



Reach  
Higher  
Montana

## College Prep Checklist

Helping you every step of the way.

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# COLLEGE PREP CALENDAR CHECKLIST

## April

- Decide which college you want to attend.
- AP students! Hit the books for AP (Advanced Placement) exams which provide the opportunity to earn credit at most of the nation's colleges and universities while still in high school. Your AP scores will determine how much credit is granted – college credit for AP exams can mean big savings.
  - Visit [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com) for more information or ask your high school guidance counselor.
- Start searching for summer employment.
- If you have any financial aid gaps, call your school's financial aid office for guidance.

## May

- In Montana, the deadline for the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program for the full school year or fall is July 1. Find the application on [ReachHigherMontana.org](http://ReachHigherMontana.org).
- AP courses are college-level classes in a wide variety of subjects that students can take while still in high school. Take AP exams if you are interested in earning college credit in advance.
- Congratulations on your graduation! Be sure to send your final high school transcript to your college.
- Interview for a summer job. The experience looks good on your resume and you could always use some extra cash to pay for school.
- Finalize your housing plans.

## Summer before college starts

- College financial aid offices will want proof/documentation of your foster care status.
- If everything is not in order you may receive a fall semester bill over the summer.
- If all forms have been completed correctly and all deadlines have been met, financial aid funds should be credited to your student account before the beginning of the semester.
- Sign up for Hopa Mountain Scholars [hopamountain.org](http://hopamountain.org)

## September

- Federal requirements state that Stafford loan recipients must complete loan counseling (or an entrance interview) before loan funds can be received.
  - This is to ensure that the recipient understands all loan obligations.
  - The college's financial aid office will provide information about the counseling process – in most cases, you must simply complete a brief online questionnaire.
- Stafford loan recipients must sign a promissory note.
- Work-study recipients need to check out jobs at your school. You will need to apply for work-study positions.

*Note: This calendar is a general guide and will not apply to all colleges. Consult financial aid materials, financial aid offices and institution websites for the specific requirements and deadlines for your college.*

## 10 TIPS FOR GETTING AHEAD OF THE GAME

1. Take the tough classes that colleges require (Dual Enrollment)
2. Think about your interests and skills
3. Meet with a school counselor, college advisor or mentor
4. Get information about colleges in which you are interested
5. Start saving money for your education
6. Visit college campuses and ask questions
7. Apply for admission before the deadline
8. Get your FSA ID, so you are ready to complete the FAFSA
9. Research scholarships, loans and work-study
10. Learn to manage your expenses

## GOING TO COLLEGE QUICK CHECKLIST

- | YES                      | NO                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is your FAFSA done?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you get a notification or Student Aid Report?                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you get accepted to the college you applied to?                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you get a letter?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you have to respond back? Have you accepted?                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you get an award letter from your school (usually electronic)?        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If so, did you accept the awards that you need/want for the fall?         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you understand what you accepted? ie. Subsidized vs unsubsidized?      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If you did not get an award letter - call the school.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If you had to take loans, did you sign your Master Promissory Note (MPN)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you complete entrance counseling for your loans?                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you sign up for an orientation session at your school?                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sometimes schools have paperwork that must be completed for orientation.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a way to get to the orientation session?                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did you sign up for housing in the dorms?                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If not, you need to do this!  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If not, did you need the deposit?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are you living off campus?  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you have a copy of your legal court documents?                         |

*The school will ask you for this to qualify for your financial aid.  
You can get it from DPHHS or your social worker.*



## Visit [ReachHigherMontana.org](https://ReachHigherMontana.org) to learn how Reach Higher Montana can help!

- Foster Youth Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs)
- FAFSA completion
- Career exploration and planning
- College planning and college success strategies
- Scholarship search tips and assistance
- Assistance and resources to help with the financial aid process

No matter what you plan to do after high school, Reach Higher Montana can help. Call us today at (877) 265-4463 to schedule an appointment with an advisor in these areas: Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Flathead Valley, Great Falls, Helena, or Missoula.



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