

Planning Your Future

Roadmap to College

Your journey to college starts the moment you step onto high school grounds. Each year is just as important as the last as you are building up the momentum to reach your destination. Remember, your college search doesn't have to begin and end with name brand schools. There are many affordable, welcoming schools out there to choose from. Use this college road map to take control of the wheel and navigate your road to success. Buckle up and enjoy the ride!

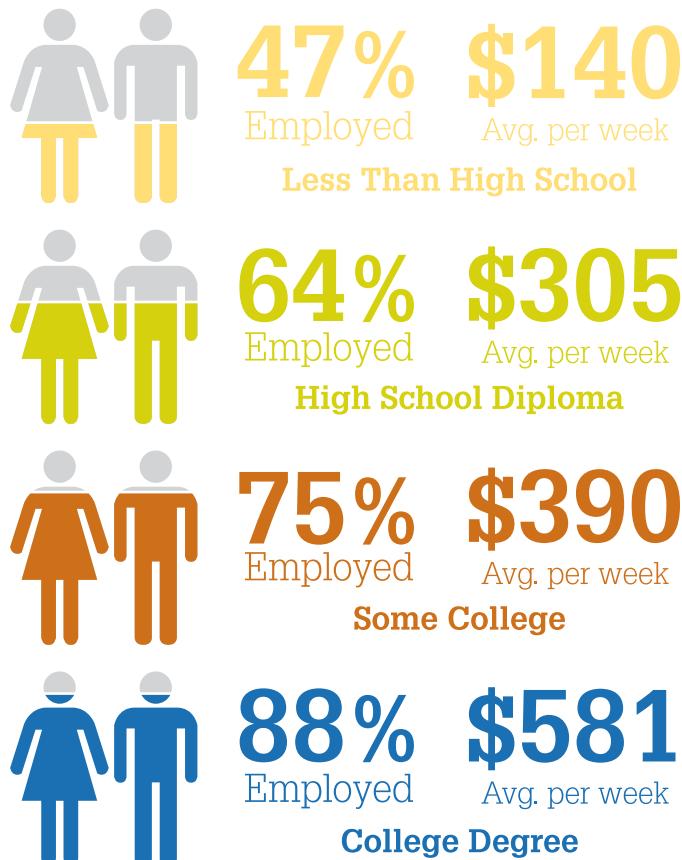
Hitting the Road: Why College Matters

- 1 Getting a college education leads to closer **family** relationships. Your education will put you in a trailblazing position to inspire future family generations.
- 2 Increase in personal **opportunities**. Education opens up doors. More flexibility, options, and resources are promised to those that enhance their knowledge.
- 3 Extraordinary **growth** will occur. Education will expand your mind and expose you to many different people, topics, and experiences.
- 4 Better **health** gives you the strength to take on life's challenges. College is where you can build the knowledge and skills to maintain better health.
- 5 Greater **wealth** means more choices. Whatever your dreams – owning a home, traveling the world – college is the way to support a richer life.
- 6 Stronger **community** means more collaboration to solve issues we face as a society. College is where you can shape your views, develop skills and character traits you need to become future leaders who give back to their family and build stronger community.
- 7 More **security** means less worry. Less worry about supporting yourself and the people you love. College is a way to achieve independence.

(<http://youcango.collegeboard.org/why-go>)



How Recent College Grads Stack Up



Even in today's economy, recent graduates with an **Associate or Bachelor's Degree** **earn about 90% more than** someone with just a high school diploma.

9th and 10th Grades: Start Your Engines

Although college applications are still a few years away, you want to now begin doing things your future self will thank you for. Trust in the journey for doors will open that you never knew existed!

- Tell your teachers & counselor that you plan on going to college.
- Transform what you believe is possible for yourself because you are getting ready to change the world.
- Get to know your teachers and school counselors – these relationships can lead to future recommendation letters.
- Develop strong study habits - pay attention in class, complete your homework on time, and ask for extra help from your teachers when you don't understand something.
- Set short and long term personal goals and academic objectives.
- Get involved in activities after school such as joining clubs, being involved in sports, or getting a job. You can also volunteer in your community. These opportunities can all help you determine areas of potential academic interest.
- Be open to explore new possibilities. Here's a great resource to start with: <http://www.act.org/profile>
- Start to gather information about colleges - use college search tools or ask your guidance counselor for resources. <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges>
- Work with your school counselor to register to take the PSAT and/or PLAN.
- Use your summer to read, attend pre-college camps, take enrichment classes, or seek employment – this is a great opportunity to better your verbal, writing, critical thinking and leadership skills. NC State has a listing of pre-college programs here: <http://emas.ncsu.edu/precollege>



11th Grade: Pedal to the Metal

Junior year is the time to get serious about planning for college, to stay ahead. The grades you make this year will be the primary ones used for college admissions, so you want to make sure you're doing everything you can.

- Meet with your counselor at the beginning of the school year to make sure you are on track to meet the minimum course requirements needed for college admission.
- Continue to take challenging courses.
- Register to take the SAT and/or ACT multiple times.
- Narrow down your list of colleges based on where you will thrive best. Keep in consideration the school's size, location, whether they have the major you're interested in and extracurricular activities available. You can research schools on College Board: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges>
- Attend college fairs in your area to speak with admissions reps from schools you are interested in.
- Make a list of teachers, coaches, and community members that you may be able to ask for recommendation letters when you apply to college.
- Maintain involvement outside the classroom & explore leadership opportunities.
- Try to find an internship or volunteer opportunity in the field you plan to study.
- Utilize breaks you have from school, such as spring break and summer break to visit colleges.
- Research scholarship deadlines and requirements for your senior year.

Pit Stop: What Do You Do With Your Summer?

- ▶ Apply for and attend summer camps that focus on your areas of interest.
- ▶ Speak to your teachers and people in your community to obtain an internship, job or volunteer opportunity in a field related to your future career.
- ▶ Take dual enrollment courses at your local college.
- ▶ Set-up college campus tours with your friends/family.
- ▶ Remember, set personal and academic goals as proper planning prevents poor performances.



12th Grade: On the Home Stretch

You are one year away from unlocking your opportunity to future success. The goals you created your freshmen year will serve as a great source of motivation during challenging times.

Fall

- Select 3-5 colleges – a dream school, safety school and others in between.
- Visit <https://fsaid.gov> to get an FSA ID number to e-sign your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Plan your application process by writing down deadlines on your calendar.
- Meet with your guidance counselor to go over your academic record.
- Take the SAT and/or ACT again prior to college application deadlines.
- Keep up your good grades.
- If you receive free or reduced lunch see your guidance counselor for fee waiver options.
- Reach out to your teachers, coaches and community members for any needed letters of recommendation.
- Think back on your life and make a list of moments that could potentially become a part of your personal essay.
- Visit colleges you plan to apply to.
- Aim to apply by early application deadlines.
- Remind parents/guardians to prepare tax information for your financial aid application.
- Student athletes register with the NCAA Clearinghouse for eligibility certification.

Spring

- Focus on finishing your high school career strong.
- After January 1, start and complete your financial aid application – be aware of institutions priority deadlines. <https://fafsa.ed.gov>
- Compare admissions decisions and financial aid packages.
- Take AP/IB exams and send results to your future college.
- May 1 is the national deadline to confirm your enrollment – decide which institution you wish to attend.
- Join admitted student groups to connect with future classmates.
- Send an official final transcript to your future college.
- Figure out housing arrangements, orientation dates, and placement testing requirements.
- Apply for education loans, if needed.

Celebrate!

You are the first in your family to go to college!

The Passenger: Note to Parents

As a parent or family member, you are one of the most important pieces of the college success puzzle. You are in a unique position as an encourager to extend the efforts of counselors and teachers by reinforcing the information students are receiving. Parent involvement in the college process has been positively correlated to student achievement.

Play your role and help your student reach their full capacity by:

- ▶ Reaching out to teachers, counselors and administration to stay informed of what your child is currently working on or what they should be doing to prepare for college. This creates a partnership and these key individuals can offer ideas and assistance about how you can support your student's college plans.
- ▶ Encouraging your student to aim higher than completing a high school degree and take charge of their future. In today's economy, a high school diploma just isn't enough and you can restore what the student thinks is possible.
- ▶ Helping your student envision positive outcomes, focus on their strengths, and encouraging them when things don't always go their way.
- ▶ Talking to them about their college and career plans and letting them know that you are behind them to support them with anything they may need along the way.
- ▶ Teaming up with your student to work through unavoidable obstacles and hardships.
- ▶ Connecting with community-based organizations that support first in the family students aspiring to go to college. <http://www.imfirst.org/partners/schools-and-organizations/list>
- ▶ Visiting <https://fsaid.gov> to get an FSA ID number to e-sign your student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) before January 1 of their senior year.
- ▶ Joining parent and family services to ensure your student completes their college experience. This service is offered by most institutions to enrich relationships between parents, families, and college students.

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**“ You just don’t know how magnificent you might be.
Think Big. ”**

– John Tyler Caldwell
NC State Chancellor (1959-1975)

NC State recognizes that higher education is a pathway to success and we've made it part of our mission to help open access to capable students in North Carolina and across the nation. While the information provided here applies to all students, it is designed to aid students who are first in their family to attend a four year institution.

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