

SENIOR YEAR: SUMMER/FALL

- Research local scholarship opportunities.** Talk to your school counselor, teachers, or other adults in your community about scholarships offered by local organizations. Go to your local library and ask for help. Ask your parents to see if their employers grant scholarships. And don't forget to check the College Board's **Scholarship Search**.
- Look up deadlines.** Don't miss the priority deadlines for your colleges' financial aid applications — meeting these will help you get as much money as possible. You can compare deadlines for different colleges by using the **College Search** tool. And be sure to find out the application deadlines of any private scholarships or loans for which you plan to apply.
- Get an estimate of what the colleges on your final list will actually cost.** Get a better idea of what you'll pay to attend a college by looking at its estimated net price — the cost of attending a college minus grants and scholarships you receive. You can get this figure by going to the net price calculator on the college's website or, for some colleges, by using the College Board's **Net Price Calculator**.
- Find out about different kinds of student loans.** Not all student loans are equal. Loans come from different sources, and some kinds are more expensive than others. Read **Types of College Loans** to learn more.
- Find out if you need to file a CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®.** A college may require students to complete this application — or the college's own forms — to apply for financial aid awarded by the institution.
- Complete the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE, if required.** If you need to submit the PROFILE to a college or scholarship program, be sure to find out the priority deadline and submit it by that date. Read **How to Complete the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE**.
- Complete your FAFSA.** You can submit the FAFSA after Oct. 1 — sooner is better to qualify for as much financial aid as possible. Filling out the form online at fafsa.gov is the fastest way to do it.

Notes:

SENIOR YEAR: WINTER/SPRING

- Apply for any private scholarships you've found.** Make sure you understand and follow the application requirements and apply by the deadline.
- Compare your financial aid awards.** The colleges you apply to will send financial aid award letters to tell you how much and which kinds of aid they're offering you. Use the **Compare Your Aid Awards** calculator to make side-by-side comparisons of each college's aid package.
- Contact a college's financial aid office, if necessary.** Financial aid officers are there to help you if you have questions. If your financial aid award is not enough, don't be afraid to ask about other options.
- Select a financial aid package by the deadline.** Once you've compared the offers, you and your family should discuss which package best meets your needs. Financial aid is limited, so if you don't accept your award on time, it may go to another student. You can, however, ask for an extension if you are waiting to hear from other schools. Each college will decide if it's able to give you an extension.
- Complete financial aid paperwork.** If loans are part of your financial aid package, you'll have to complete and submit paperwork to get the money.
- Get ready to pay the first college tuition bill.** This usually covers the first semester and is due before you enroll.

Notes:

Visit bigfuture.collegeboard.org for more information.