

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) sponsors more than 35 National College Fairs™ and 25 Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs in the U.S. which you are invited to attend free of charge. Fairs are also available online at www.onlinecollegefair.com.™ To find out more about these fairs you may either see your counselor for the schedule of a college fair close to you, visit us at www.nacac.com, or visit www.onlinecollegefair.com to view the schedule for the Online College Fairs.™

**Thinking about
College?
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If you would like additional copies of this brochure, contact the NACAC national office:

Guide for Parents
c/o National Association for College Admission
Counseling
1631 Prince Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2818

If you need more information about college admission, contact the counselors in your school. They look forward to hearing from you.



**National Association for College
Admission Counseling**
www.nacac.com
www.onlinecollegefair.com



Guide for Parents

As a parent, you want the best for your child's future. Planning should begin as early as middle school. If you wait until the junior or senior year of high school, you've waited too long. This brochure will help you and your child make the right decisions now, when it counts.

The selection of a college – including the cost – is an important decision for the whole family. Going to college costs a lot; but if you need money, it is available, provided you plan ahead.

What is financial assistance?

Financial assistance is money to help pay for college. This money can be used for educational expenses (tuition, fees, and books) as well as for other expenses (food, housing, and transportation). Grants, loans, scholarships and work study are the four types of financial assistance.

Can I get financial assistance if my child doesn't want to go to a 4-year college?

Yes. Money is available for 2-year community or junior colleges (as well as for business, vocational/trade schools).

How is financial aid determined?

You must show that you need money to be awarded financial aid. Need is the difference between what it costs to attend college and what your family can afford to pay. Special talent and academic scholarships and grants are available at many institutions.

How can I find money for my child's education?

The guidance counselor can direct you to resources to help you learn about applying for money for college. Don't pay for guaranteed scholarships. You can begin to research financial aid as early as ninth grade. Don't be misled by others. There are more students and families receiving financial assistance for education than you may think.

Using the Internet In Your College Search

The Internet is a great place for future college students to gather information about colleges. There are many Web sites that can help guide you through the college selection process. Some Web sites can help you prepare for, choose, apply and find ways to pay for a college education. Other sites require a fee before using their information, but most offer free information. These days most colleges and universities maintain Web sites. It is at these sites that you can find quite a bit of information about these particular colleges or universities, including admission info, student life, faculty and administrator info, weather conditions, campus maps, virtual campus tours, live images of the main campus as viewed through a Web camera, and chat rooms where you can interact with other students.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Online College Fair website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a search box and a logo. Below the navigation bar, the main content area features a large graphic with the text "ONLINE COLLEGE FAIR .COM" and "THINK OUTSIDE THE BOOTH." The graphic depicts two people standing in a virtual booth. To the left of the graphic, there are several links: "High School Students", "Check back in September to chat the with college admission representatives.", "Schools", "View Demo", "Click here for a PDF file of the registration form or call us at 800.642.8868 for registration information.", and "Register Now". To the right of the graphic, there is a text box that says "This site will be officially launched in September, 2000." and "Today, you will find a quick synopsis of the Online College Fair program so that you can better understand this tool." Below the graphic, there is a footer with the text "You're Here" and a list of links: "Participating Schools", "Schedule", "FAQ", "About Us", and "Contact Us". At the bottom, there is a phone number "1.800.642.8868" and an email address "support@interactivesfairs.com".

To help in your search, NACAC offers an online recruiting tool, Online College Fair.™ During scheduled times you will be able to log onto www.onlinecollegefair.com to chat with admission professionals, professors, coaches, and members of the student body on all aspects of the college admission process.

Useful Financial Aid Web Sites

Free Application for Federal Student Aid – www.fafsa.ed.gov

Student Guide: Financial Aid from the U.S. Department of Education – www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide

What are the first steps?

1. Planning for college can start as early as middle school.
2. Talk with your child's guidance counselor or teacher about your child's options after high school.
3. Keep and use this guide to be sure that your child is taking the right courses.
4. Encourage your child to study and take competitive courses.
5. Be involved in school activities. Go to parents' nights and conferences and meet with your child's teachers.
6. Be sure your child is taking the most difficult courses he or she can handle so that college and career choices are open.
7. Encourage your child to participate in school, community and church activities.

What should my child do?

1. Your child's ability to read, write and use a computer is the most important and basic skill needed for the future.
2. Your child needs a firm foundation in rigorous, high level math and English courses.
3. Your child should take advantage of courses offered in science, social studies, foreign languages and performing arts.
4. Your child must learn good study habits.
5. Your child should consider what he or she wants to do after high school and discuss options with the school counselor or teachers.

What can I as a parent do?

- Believe in your child's abilities.
- Take an interest in what your child is studying and his/her homework.
- Help your child remain focused on school.
- Visit the school and schedule conferences.
- The courses your child takes and the grades he or she now receives have a lot to do with what your child can do after high school.
- Work with your child on the development of his or her schedule of courses.
- Create a quiet place for your child to study.
- Start early when researching financial aid.

How do I find out what courses my child should take in school?

Talk with the counselor or teacher at the school. He or she can show you what classes best prepare your child for the future. Principals may also help. Use the chart on the opposite panel as a guide to be sure that your child takes the recommended courses. You are encouraged to work with your child's guidance counselor in the development of his or her schedule.



Types of Institutions

Colleges and Universities (4-year)—Institutions made up of divisions called schools or colleges. Geared toward preparation for professional occupations such as accounting, engineering, and health services. Traditional classroom setting. Offer BA or BS degrees upon completion of program.

Community and Junior Colleges (2-year)—Institutions are conveniently located in local communities. Specialize in college transfer programs often tied to four-year colleges in state or area. Usually respond to local employment demand by offering courses in needed areas. Offer associate degrees or certificates upon completion of program.

Comprehensive Institutions—Award baccalaureate, may also award associate degrees; offer graduate degree programs primarily at the master's, specialist's, or professional level, although one or two doctoral programs may be offered.

Military Academies—Military establishments that combine education and training for the armed forces in large and very structured institutions. There are five service academies in the U.S., all of which require serving at least four or six years as officers in exchange for four years of education. The military's goal is to produce officers who are well educated both academi-

cally and in the workings of the military itself. Offer degrees upon completion of officer training program.

Performing and Visual Arts Colleges—Institutions including universities, colleges, schools, and conservatories with programs of study in the areas of music, art, theater, dance and related disciplines. Many conservatory programs emphasize auditions and portfolio presentation. Offer degrees or professional degrees upon completion of program.

Specialized Colleges—Colleges that concentrate their offerings in one or two specific areas are classified as specialized colleges. They include colleges offering the following types of study: agricultural/technical, art/music, Bible, business, engineering, health sciences, military, seminary/rabbinical, and teacher preparation. Some are two-year colleges; others offer four years of study.

Vocational, Technical and Business Schools—Private proprietary schools specializing in trades or vocations by offering various courses and occupational programs. Specialize in skill training (e.g., welding, cooking, hair styling, and word processing) required for a specific job. Offer certificates upon completion of training program.

Minimum Education Requirements for Various Institutions

	2-Year and 4-Year Colleges, Universities and Military Academies	Performing and Visual Arts Colleges	Vocational and Technical Schools	Business Schools
Science, including Laboratory	2 to 4 years Biology, Chemistry, Physics	1 to 3 years	1 to 3 years	1 to 3 years
History/Social Sciences	2 to 4 years	2 to 4 years	2 to 4 years	2 to 4 years
Other Activities, including Community Service Work, and Participation in Clubs	Music, Art, Dance, Drama	Music, Art, Dance, Drama	Shop and skills courses	Shorthand, Accounting