

# 5 APPLYING FOR COLLEGE

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For more information and to view the **glossary**, check out our websites:

WCAN.ORG | PCCN.ORG | READYSETGRAD.ORG | ROADMAPPROJECT.ORG

# 5 APPLYING FOR COLLEGE: RESEARCHING COLLEGES

## HOW DO I RESEARCH COLLEGES?

- Visit: [wcan.org/resources/college-map](http://wcan.org/resources/college-map) for a list of colleges in Washington state
- View college websites
- Sign up for college mailing lists
- Attend **college fairs**
- Tour colleges

**College search takes time.** Schedule a few hours each week to work on researching colleges.

## WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER?

**Type of college** – technical, 2-year, 4-year

**Location** – distance from home, weather, urban or rural, etc.

**Degrees available** – **associate's, bachelor's, certifications** and **apprenticeships**

**Programs available** – subject areas or **majors** offered

**Public vs. private** – public colleges are partially funded by government funds and private colleges are not directly publicly funded

**Special focus** – colleges that focus on a specific interest or student population such as arts, single-sex, religiously affiliated and specialized-mission colleges

**Diversity** – the types of cultures, languages and demographics represented on campus or in the community

**Size** – number of students, campus size, class size, city population, etc.

**Cost of attendance** – in- or out-of-state **tuition, college fees**, books, transportation and housing

**Selectivity** – measured by the percentage of students who get accepted based on admission requirements

**Graduation rate** – number of students who graduate within 4 or 6 years from that college

## \* GOOD TO

**KNOW:** Community colleges offer 2-year degrees with a path to **transfer** to a 4-year school and some offer bachelor degree programs.

## \* DON'T FORGET:

Consider the admissions requirements and determine if the school is a **reach, solid, or safety** for you. It is recommended that you apply to at least one school in each category:

**Reach** – You might not get in, but it's worth applying to because it's your dream school

**Solid** – You're a competitive applicant and will likely get accepted

**Safety** – You'll definitely get accepted, and it's a backup in case the others don't work out

## TALK TO:

Your high school counselor

College and career center adviser

College **admissions counselors** or representatives who visit your school

Family members, teachers, mentors and community members who have been to college

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# 5 APPLYING FOR COLLEGE: PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

All colleges have an **application**. Typically, you can submit a vocational, technical, 2-year or 4-year college/university application online and sometimes in person, or by mail.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY TO MOST COLLEGES?

Your **official transcripts** from **high school** and college if you have earned college credit

Your **test scores** from the **SAT or ACT**

## WHAT ADDITIONAL STEPS MIGHT I NEED TO COMPLETE A 4-YEAR COLLEGE APPLICATION?

**Personal Statement** – a way for the college to get to know you and why you are interested in the school

**Short Answer Responses** – additional questions that may focus on specific concepts, such as diversity, culture and examples of persistence/overcoming adversities.

**Activity Log/Resume** – a list of **extracurricular activities** that can include clubs, sports, jobs and anything you do outside of school.

**Letter of Recommendation** – a letter from a teacher, counselor, coach, etc. that can speak to your qualities, characteristics and capabilities.

## GOOD TO KNOW:

Some programs like **apprenticeships**, vocational and technical certifications have a unique application process. Check out **lni.wa.gov** for more information on apprenticeships or visit **sbctc.edu** for vocational and technical training programs.

## ANYTHING ELSE?

You may need to pay a fee in order to submit a college application.

However, you may be eligible to receive a **fee waiver**:

- If you are a College Bound Scholarship student
- If you receive free and reduced price lunch
- If you participate in programs like TRiO, Upward Bound, or GEAR UP
- If you are a youth in foster care
- If you took the SAT or ACT with a fee waiver
- Contact your high school counselor, college admissions office, National Association for College Admission Counseling, or The College Board to inquire about fee waivers.

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## DON'T FORGET:

You could be competing against MANY other applicants. Make sure your answers are a clear and true representation of who you are and how you have prepared yourself!

# 5 APPLYING FOR COLLEGE: HOW TO APPLY

## TIPS FOR APPLYING:

**Complete and submit at least three** college **applications** in the fall.

**Apply for financial aid** by completing the **FAFSA** or **WASFA** as early as October 1 to ensure you have options to pay for college.

**Use a professional email address** with your name. Check your email often, as you will receive important, time-sensitive messages.

Talk to your counselor if you are unable to pay application fees. You may be eligible for **college application fee waivers**.

**Keep track of deadlines** using a spreadsheet or to-do list.

**Proofread, review and revise college essays.** Have at least one other person (mentor, counselor, teacher, etc.) look over your finalized application.

**Check the status** of your college and financial aid apps to make sure they have been received. You typically can do this via the **online college portal**, email or phone.

Be sure to **save all parts of your college application**; you may be able to reuse them for other college or scholarship applications.

After you submit your **application**, you should receive a **confirmation message**. If you do not, contact the college admissions office to find out the status of your application.

## 4-YEAR COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS:

**Submit** your FAFSA or WASFA.

**Read admission requirements** for each specific school.

**Create an account** for your online application.

Request **letters of recommendation**. Receive a **confirmation email** that your

Request **official transcripts**.

**Send SAT or ACT** scores.

Write and edit your **personal statement** essay and other **short answer responses**.

**Complete and submit** your college application.

Receive a **confirmation email** that your application was successfully submitted.

## WHAT IS THE COMMON APPLICATION?

The common application, or common app, is a college admissions **application that is used by over 700 colleges in the U.S.**, including many private colleges in Washington. Once the common app is completed, it can be sent to any number of participating colleges. The common app is used exclusively for eligible 4-year colleges and universities. To start the common application, visit **commonapp.org**.

## 2-YR COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS:

**Apply** online, by mail or in person.

**Submit** the FAFSA or WASFA.

Take a **placement test** at the college. Some colleges also accept transcripts or other info to determine placement.

Schedule an **academic advising** appointment.

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