

CEC College and Career Planning Guidebook

This document provides information and helpful links to websites to assist students on their college and career exploration, planning, and application.

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College Planning

College Planning Timeline

Freshman Year

- Work with your CEC Academic Advisor to choose classes that are appropriate for your goals, and abilities.
- Focus on getting good grades as your high school transcript will be an important part of how colleges evaluate you.
- Take the PSAT9 in the spring. Scores are not sent to any colleges, but practicing the exam has proven to increase scores on the SAT.
- Get involved!
 - Participate in a club
 - Volunteer for an organization you care about
 - Play sports or follow whatever your passion may be outside of school.
- Start the conversation with your parents/guardian about what they think they can afford for college.

Sophomore Year

- Continue to work with your Academic Advisor to choose appropriate classes.
- Start to research colleges and universities that may offer degrees in which you are interested. Keep a list. (Links to tools to help you research colleges are below)
- Keep track of your accomplishments, awards, and community service to build a resume.
- Take the PSAT10 in the spring. Scores are not sent to any colleges, but practicing the exam has proven to increase scores on the SAT.
- Continue with extracurricular activities

Junior Year

- Continue to make getting good grades a priority!
- Take some College Personality Quizzes (see links below) to help you identify colleges that may be a good fit for you and to help you narrow down your college list.
- Do more in-depth research into colleges on your list and gather information about their entrance requirements.
- If possible, start to plan some in-person college visits.
- Take the SAT in the spring. If colleges on your list require SAT scores, use your free score report option to have them sent.
- Continue with extracurricular activities, or consider getting a summer job to boost your resume.

Senior Timeline

Your senior year will be the most active. Here is a month-by-month breakdown of activities.

September/October:

- October 1-March 1: Complete the [FAFSA application](#) if you are a US Citizen or Permanent Resident. If you are not a US Citizen or Permanent Resident, complete the [Colorado Application for State Finance Aid \(CASFA\)](#).
- October 18-20: During [Colorado Free Application Days](#), you can submit college application to most state colleges for free!
- Complete the online Graduation Application before your spring academic advising appointment.
- Pay attention to early application deadlines for the colleges to which you are applying.
- Register to retake [ACT &/or SAT](#) tests if original scores were lower than desired.
- Begin requesting [letters of recommendation](#) for college applications. Email staff directly for recommendations.
- Fall is a great time to take your senior photos!

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November:

- Submit college applications and plan visits (ongoing)
- If you think there are errors on your CEC transcript, submit a [CEC Transcript Correction Form](#)
- Graduating with a degree or certificate from Arapahoe Community College or other community college? Log into your community college student portal to apply for graduation.
- Request CEC Transcripts through [Parchment](#).

December:

- [CEC Transcript Correction Form](#) due to Registrar by December 1
- [CEC Graduation Application](#) Form due to Registrar by December 1
- Apply for college scholarships (ongoing)
- Complete and submit college financial aid applications if not already done.
- Submit college applications, if not already done.

January:

- Order yearbook (link to order coming soon)
- Complete [FAFSA application if you haven't done so already](#).
- Senior Pictures and Senior Ads due (T.B.D).

February:

- CEC auditions for walking graduates wishing to perform in the ceremony is T.B.D.
- Contact the admissions office for the college(s) to which you have applied, and make sure you have submitted all necessary paperwork
- Place Jostens order for graduation announcements (link to order coming soon)

March:

- Contact the financial aid office at the college(s) and make sure your information was received
- Order cap and gown (link to order coming soon)

April:

- Complete [CEC Post-Graduate Questionnaire](#)

May:

- Decide on which college you are attending and notify the school by May 1
- CEC fees and books due by (Date and Time T.B.D.) (diplomas and transcripts will be held until balance is current)
- CEC Yearbooks arrive and distributed
- Graduation Rehearsal: Date and Time T.B.D.
- Senior Breakfast: Date and Time T.B.D.
- CEC Graduation: May 19 (tentative)

June:

- CEC diplomas available for pickup in front office in June (account must be current; records will not be released if there is a balance on the student account)

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- Send final transcript to the college you plan on attending

Researching Colleges

College match quizzes

[US News and World Report—College Personality Quiz](#)

[Niche-Find your best fit colleges \(profile required\)](#)

[College Covered \(Discover Card sponsored\)](#)

College Directory/Information Website Links

These were the top sites listed by US News and World Report. Some of these sites require you to make a profile which may lead to unwanted emails.

[College Navigator](#). The graphics aren't slick, but this federal website contains more data on the nation's colleges and universities than any place else on the Internet. Using the College Navigator's school search engine, you can scour the country for schools based on your criteria, which is handy if you aren't sure where to hunt for schools beyond the obvious name brands and your own state institutions.

[College Discovery](#). College Discovery is a free-forever service and powerful recommendation engine that helps students discover colleges through predictive analytics. More than just a search engine, College Discovery utilizes billions of historical and real-time insights to offer suggestions that go beyond obvious recommendations, helping students to expand their search to include likely-fit and hidden gems. Students will be able to search schools of interest and browse "Related Colleges."

[College Results Online](#). Families assume that their children will graduate from college in four years, but that's sadly not true for most. This great website provides four, five, and six-year graduation rates of schools across the country. What I also like about College Results Online is that it breaks down graduation rates by gender and ethnicity.

[Cappex](#). This website is an online matchmaker that borrows features from Facebook that should appeal to teenagers. Through Cappex, you can access Meritaid.com, which provides a valuable directory of scholarships that thousands of schools offer.

[CollegeMajors101](#). Wondering what you can do with a degree in biology or dance? College Majors 101 offers lots of information about what you can do with dozens of majors, as well as what you can expect academically if you pursue these majors.

[College Insight](#). College Insight, which is the brainchild of the Institute for College Access and Success, has gathered detailed information on thousands of colleges. You can find statistics for any school on such topics as college affordability, graduation rates, and college diversity, including the racial and ethnic breakdown of students and professors.

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[College Board](#). I am always turning to the College Board when I want to check some quick facts about a particular school. You can easily retrieve the academic profile of a college's freshman class, financial aid and merit aid stats, available majors, and much more.

[Unigo](#). This site, which has teamed up with the *Wall Street Journal*, serves up the unvarnished scoop on schools from the students themselves. You won't find spin from admission offices here. Unigo urges college students to share their take on their own schools through comments, photos, and videos.

[College Scorecard](#). Created by the United States government, the College Scorecard is an online tool that allows you to compare colleges and universities across five data points: cost, graduation rate, employment rate, average amount borrowed, and loan default rate.

Other College Research Tools

[Big Future by the College Board](#)

[National Center for Education Statistics](#)

[Trade Schools, Colleges and Universities](#)

[National Center for Education Statistics](#)

[College Confidential](#)

[Colorado Community College System](#)

[Petersons Test Prep](#)

[The College Board](#)

[GoCollege](#)

[NCAA Eligibility Center for College Sports](#)

How Do I Apply to College?

Step 1: Look on your prospective college websites for important application deadlines and requirements like letters of recommendation. We recommend getting a wall calendar or some other type of calendar and start to mark the deadlines on the calendar for the various universities.

Step 2: Meet with your advisor if you need assistance. College planning can be done during your regular advising appointment each semester or email your advisor to schedule a separate appointment.

Step 3: Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Colleges and most scholarship applications require that you submit a FAFSA. The Application for the following school year opens October 1st.

Step 4: Start the application process for your chosen universities! Check to see if the universities you have chosen accept the Common App. For students applying to Colorado universities, there is a free application day October 18-20 where application fees are waived and free community college transcripts can be ordered.

Step 5: Don't forget to request letters of recommendation from teachers and advisors. While the request may be sent through the common app, it's common courtesy to reach out to your teacher and advisor to let them know you are requesting a letter. Make sure you are giving them ample time to write the letter. Click here for the letter of recommendation request form.

Step 6: Order your CEC transcripts through Parchment. Create a Parchment Account here.

Step 7: Take the SAT and/or the ACT. CEC offers the SAT for free in the spring. Many students take the SAT or ACT more than once to improve their scores. Additional tests come with a fee, but you can register to take

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them again through the College Board. You will also go to College Board to request your scores be sent to the universities to which you are applying.

Application Assistance Website Links

[Colorado Free Application Days](#)

[Commonapp.org](#)

[Common App Writing Prompts](#)

[Common App Writing Requirements by College](#)

[How to approach the essay – Common App](#)

[CECDC Parchment](#) (ordering CEC transcripts)

[Sending SAT Scores](#)

[Test Optional advice compiled by CDHE](#)

Financial Aid/Scholarship Search Engines

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- [How to fill out the FAFSA video](#)
- [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#)
- [FAFSA 4Caster](#)

Scholarships

See our Scholarship document on our website for links to scholarship search engines and other Colorado specific scholarships.

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Career Guidance and Planning

This guidebook provides links to resources you can use to help you explore careers whether you plan to attend college or are choosing to go directly into the workforce after high school graduation.

Discover what jobs might fit you

Take some career assessments.

- Interest profiler on [O*NET](#)
- [Career Cluster Activity](#)
- Sign up (through your ACC student portal) to take career assessments at Arapahoe Community College.

Do some research into your desired careers

Arapahoe Community College Career Services

Since you are an Arapahoe Community College student you have access to use their [Career Services](#) which include:

- Career assessments (My Colorado Journey, YouScience, Myers-Brigg and more)
- Career Counseling
- Handshake job board

Other Career and Job exploration websites

- [My Next Move](#)
- [O*NET](#)
- [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)
- [My Colorado Journey](#)
- [Connecting Colorado](#)

Do some informational interviewing

Interviewing someone who is already in the job or field you are interested in is one of the best ways to get honest information about the job or career. Ask your parents if they know of anyone. Ask teachers, advisors or any other trusted adult if they know of people who work in the field you're interested in. Below is a link to a list of possible questions. Choose a few questions and provide them to the person you are interviewing ahead of time so they can prepare some good answers for you. This is also a great way to start building a network of people you know that might help you get jobs in the future.

[The Best Questions to Ask in an Informational Interview](#)

Market yourself

- Use sites like [LinkedIn](#) to develop your professional image and create a network.
 - [20 steps to a better LinkedIn profile in 2024](#)
- [Tallo.com](#) is a platform like LinkedIn but it's for students looking for internships.

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Search for jobs

One of the top job sites is [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com), but if you know the particular companies you would like to work for, go directly to their websites and look at the bottom of the webpage for “careers.”

Prepare your resume and cover letter

- [How to make a comprehensive resume](#)
- [Top 10 skills to put on your resume](#)
- [How to write a cover letter](#)

Prepare for an interview

[30 top interview questions to prepare for](#)
[How to answer “tell me about yourself” in a job interview.](#)

Internships and Mentoring Resources:

[Colorado Health Care Corps](#)
[MC² Medical Career Collaborative](#) (must apply as a sophomore)
[CareerWise Colorado](#)
[Colorado Health Careers Collaborative](#) (ACC)

Other Helpful Articles:

[25 Best Jobs that Don't Require a College Degree](#)

Most of the articles in this guide were taken from Indeed.com. They offer many articles and useful tools on their [Career Guide](#) webpage.

Internship opportunities through CEC Inverness:

Contact Ms. Wendy Rhodes at CEC regarding the following opportunities:

- [Lockheed Martin: Advanced Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship Program \(AMTAP\)](#)
- Lockheed Martin High School Internship Program (must be at least 16 years old)
- Lockheed Martin [SWAP Software Associate Degree Program](#)