit final scholarship applications.
- Find a shadow or volunteer experience for the summer
- Notify institution of outside scholarship awards
- Submit MPN & Loan Counseling if you need student loans
- Login to student portal often to check for messages, alerts verifications and or holds on your student account







# Career and Trade School Options









**Sharon Arcuri**  
College & Career Advisor

[sarcuri@collegenowgc.org](mailto:sarcuri@collegenowgc.org)  
216-200-4550

You can schedule appointments via the link below. I am at North Olmsted on most Thursdays throughout the school year.

<https://cngc.org/NorthOlmsted>



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