



Wahkiakum High School 12th Grade College Preparation Checklist

Summer Before 12th Grade

Students To Do List:

- Create a username and password called an FSA ID that you will use to confirm your identity when accessing your government financial aid information and electronically signing your federal student aid documents. You and your parent will each need your own unique FSA ID. Learn about the FSA ID, and create yours, at StudentAid.gov/fsaid. Note: you must create your own FSA ID; if your parent creates it for you that will cause confusion later and will slow down the financial aid application process.
- Narrow down the list of colleges you are considering attending. If you can, visit the schools that interest you.
- Search your college/s of interest for information and applications for admission. Research about financial aid, admission requirements, and deadlines for each college.
- Decide whether you are going to apply under a particular college's early decision for early action program. Be sure to learn about the requirements and deadlines.
- Apply for scholarships. Your goal is to minimize the amount of loan funds you borrow so you have less to pay back later. A good goal is one scholarship every 2 weeks!

To Explore:

- Find out what government financial aid you can apply for, and how, in Federal Student Aid at a Glance at StudentAid.gov/glance.
- Watch the "Overview of the Financial Aid Process" video at www.YouTube.com/FederalStudentAid to learn about getting student aid from the government.
- Be careful when searching for scholarships. Read *Don't Get Scammed on Your Way to College!* at StudentAid.gov/resources#consumer-protection to learn how to avoid getting cheated out of money.

Parents To Do List:

- Create your own FSA ID if you don't have one yet.
- Review your financial situation and make sure your child is looking into or already has applied for scholarships.
- Ask your employer whether scholarships are available for employee's children.

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FALL - Students To Do List:

- As soon as possible after its Oct. 1 release, complete and submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at fasfa.gov, along with any other financial aid applications your chosen school(s) may require. You should submit your FAFSA by the earliest financial aid deadline of the schools to which you are applying.
- After you submit the FAFSA, you should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) within three days to three weeks. This document lists your answers to the questions on your FAFSA and gives you some basic information about your aid eligibility. Quickly make any necessary corrections and submit them to the FAFSA processor.
- If you haven't done so already, register for and take such exams as the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, or ACT for college admission. Check with the colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require!
- Well before your college application deadlines (Some colleges will have application deadlines as early as October) ask your counselor and teachers to submit the required documents (e.g., transcript,

letters of recommendation) to the colleges to which you're applying. Ask a parent, teacher, counsel, or another adult to review your applications.

- Finalize your college essay. Many schools require that you submit at least one essay with your application.
- Keep working on scholarship applications!
- Make sure your SAT/ACT scores have been sent to the college(s) that you are applying to. You may send scores through your personal college board account.

SPRING – Students To Do List:

- Do a final visit to colleges that have invited you to enroll.
- Review your college acceptances and compare the colleges' financial aid offers. Use the "**Compare Financial Aid Offers**" tool at www.consumerfinance.gov/paying-for-college to analyze aid offers side by side.
- Contact a school's financial aid office if you have questions about the aid that school has offered you. In fact, getting to know your financial aid staff early is a good idea no matter what. They can tell you about deadlines, paperwork you might need to submit, and other aid for which you might wish to apply.
- When you decide which school you want to attend, notify that school of your commitment and submit any required financial deposit. Many schools require this notification and deposit by May 1.
- Make sure to request a final high school transcript to be sent to the school you will be attending.
- If you are going to live on campus, make a list of what you will need to take with you to your dorm room. Check your college's "Housing" or "Residence Life" webpage for further information. You will most likely get a roommate assignment from your college. Call, write, or email to get acquainted, this will also allow you to see what each student is bringing.

To Explore:

- Refer to StudentAid.gov/fafsa to learn about the FAFSA process.
- Understand the FAFSA better by watching the videos in the "**FAFSA: Apply for Aid**" playlist at www.YouTube.com/FederalStudentAid.
- Follow or like the office of Federal Student Aid at: www.Twitter.com/FAFSA and www.Facebook.com/FederalStudentAid to get regular financial aid tips.
- Make informed decisions about student loans; find important information at the "*Why Get a Federal Student Loan?*" and "*Federal Versus Private Loans*" page at StudentAid.gov/federal-vs-private.

Parents To Do List:

- Work with your child on filling out the FAFSA.
- Make sure your child's personal information is safe when he or she applies for financial aid. For tips, read Federal Student Aid and Identity Theft at StudentAid.gov/resources#consumer-protection.
- Go to www.irs.gov and read IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education to see how you might benefit from federal income tax credits for education expenses. Search for "Publication 970" from the IRS homepage to find the most recent version of the document.
- Help your child learn about the responsibilities involved in accepting a student loan by reviewing Student.Aid.gov/types/loans#considerations with him or her.
- Look at communications from schools to which your child sent FAFSA information. If a school has offered your child Direct Loans, the Federal Student Loans: Basics for Students and Federal Student Loans: Direct PLUS Loan Basics for Parents booklets might be useful to you. Find them at StudentAid.gov/resources#loans.