



THE COLLEGE CONNECTION

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

December 2024

Volume 4

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- The FAFSA is open, what now?
- ED Decisions
- Junior and Senior Checklist
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NEXT STEPS AFTER BEING ACCEPTED TO COLLEGE ED OR EA

ivywise.com

Congratulations, you were accepted to college through Early Decision or Early Action! But what do you need to do next? There are a number of things to consider moving forward, so it's important for students to weigh all their options before accepting an early offer of admission.

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11 COMMON FAFSA MISTAKES THAT CAN DERAIL YOUR FINANCIAL AID

collegedata.com



The FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and it is the financial aid form students must complete to be considered for federal student aid programs, including federal student loans, work-study, and federal grants and scholarships. Your FAFSA information may also be used by your state and by colleges to determine your eligibility for non-federal aid.

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COMING UP NEXT MONTH:

- How to write a letter of continued interest
- What is ED2?

BARNARD, BOSTON U AND UPENN ACCEPT MORE THAN HALF OF STUDENTS EARLY DECISION. IS THAT FAIR?

forbes.com

As competition for college admission intensifies, a rising number of colleges and universities are filling more than 50% of their incoming classes through early decision or early action.

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11 COMMON FAFSA MISTAKES THAT CAN DERAIL YOUR FINANCIAL AID

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To put it simply, the FAFSA is an important form you'll want to fill out correctly. Here are some common mistakes that could delay or negatively affect your financial aid awards.

1. Waiting to file your FAFSA

Submitting your [FAFSA](#) as early as possible helps to ensure that you will meet each college's financial aid deadline, as well as deadlines for state aid and scholarships. Some colleges have only so much financial aid available and they dole it out on a first-come, first served basis. This is why financial aid experts and counselors recommend completing your FAFSA as soon as possible after it is released.

2. Not having (or forgetting) your FSA ID

To complete and submit the online FAFSA, you'll need your own [StudentAid.gov](#) account and username and password (referred to as your FSA ID). Setting these things up before you sit down to complete the FAFSA can be a time-saver.

3. Supplying incorrect personal information

The FAFSA will ask for personal data including your Social Security number, date of birth, and email address. Double- and triple-check this information. Use your full legal name as listed on your Social Security card. If you are a student, use your permanent address, not your school address or a temporary address.

4. Leaving answer fields blank

Empty answer fields will cause processing errors and may cause your FAFSA to be rejected.

5. Reporting financial information for the wrong parent

If you're a dependent student, your parents or guardians will usually need to provide information about their income and assets. Whether both your parents or guardians need to provide this information depends on their marital and tax-filing status.

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FAFSA Opens December 1st

Tips for Students Preparing To Fill Out the FAFSA® Form

Students should do the following to prepare for filling out the FAFSA form:

- Create a [StudentAid.gov account](#) (if they don't already have one).
- Have their documents ready (e.g., 2023 tax returns; records of child support received; current balances of cash, savings, and checking accounts; and net worth of investments, businesses, and farms).
- Use the [Who's My FAFSA Parent? wizard](#) to identify which parent(s) will be a required contributor on their FAFSA form.
- Have their contributor information ready (e.g., first and last name, Social Security number [if they have one], date of birth, email address, and mailing address [if they don't have a Social Security number]).



COLLEGE NEWS

For fall 2023, **OSU's Corvallis** campus stopped accepting new freshman applications earlier than usual due to high demand. While this was specific to last year, it highlights the importance of applying early.

Gov. Gavin Newsom recently announced the first statewide partnership with a tech firm, Nvidia, to bring AI curriculum, resources and opportunities to **California's community colleges**.

Cal Poly agreed to a settlement in a lawsuit filed by Cal Poly student and Mustang News journalist over a complaint that the university violated the California Public Records Act.

The College of Education at **Washington State University** Tri-Cities was recently awarded a \$3.1 million grant for a new multilingual educator project, "Certifying and Advancing Multilingual Teachers by Increasing Numbers Through Three Grow-Your-Own Strands" (CAMINOS).

The **University of Alaska Fairbanks** has a new research unit that aims to make Alaska a global leader in research and development of critical minerals.

Three Oregon institutions, **Reed College, University of Portland and Lewis and Clark College**, were ranked among the top 300 best universities in the United States by Wallethub, a personal finance website focusing on financial health.

WSU students helped lobby the Washington Legislature for four new passing lanes along a stretch of state Highway 26 heavily used by students traveling between Puget Sound and Washington State University's Pullman campus. The \$11.15 million state-funded project, is intended to improve safety along the primarily two-lane highway by providing opportunities to pass slower-moving trucks and other vehicles without crossing into oncoming lanes of traffic.

UCLA leaders recently signed an MOU with Erasmus University Rotterdam for a student exchange program on diversity, equity and inclusion.

JUNIOR CHECKLIST

- ACT - Next test date is February 8th. You must register by January 3rd. It takes 30 minutes to complete registration and you will need a photo.
- SAT - Next test date is March 8th. You must register by February 21st.

SENIOR CHECKLIST

- Attend virtual college meetings
- Keep your grades up.
- Last chance to register for the SAT or ACT
- FAFSA opens December 1st
- Research scholarships
- Check application deadlines for January



11 COMMON FAFSA MISTAKES THAT CAN DERAIL YOUR FINANCIAL AID

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6. Including the wrong assets

The FAFSA will ask you and your parents to list your assets, including checking and savings accounts. However, you do not need to include the value of retirement accounts, home equity for the home you live in, assets of a business with less than 100 employees, and college savings accounts not in your or your parents' name (such as, accounts in your grandparents' names or the name of another relative).

7. Reporting tax and other financial information from the wrong year

You and your family will report tax information from the "prior-prior" year on the FAFSA.

8. Providing an e-mail address you don't regularly check

College financial aid offices tend to contact students by email, so make sure to check your email often.

9. Incorrectly counting household size

The FAFSA asks how many people in a household will be attending college during the financial aid award year. Students sometimes forget to include themselves in that group. Siblings and other members of the household must be attending college (or a program that leads to a college degree or certificate) at least half time to be considered a college student on the FAFSA.

10. Forgetting to sign and date your FAFSA form

When you reach the end of your FAFSA, don't forget to sign the form. Your FAFSA will not be processed until you and any other contributors to your form have signed it.

11. Failing to carefully review your FAFSA Submission Summary

After you submit the FAFSA, check the dashboard of your StudentAid.gov account for your [FAFSA Submission Summary](#).

"Don't rush to be first to submit the FAFSA"

CNBC.COM

FAFSA opens on limited basis Oct. 1st and for everyone on Dec. 1st





SCHOLARSHIPS

- **HISPANIC HERITAGE YOUTH AWARDS** - honors Latino high school seniors who demonstrate excellence in various categories including: Community Service, Education, Engineering, Entrepreneurship & Business, Green Sustainability, Healthcare & Science, Media & Entertainment, Public Service & Social Justice, and Technology. Application is now open.
- **APIA SCHOLARSHIP** - Scholarships at APIA Scholars are open to AANHPI undergraduate students attending U.S. accredited colleges or universities. Scholarship amounts range from \$2,500 one-year awards to \$20,000 multi-year awards. Deadline: January 15th, 2025
- **TOP TEN SCHOLARSHIP** - Inspired by David Letterman and his top ten lists, we created the Top Ten List Scholarship. With so many awards based on grades and extracurricular activities, this unique scholarship gives you the chance to show us what's truly special and different about you. Deadline to apply Dec. 31, 2024
- **AROUND THE CORNER SCHOLARSHIP** - I created this scholarship, to help get you started with identifying what YOU need to do to get prepared for everything that the college process entails. Deadline Dec. 31st and June 30th.
- **THE CIRKLED IN "NO SWEAT" SCHOLARSHIP** - is a \$2500 CASH scholarship you can use for any educational purpose, from books to summer camp. Deadline Dec. 31st 2024
- **GE REAGAN FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP** - Earn a \$10,000 renewable scholarship - up to \$40,000 total - for tuition, school fees, books, supplies, and on-campus room and board. Deadline to apply Jan. 4th 2025
- **MY IMPACT CHALLENGE** - My Impact Challenge is a civic engagement contest hosted by the Bill of Rights Institute. Submission is open to US citizens and US-based young people who are between the ages of 13 and 19 and enrolled in middle or high school on January 1, 2025. Deadline to apply May 18th 2025.
- **ASEV TRADITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP** - For those who express an intent to work in the field of viticulture or enology extension. Deadline to apply March 1st 2025
- **QUESTBRIDGE** - QuestBridge connects high-achieving students from low-income backgrounds with a thriving community and transformative educational, career, and life opportunities that help propel them to lives of fulfillment, meaning, and purpose.

HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION

Manages 70 of the largest need based scholarship opportunities in the country for high school seniors who have faced or overcome obstacles. Scholarships by state and by career.





BARNARD, BOSTON UNIV. AND UPENN ACCEPT MORE THAN HALF OF STUDENTS EARLY DECISION. IS THAT FAIR?

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Once considered an option for only the most prepared students, early admissions applications have become a more mainstream strategy as students aim to improve their odds at top schools and—increasingly—selective colleges seek to secure enrollments.

While the focus has largely been on students leveraging higher acceptance rates that can occur via early admissions, a striking number of colleges seek their own advantage by filling large portions of their enrollees with early decision applicants. Schools can minimize the uncertainty of regular decision cycles, securing incoming classes ahead of the competitive spring season when students typically compare offers from multiple schools.

For example, Boston University admitted 58% of the Class of 2028 via early decision; Barnard College admitted 56% of first-year students early; and the University of Pennsylvania accepted 51% of its incoming students via early decision.

This reality intensifies the stakes for regular decision students, who battle for a decreased number of spots and, often, tougher odds. Indeed, regular decision applicants tend to be from less well-resourced backgrounds, according to Common App research.

Early decision—which is a binding commitment—generally precludes a student’s ability to compare financial aid packages that universities may offer. Students who apply early aren’t weighted as often by these considerations.

“Applying early is closely associated with the educational and socioeconomic characteristics of applicants’ home communities,” the research states.

In addition, the Common App research finds that Asian students were more likely to apply early decision while white and multiracial students were most likely to apply early action, which is non-binding. Meanwhile, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Native American or Alaska Native, and Latinx applicants were least likely to apply early at all.

There are some signs that incoming class spots being filled via early admissions may be declining, albeit slightly. The most recent percentage of new students Barnard accepted early is slightly below the 62% accepted for the Class of 2026.

“The broader trend of early admissions, whether through early decision or early action, is reshaping the way students and families approach college applications.”





NEXT STEPS AFTER BEING ACCEPTED TO COLLEGE ED OR EA

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If You Want to Accept the Offer of Admission:

- **Accept the Offer of Admission:** Most Early Action colleges will give students until May 1 to accept the offer of admission;
- **Withdraw All Other Applications:** If you accept the offer of admission, you'll need to withdraw your other applications. We advise students to email the colleges — either the main admissions office email or admissions representative for their area — and include their full name, high school, and reason for withdrawing.
- **Continue To Focus on Senior Year:** Getting in early and accepting the offer can be a big load off your shoulders, but there's still a whole other semester to go through! Remember, colleges will request to see your second semester grades, and if there's a significant drop in your performance colleges can (and have) rescinded acceptances or placed students on a probationary plan. Don't give into senioritis!

If You're Not Ready to Accept Your Spot:

- **Hold Off on Giving the College Your Decision:** You don't have to respond to the offer just yet, so take some time to think about it. Consider your college goals and what's going to be the best decision for you.
- **Continue To Work on Your ED II, EA II, and Regular Decision Applications:** With Regular Decision deadlines of Jan. 1, you'll need to make sure all your other applications are done and ready to go. Be sure the remaining schools on your college list are a good mix of reach, target, and likely institutions.

If You Were Accepted Early Decision:

If you were accepted to college through Early Decision, it's important to remember that the decision is binding — you signed an agreement that you will attend if accepted. Here's what to do next.

- **Withdraw All Other Applications:** Since the decision is binding, you will need to withdraw any other Regular Decision applications you may have submitted.
- **Discuss Financial Aid:** For many students, an Early Decision acceptance can come with some unfavorable news, like not enough financial aid.

“Applying early is closely associated with the educational and socioeconomic characteristics of applicants’ home communities”

forbes.com

