

GPS to College - 11th Grade

Adopted by ICAN

August Tips

- Talk to your parents and your school counselor about where you want to go to college. Make sure you're on the right track by taking the necessary courses during your junior year.
- Keep your grades up. Colleges look at your overall GPA through all four years of high school.
- Review your college savings plan; start saving money now if you haven't already done so.
- Beware of scholarship search and financial aid service organizations that charge a fee for service. Much of the information you may be seeking is available at no cost. Check with your high school counselor or search at no cost.
- Let EducationQuest or the Iowa College Access Network help you through the college planning and financial aid process without charge.

September Tips

- Attend college fairs in your area and meet with college representatives who visit your high school.
- Check with your high school counselor to register for the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT[®]). These scores are used to determine National Merit Scholars.
- Discuss with your parents and high school counselor what is important to you in a college (i.e., size, type, location, programs, facilities, cost, academic quality, etc.).
- Begin gathering information about colleges that interest you and start a list of those you would like to visit.

October Tips

- Fall college fairs are nearing an end. Find remaining college fairs in your area by talking to your school counselor.
- Colleges receive thousands of admission applications each year. Be sure to meet with your high school counselor to help yours stand out from the crowd!
- Have you started to gather information on the colleges you may want to attend? Research different colleges by visiting www.teammates.org/postsecondary in the "College Knowledge" section.
- Explore college and career options related to your interests.

November Tips

- Plan to take the ACT[®] and/or SAT[®] exams. Find out registration and test dates. Get ready for the exams by using online practice tests or study guides at your local library or bookstore.
- Review websites and brochures from the colleges that you might want to attend.
- Check the entrance requirements of the colleges that you're planning to apply to, and find out which test(s) you need to take.
- Beware of scholarship search and financial aid service organizations that cost money. Most information is available at no cost. Check with your high school guidance office or search for no charge on this site. EducationQuest and the Iowa College Access Network are also available to help you with the financial aid process at no cost to you.
- Look into campus visits. Some colleges host special visit days for juniors.

December Tips

- Begin to research scholarships. Learn about selection criteria and what's required to apply. Find a list of scholarship searches.
- Register now if you're planning to take the January SAT or the February ACT.
- Consider volunteering during your holiday break.

January Tips

- Happy New Year! Start it off right by scheduling campus visits to the top three to five colleges on your list.
- Get involved. Colleges seek well-rounded students who not only get good grades, but who are also involved in school activities or community organizations.
- Organize scholarship information according to deadline. Keep your planner or organizer updated with application deadlines so you won't miss any.
- Prepare to take the ACT[®] or SAT[®] tests. Take practice tests online or visit your guidance office, local library or bookstore for good study guides.
- Although financial aid is available from different sources, you and your parents are expected to pay part of the cost of your education.

February Tips

- Soon you'll be completing college and scholarship applications. Put together a resume listing your activities, awards, school achievements, employment and volunteer experience.
- Investigate careers.
- Make sure your senior year includes the credits needed to meet college entrance requirements. Talk to your school counselor about AP[®] (Advanced Placement) courses and CLEP[®] (College Level Examination Program) tests. Consider taking honors or college-level classes while you're still in high school.
- If you're planning to take the April ACT[®] test, register now.

March Tips

- Schedule college visits. Call ahead to arrange campus tours.
- Attend college fairs in your area. Ask your school counselor for information on upcoming college fairs.
- During college visits, meet with an admissions representative and a financial aid officer to find out what types of aid are available.

April Tips

- Take notes and compare your thoughts on each college after your visit.
- If applicable, try to take AP[®] (Advanced Placement) exams while information is fresh in your mind. Check with your counselor for more information.
- Register now for the June ACT and/or SAT.
- Don't forget to update your summer reading list.

May Tips

- Think about the college experience and environment you want. Write down what's important to you, review your career plans and find a college that's a good fit.
- Line up a summer job in line with your career interests or volunteer in your community. Save some of your summer earnings for college expenses.

- If you plan to take AP[®] (Advanced Placement) exams, check with your school counselor now for more information.
- Consider taking a summer course at a local college.
- Beware of scholarship search and financial aid services that charge. Much of the information you need is available for free.

June Tips

- Begin applying for scholarships.
- Beware of credit card offers. It's easy to quickly get in over your head. Talk to your parents about offers and if any of the cards are right for you.
- If you haven't visited all of the colleges on your list, schedule a college visit.
- Use the Internet to get information on your preferred colleges.
- Finalize your college choices. Look especially at the features that are most important to you.

July Tips

- Get ready for your senior year! Start thinking about how to manage your time. Remember that you should focus on keeping your grades up, filling out applications and selecting a college despite the distractions.
- Polish your resume, and if needed, get together writing samples, portfolios or audition tapes.
- Think about which teachers, employers or other adults you'll ask to write letters of recommendation. Ask for letters at least two weeks before you need them. Plan to ask at the very beginning of the school year.