

College Prep Checklist

Helping you every step of the way.







visit us at ReachHigherMontana.org

COLLEGE PREP CALENDAR CHECKLIST

Summer before senior year

- ☐ Follow us on social media. fo
- ☐ "One-Two-Free" dual enrollment program offers two tuition-free dual enrollment courses from participating MUS colleges to all Montana high school students.
 - mus.edu/one-two-free
- Request applications. brochures and financial aid information from colleges.
- Organize all college materials into separate files by college.
- Narrow your college list to between five and eight colleges. Visit as many colleges on the list as possible this fall or summer.
 - Get a feel for the campus. Take a tour, sit in on a class, and try to stay in a dorm.
 - If you can't visit the campus, check and see if the college offers virtual tours on its website.
- ☐ Keep a college calendar of all admission and financial aid deadlines.
- Take advantage of the scholarship search tool on the Montana Career Information System (MCIS). Link on ReachHigherMontana.org. Ask employers, local businesses, or community organizations if they offer scholarships.

September

- ☐ Meet with your high school counselor to talk about college applications and financial aid.
- Plan to take the SAT or ACT. Check with your counselor.
- ☐ Take a free ACT test prep and find resources that will help you succeed.
 - ACT.org
- ☐ Visit with an Education Talent Search advisor, if available, at your school,
- ☐ Apply for your FSA ID online at fsaid.ed.gov.
- ☐ Ask your counselor for information on state and local scholarships. Take advantage of the scholarship search tool using the Montana **Career Information** System (MCIS). Link on ReachHigherMontana.org
- ☐ Before you complete the FAFSA online, visit FAFSA on the web (fafsa.gov) and familiarize vourself with the website's content and features.
 - Start gathering identity and financial documents necessary to complete the FAFSA.

October

- College Application Week is this month, apply to one college for free.
- Some colleges require early submission of applications for priority consideration for merit or need-based scholarships.
 - This means that your admission and financial aid applications might be due in the winter in order to qualify for some types of scholarships.
 - Visit your colleges or visit their websites to learn about deadlines.
- ☐ You should sign and submit the FAFSA as soon. as possible after Oct. 1. Applying early improves your chances of receiving aid from as many sources as possible.
- ☐ If you are a male student who will be 18 at the time you complete the FAFSA, you are required to register with Selective Service to be eligible for federal and state aid, Call Selective Service toll free at (888) 655-1825 for more information.

November

- ☐ Make sure you apply for scholarships in time to meet application deadlines.
- Make a scholarship calendar, or add to this one.
- ☐ Some scholarships to consider include:
 - serve.mt.gov
 - horatioalger.com
 - fosterclub.com
 - fc2success.org
 - childrensaction network.org
- nfpaonline.org
- eduinreview.com
- aie.org
- togetherwerise.org
- ☐ Applications received by the priority dates are given the highest consideration.

COLLEGE PREP CALENDAR CHECKLIST

December	January	February	March
☐ FAFSA priority deadline or most schools in Montana is Dec. 1! ☐ Education and Training Youcher (ETV) application deadline for Spring and Summer semesters is Dec. 15. ☐ The Student Aid Report (SAR) should arrive between two to four weeks after the FAFSA is submitted. ■ If you have not received your SAR four weeks after submitting the FAFSA, call (800) 4-FED-AID or (800) 433-3242. ■ If you identify any errors on the SAR, make corrections and send it back immediately.	□ Complete the institutional financial aid application for each college you are interested in attending. □ Some admission decisions and financial aid award letters arrive this month. □ Explore programs with foster youth in mind. ■ MSU Hilleman Scholars Program, montana.edu/hillemanscholars/ ■ Dawson Promise, dawson.edu/about-dcc/dawson-promise/	□ Start looking for housing. □ Stipends may be available for housing deposits. Talk to your Chafee Foster Care Independence Program provider, or transitional living specialist. □ The OFA Casey Family Scholars Scholarship (up to \$10,000) application becomes available. Visit orphan.org. □ Admission decisions and financial aid letters arrive this month. ■ Read letters carefully and be sure to meet deadlines for accepting awards.	□ Foster youth, sign up to attend Reach Higher Montana Summit. Apply for this free event at ReachHigherMontana.org □ The National Foster Parent Association scholarship is due March 31. Visit nfpainc.org for more information.

COLLEGE PREP CALENDAR CHECKLIST

April	May	Summer before college starts	September
Decide which college you want to attend. AP students! Hit the pooks for AP (Advanced Placement) exams which provide the opportunity of earn credit at most of the nation's colleges and universities while still on high school. Your AP excress will determine how much credit is granted—college credit for AP exams can mean big savings. Visit collegeboard.com for more information or ask your high school guidance counselor. Start searching for summer employment. If you have any inancial aid gaps, call your school's financial aid office or guidance.	□ 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. □ 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.	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	□ 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 understandall 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 recipient 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.

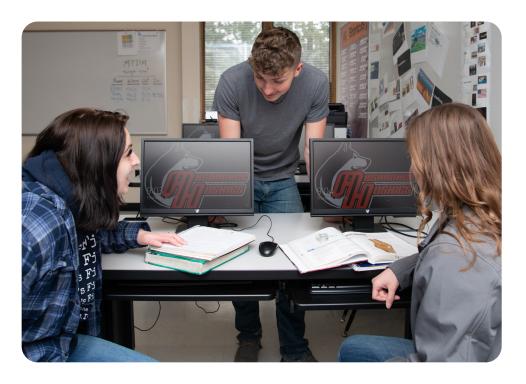
specific requirements and deadlines for your college.

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	Is your FAFSA done?
Н	\perp	
Ш	Ш	Did you get a notification or Student Aid Report?
		Did you get accepted to the college you applied to?
		Did you get a letter?
		Did you have to respond back? Have you accepted?
		Did you get an award letter from your school (usually electronic)?
		If so, did you accept the awards that you need/want for the fall?
		Do you understand what you accepted? ie. Subsidized vs unsubsidized?
		If you did not get an award letter – call the school.
		If you had to take loans, did you sign your Master Promissory Note (MPN)?
		Did you complete entrance counseling for your loans?
		Did you sign up for an orientation session at your school?
		Sometimes schools have paperwork that must be completed for orientation.
		Do you have a way to get to the orientation session?
		Did you sign up for housing in the dorms?
		If not, you need to do this!
		If not, did you need the deposit?
		Are you living off campus?
		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 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.



7 West 6th Ave ■ Helena MT 59601 ReachHigherMontana.org info@reachhighermontana.org (406) 422-1275 ■ (877) 265-4463