

Parent Action Plan: 12th Grade

Senior year is a whirlwind of activities. This is a big year for your scholar as he or she balances schoolwork, extracurricular activities and the college application process. Use the suggestions below to help you and your scholar successfully navigate this important time.

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Summer

- **Attend your annual commitment meeting** with your scholar and Crossroads Counselor. Commitment meetings help scholars stay on track and share goals and aspirations with the people who can help them be accountable to their success.
- **Visit colleges together.** If you haven't already, make plans to check out the campuses of colleges in which your scholar is interested. Use the [Campus Visit Checklist](#) to learn how to get the most out of these experiences, and talk with your Crossroads Counselor about opportunities for fall college visits with Crossroads.
- **Have your scholar sign up (and/or sign up yourself) for text reminders from the [#UpNext Campaign](#).** Text your full name to 240-623-8319 to get text reminders and resources for the college application process.
- Consider taking a college summer course
- **Ensure your scholar attends Crossroads' Senior Year Kickoff** at Duquesne University. The Senior Year Kickoff teaches rising senior scholars the ins and outs of presenting their best selves to colleges and connects them with Crossroads alumni and other current college students who can provide advice on the search, application, and transition process.
- **Work with your senior and Crossroads' PULSE Fellow to finalize a college list.** You can help him or her choose which colleges to apply to by weighing how well each college meets his or her needs and comparing them using your individualized Crossroads college tracker. Find out more about [how to finalize a college list](#).
- **Find out a college's actual cost.** Once your 12th-grader has a list of a few colleges he or she is interested in, use [the College Board's Net Price Calculator](#) together to find out the potential for financial aid and the true out-of-pocket cost—or net price—of each college.
- **Encourage your senior to get started on applications.** He or she can get the easy stuff out of the way now by filling in as much required information on college applications as possible. Read about [how to get started on applications](#). And remember, Crossroads' PULSE Fellow and counselors are available to support your scholar in the application process.
- **Apply for scholarships** to minimize the amount of loans you borrow. Remember, various local and national companies offer scholarships. Also ask your employer if scholarships are available.
- **Have a conversation with your senior about applying early.** If your senior is set on going to a certain college, he or she should think about whether applying early is a good option. Now is the time to decide because early applications are usually due in November. Read about the pros and cons of [applying early](#).

This resource adapted from documents in College Board's BigFuture™ initiative. More resources here:
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/for-parents>

- **Gather financial documents:** To apply for most financial aid, your child will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You'll need your most recent tax returns and to complete the FAFSA, which opens Oct. 1. Remember that Crossroads will host a FAFSA Workshop for all senior parents in the fall!
- **Create an FSA ID** that you will use to confirm your identity when accessing your FAFSA. Seniors and parents will each have a unique FSA ID.

Fall

- **Encourage your senior to meet with their Crossroads and school counselors.** This year, he or she will work with the counselor to complete and submit college applications. Learn more about [the counselor's role in applying to college](#).
- **Use your Crossroads college tracker to create an application calendar with your child.** This should include application deadlines and other important dates. Your child can find specific colleges' deadlines in [College Search](#).
- **Help your child prepare for college admission tests, and encourage them to attend Crossroads fall SAT refresher class, taught by The Princeton Review.** Many seniors retake college admission tests, such as the SAT, in the fall. Learn more about helping your 12th-grader [prepare for admission tests](#).
- **Help your child find and apply for scholarships.** He or she can find out about scholarship opportunities from the school counselor. Your high school student will need to request and complete scholarship applications and submit them on time. Learn more about [scholarships](#).
- **Offer to look over your senior's college applications, and have them check in with Crossroads' PULSE Fellow and a Crossroads Counselor.** But remember that this is your child's work so remain in the role of adviser and proofreader and respect his or her voice.
- **Attend Crossroads' FAFSA Workshop (in September) and fill out the FAFSA to apply for aid beginning Oct. 1.** The government and many colleges use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to award aid. Now it's easier than ever to fill out this form because you can automatically transfer your tax information online from the IRS to the FAFSA. Read [How to Complete the FAFSA](#) to learn more. Make sure you also apply for the Pennsylvania State Grant. You can do this directly from the FAFSA confirmation page. Click [here](#) if you have submitted your FAFSA and missed the link.
- **Complete the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®, if required.** If your child needs 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](#).
- **Encourage your child to set up college interviews.** An interview is a great way for your child to learn more about a college and for a college to learn more about your child. Get an overview of the [interview process](#).

Winter

- **Work together to apply for financial aid.** Have your child contact the financial aid offices at the colleges in which he or she is interested to find out what forms students must submit to

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apply for aid. Make sure he or she applies for aid by or before any stated deadlines. Funds are limited, so the earlier you apply, the better.

- **Learn about college loan options together.** Borrowing money for college can be a smart choice — especially if your high school student gets a low-interest federal loan. Learn more about the [parent's role in borrowing money](#).
- **Encourage your senior to take SAT Subject Tests.** These tests can showcase your child's interests and achievements — and many colleges require or recommend that applicants take one or more Subject Tests. Read more about [SAT Subject Tests](#).
- **Encourage your senior to take AP Exams.** If your senior takes AP or other advanced classes, have him or her talk with teachers now about taking these tests in May. Read more about the [AP Program](#).

Spring

- **Help your senior process college responses.** Once your child starts hearing back from colleges about admission and financial aid, he or she will need your support to decide what to do. Read about [how to choose a college](#). You are encouraged to revisit college that have invited you to enroll.
- **Review financial aid offers together.** Your senior will need your help to read through financial aid award letters and figure out which package works best. Be sure your senior pays attention to and meets any deadlines for acceptance. You can contact college's financial aid office if you have questions about the aid offered to you. Get more information on [financial aid awards](#).
- **Help your senior complete the paperwork to accept a college's offer of admittance.** Once your senior has decided which college to attend, he or she will need to review the offer, accept a college's offer, mail a tuition deposit and submit other required paperwork. Many colleges require deposits by May 1. Learn more about your high school senior's [next steps](#).
- **Ensure your scholar participates in Crossroads' (A) Senior Retreat, (B) Senior Recognition Dinner, and (C) College Signing Day** to celebrate all the hard work that went into their high school years and college acceptance.
- **Encourage your scholar to attend Crossroads' College Transition Workshops**, designed to develop essential college skills like time management, healthy relationships, and financial literacy. *(Remember that attending all transition workshops makes your scholar eligible for \$500 next year through Crossroads' 500th Fund!)*
- **Meet with Crossroads Counselor or PULSE Fellow to discuss your scholar's financial aid package** and ensure you understand how much financial aid must be paid back as loans, work study, etc.