

EMPOWER MY HOOD[®]

Checklist for Rising High School Seniors

Guidance

- Regularly meet with your guidance counselor to discuss your college plans and application progress.
- Schedule meetings with financial aid officers or college admission counselors for additional support and advice.

Testing/Essay

- Take standardized tests such as the SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests.
- Prepare and take AP exams to earn college credit and strengthen your application.
- Write and refine your personal statement and college essays.
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers or mentors.

Applications

- Create and manage accounts on CollegeBoard, SUNY, CUNYFirst, and CommonApp (*Be aware that some schools may require separate applications.*)
- Decide on your application strategy: Early Action (EA), Early Decision (ED), or Regular Decision (RD).

Financial Aid

- Research and apply for scholarships to help fund your education.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Apply for State Aid programs like TAP.
- Fill out the CSS Profile if required by your colleges.

Colleges

- Research and visit colleges to find the best fit for you.
- Attend college fairs and workshops to gather information and ask questions.
- Email college admissions officers to show interest and ask specific questions about their programs.
- Submit all college applications.

Long-Term Needs

- Develop strong interviewing skills through practice and mock interviews.
- Create a professional resume and cover letter to use for college applications and job opportunities.
- Ensure your high school transcripts are up-to-date and accurate.

Timeline for Rising High School Seniors

August (Before Senior Year)

- **Research Colleges**
 - Identify potential colleges based on academic interests, size, location, and campus culture. Create a list of ***Reach**, **Match**, and **Safety** schools.
 - Start with a list of **15** potential colleges and go on from there.
- **Visit Colleges (if possible)**
 - Attend virtual or in-person tours and information sessions.
 - Schedule interviews or meetings with admissions officers.
- **Register for Standardized Tests**
 - If you have not done already so:
 - Sign up for SAT, ACT, or any required SAT Subject Tests.
 - Plan a study schedule and consider test prep courses.
- **Start Building a List of Activities and Achievements**
 - Include academic awards, extracurricular activities, volunteer work, and jobs.
 - **Note:** See Resume Template Below

September

- **Meet with a Guidance Counselor**
 - Discuss college list, academic records, and application timeline.
 - Request unofficial transcripts to review.
- **Ask for Letters of Recommendation**
 - Identify and approach teachers, coaches, or mentors who know you well.
 - Provide them with a resume and any forms required.
- **Begin Drafting College Essays**
 - Review essay prompts and brainstorm ideas.
 - Write a rough draft of the personal statement.
- **Attend College Fairs and Workshops**
 - Speak to your counselors to receive information on various college fairs and information sessions throughout the month that may be going on.

October

- **Take Standardized Tests**
 - Complete SAT on the first Saturday of October (October 5, 2024).
 - Complete ACT on the third Saturday of October (October 19, 2024).
 - Send scores to colleges.
- **Complete Early Action/Early Decision Applications**
 - Ensure all components (essays, letters of recommendation, transcripts) are submitted.
 - Verify submission deadlines, typically November 1st for many colleges.
- **Attend Financial Aid Workshops**
 - Your own NYC public high schools often host FAFSA completion workshops.
 - Browse for any potential scholarships
- **Familiarize Yourself with the Common App, CUNY or SUNY Application Database**
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November

- **Submit Early Action/Early Decision Applications**
 - Typical deadline: November 1st, 2024.
 - Follow up to ensure all materials are received.
- **Continue Working on Regular Decision Applications**
 - Polish essays and gather application materials.
- **Start Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Application**
 - The FAFSA 2025-2026 opens on October 1st. Complete it as early as possible.
 - It is important to complete as soon as possible just in case any additional documents are needed from you.

December

- **Submit Regular Decision Applications**
 - Verify all documents are ready and submit applications.
 - Common deadlines: December 15th, 2024, or January 1st, 2025.
- **Finalize and Submit FAFSA**
 - Aim to complete the FAFSA by December 15th, 2024, for priority consideration.
- **Apply for Scholarship**
 - Research and apply for national, state, and local scholarships.

January

- **Follow Up on Submitted Applications**
 - Ensure colleges received all application material.
 - Track application statuses through college portals.
- **Prepare for Interviews (if applicable)**
 - Schedule and practice for any upcoming college interviews.
 - Research common interview questions.

February - March

- **Monitor Email and College Portals**
 - Stay updated on application statuses and respond promptly to any requests.
- **Complete Scholarship Applications**
 - Continue searching and applying for scholarships.
 - Meet deadlines and submit required documents.
- **Submit Mid-Year Reports**
 - Ensure your high school sends mid-year grades to colleges.

April

- **Review College Acceptance Letters**
 - Compare financial aid packages and college offers.
 - Visit campuses if possible to aid in decision-making.
- **Make a Decision**
 - Choose the college you intend to go to and submit the enrollment deposit by May 1st, 2025.
 - Notify other colleges of your decision.

May - June

- **Prepare for High School Graduation**
 - Ensure all academic and graduation requirements are met.
- **Send Final Transcripts**
 - Request that your high school sends final transcripts to your chosen college.
- **Thank Recommenders**
 - It is polite to write thank-you notes to teachers and mentors who wrote your recommendation letters.