



Hacia Adelante

Pathways to College

A Guide for Families in Texas



INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
MARIA "CUCA" ROBLEDOR MONTECEL, Ph.D., PRESIDENT & CEO

English Version



INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
MARÍA "CUCA" ROBLEDO MONTECEL, PH.D., PRESIDENT & CEO

Mission: Creating schools that work for *all* children.

Vision: IDRA is a vanguard leadership development and research team working with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower all children, families and communities.

Functions:

POLICY AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - IDRA policy and leadership development promotes accountability and responsibility. Using inclusive, cutting-edge and broad-based strategies, we develop leadership within communities, schools and policy-making bodies to create collaborative and enlightened educational policies that work for *all* children.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION - IDRA research and evaluation advance educational policies, programs and practices. Using collaborative and innovative methods, we investigate important questions and provide insights into compelling educational issues. As a national resource, we set standards in the design, analysis, and synthesis of timely and useful research involving diverse populations.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - IDRA professional development causes people across the country to take action that empowers others. We assist people to create educational solutions through innovative, participatory, and hands-on presentations, workshops, and technical assistance that promotes sustained growth and development.

Our assistance values the needs and cultures of our participants and acknowledges their experiences. We carefully craft training designs that include reflection and application. IDRA professional development causes participants to take a new look at persistent problems and equips them to take action that produces positive outcomes for *all* children.

PROGRAMS AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT - IDRA programs and materials cause people across the country to improve education for *all* children. Our programs produce results. Our materials are useful and timely; attractive, cost-effective and intuitive; linguistically, culturally and developmentally appropriate.

IDRA pro-actively disseminates cutting-edge information to educators, administrators, higher education personnel, decision makers and policymakers, parents and community leaders.

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Third Edition

IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization, directed by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.,
dedicated to creating schools that work for all children. As a vanguard leadership development and
research team for three decades, IDRA has worked with people to create self-renewing schools
that value and empower all children, families and communities. IDRA conducts research and
development activities, creates, implements and administers innovative education programs and
provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance.

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César Chávez

"The end of all education should surely be service to others. We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about the progress and prosperity for our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others for their sake and for our own."

"El final en toda educación debe ser, sin duda alguna, el servicio a otros. No podemos procurar realizarnos nosotros mismos y olvidarnos del progreso y prosperidad de nuestra comunidad. Nuestras ambiciones deben ser suficientemente amplias para incluir las aspiraciones y necesidades de otros por su bienestar y por el propio."

Foreword

The importance of family involvement in student educational success is well documented. Family involvement in education does not end with high school graduation. It includes being involved in helping your child continue through college into meaningful work. The approach of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is to honor families' culture and language and to provide them with information and helpful tools to access the path to college.

This guide provides a family approach to college planning. Early planning is important for everyone. Family involvement tends to decrease after elementary school. However, establishing early, ongoing and positive relationships with school personnel at the middle school and high school levels can help families more easily apply and gain admittance to college.

IDRA also encourages colleges to engage early with schools, families and communities to provide timely, accurate information and guidance to make college more accessible for all.

This guide is based on a collaborative approach to goal-setting and decision-making. Some portions are addressed to parents while others can be used by students individually and with their families. The goal of this guide is to help students gain college entrance. (A Spanish-language version of this guide is available.) We also hope that in the long term, students and their families who have been successful in this process will enrich their communities by sharing their experiences and providing leadership and support for others. Once families have successfully navigated the system, they can become important resources for others within their communities and circle of friends.

Part One – Basic Information on College

¡Sí Se Puede! – Yes! We Can!

We all want our youth to graduate from high school prepared to exercise their options to continue in college or join the workplace. It is important to not give up! Think college for your children. For every barrier there is a solution.

Obstacles

Some schools do not advise students of college preparatory courses

Some schools do not expect all students to prepare for, attend and complete college.

Some believe that college is only for the "elite."

Some have limited or lack of finances. Some believe the myth that no resources are available.

What to do or consider...

- Schedule a meeting with school personnel such as teachers, administrators and counselors to talk about the courses needed for college.
- Start thinking about college early when your child is in elementary or middle school.

- Ensure that the high school has the rigorous curriculum for college and enroll your child in these courses.
- Talk to your child in terms of "when you go to college" rather than "if you go to college."
- Visit your public library for more information about colleges across the country.

- To go to college and be successful all students do not need to be "scholars" or have excellent grades. Remember that choice is a birthright. Early preparation and planning makes college a reality.
- Help your children at an early age see themselves as leaders with strengths, abilities, and the intelligence to go to college.

- Do not eliminate a potential college because of costs.
- Talk to school personnel, including teachers, administrators and counselors about federal, state, local and private funding sources.
- Visit financial aid or scholarship web sites, or visit your public library for more information.
- Set up an early savings account in your child's name for college.

Obstacles

What to do or consider...

Some believe that girls do not need to go to college.

- Expect that all students benefit from college. Both men and women need to be responsible for finances and households.
- Look at the school courses to make sure girls and boys are in the classes they need for college.

Negative influence of others to *not* go to college.

- Encourage your child to be independent, make positive choices, and try new options.
- Think and talk about college as a way to make dreams come true.
- Encourage your child to think about what he or she wants to do in the future. Talk about several employment options and the type of education required.

College seems "too far away"- family concerned about children "leaving the nest."

- Start preparing yourself for your child's separation early; celebrate positive independent decisions.
- Include your child in making family decisions in preparation for independent living.

Immigrant status viewed as a barrier to college.

- Some states require immigrant students to pay resident fees instead of out-of-state or international tuition.
- Inquire about special scholarships available for migrant students.

Lack of awareness of the importance of tests.

- Know about all exams and dates required for graduation and college admission (e.g., SAT, ACT).
- Help students understand the schedules for the required exams, how many times they can take the exams and the fees.
- Insist that schools teach the material (content) needed for college, not just how to pass tests.

Student has not completed the required classes for college.

- Speak to teachers and counselors about ways to make up the lost courses or grades (summer school, dual credit, self-paced courses, accelerated instruction).

Information and support available only in English.

- Insist that your school provide information on college in a language you understand, ask for bilingual advisors.



Some Facts About College: A Word for Parents

A college or university degree is an important asset in improving life for young people. It is critical to gaining access to economic and educational opportunities. Getting a two-year or four-year college degree requires planning and effort from students and families. Advantages to having a college or university degree are...

Higher earning power. People with a college education earn more annually than those without a college degree. The average annual household earnings in 2006-2008 by educational attainment are below (U.S. Census Bureau).

- \$19,989 for no high school diploma;
- \$27,448 for high school diploma;
- \$33,838 for associate degree;
- \$47,853 for a bachelor's degree or higher;
- \$63,174 for graduate degree;
- \$87,644 for doctorate degree;
- \$99,207 for professional degree.

On average over a lifetime, someone who completes a four-year college earns over \$2 million more than someone who does not (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006).

Lifelong learning skills and knowledge. A college education can offer opportunities to learn about a variety of subjects as well as specialized study in a particular area. Students learn to write, read and speak critically. These tools are essential in any occupation.

Better job options. A college or university degree can provide opportunities to learn technical skills for a rapidly changing workforce. A college degree can offer your child more career options. Examples of the kinds of jobs that are available are on the next page.

Job Options

Two-Year College
(associate degree)

Four-Year College
(bachelor's degree)

Four+ Years of College
(various graduate degrees)

Medical laboratory technician
Computer technician
Car mechanic
Commercial artist
Heating, air-conditioning, and refrigeration technician
Hotel/restaurant manager
Physical therapy assistant

Teacher
Computer systems analyst
Accountant
Artist
FBI agent
Graphic designer
Insurance agent
Newscaster or sportscaster
Public relations counselor
Music teacher
Engineer
(and many more)

Minister, Priest, or Rabbi
Scientist
Architect
Dentist
Geologist
Lawyer
Marine biologist
Psychologist
Veterinarian
Zoologist
Doctor
Social worker
Physical therapist

What is higher education?

At a two-year community college, a student can earn an associate of arts degree (A.A.), associate of science degree (A.S.), or a certificate or license in an occupational program to prepare for specific jobs, such as medical technicians and dental assistants. Students can take courses that can be transferred to four-year colleges and universities.

At a four-year university, a student can earn a bachelor of arts degree (B.A.), which for example is required to become a teacher, or a bachelor of science degree (B.S.), which for example is required to become an engineer.

How early should parents begin talking with their children about college?

Think about college early! Getting ready for college is a journey to create the life you want. It is never too early to start talking to your children about college, even in elementary school. Tell them that good grades and attendance are important for the road to college. Take them to visit local colleges to get a "feel" for lifelong learning.



How can parents help their children plan for college?

Learning begins at home. And valuing the importance of college begins with parents, family, and friends encouraging continuing education. Make sure that your child is enrolled in college preparatory classes.

Introduce yourself to your child's high school guidance counselor and teachers. Stay in contact with your child's guidance counselor. Make sure that he or she knows that you want your child to go to college. Talk about planning for college. Meet frequently with teachers to discuss your child's progress. Speak to friends and family who have graduated from college to get a feel of what to expect.

Ensure that your child has access to challenging courses

Studies show that if students take algebra and geometry early - starting in the eighth and ninth grades - they are more likely to go on to college than students who do not. By taking algebra early, your child probably will be able to enroll in chemistry, physics, and advanced math courses before finishing high school. Then he or she will have room in the high school schedule to take a second language, or advanced placement course. Making good grades in these kinds of tough courses can be a big plus in helping your child get into college.

Here are two of the most important things your child can do to prepare for college:

- ✓ sign up for the right courses, and
- ✓ work hard to earn a high grade point average.

Ensure that your schools make algebra and geometry accessible to your child as soon as possible. Algebra and geometry are the foundation for many advanced math and science courses (such as chemistry and physics) that some colleges want high school students to take.



Encourage your daughter or son to take advanced placement (AP) courses in high school. If successfully completed, they may count as college credit. (In some cases, you must pass an exam to get the college credit.) Ask your school principal, guidance counselor and teachers about these classes. AP classes are offered in a variety of subject areas and can be counted toward college requirements.

What tests are required for college?

Getting accepted by a college requires certain tests. Check with the college or university for specific requirements. These tests are administered throughout the year. Make sure your daughter or son registers for these tests early. They can take the tests more than once. Check with the guidance counselor about test dates. The following table illustrates tests that many colleges require.

Tests Required for College	
Four-Year College or University	Two-Year Community College
High School	High School Diploma or GED
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), which tests math and verbal abilities, or ACT (American College Test), which tests a variety of subject areas including math, science, language, and social studies.	(some will require SAT or ACT) (some will require SAT II)
SAT II Subject Test that tests knowledge and abilities in certain subject areas.	



When your child is in eighth and ninth grades, have him or her take the EXPLORE test to prepare him or her for high school and give your child suggestions for choosing a career path. In the 10th grade, your child can take the pre-Act exam called the PLAN.

When your child is a junior in high school, register him or her to take the Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT or the Pre-SAT), which gives students an idea of what the SAT is like.



Create a circle of support

A circle of support consists of teachers, counselors, and others who are willing to help you. All of them can be good resources. But they will not know you need support and encouragement unless you let them in on your plans. Tell them you are interested in putting college in your child's future. Ask them to be on your college support team. Ask for their help.

Ask about programs or activities that can help you reach the goal of college. Ask about the following:

- ✓ **Before-school and after-school programs** that are especially for students who are thinking about college;
- ✓ **Mentor programs** that meet regularly with a college graduate who can tell about what to expect and plan for; and
- ✓ **Summer programs, internships, and advanced courses** that help students prepare for college.

How do I apply?

Make sure that your daughter or son has requested applications from colleges and universities through the guidance counselor's office or directly from the college or university. Some colleges allow students to complete one application - electronic or paper - to apply to as many state public universities as they like.

How can families start planning early to pay for college?

College academic years are divided into semesters or quarters. In the *semester* system, each semester, fall and spring, is comprised of 16 weeks. Colleges operating on the *quarter* system have four sessions (fall, spring, winter, summer) comprised of 10 weeks. Students usually do not attend school in summer, but may elect to do so. Schools organized on the semester system generally have two summer sessions that vary in length. Quarter system schools have a 10-week term during the summer.

In order to receive financial aid from a college, your child must enroll as a full-time student. This means that the student takes the number courses required by the college to be classified as a full-time student. This number varies from college to college.



Inquire about financial aid packages.

Tuition and fees are paid at the beginning of each semester or quarter and usually cover the college's cost of student insurance, use of athletic facilities, the library, and records processing. The amount of tuition a student pays depends on the number of courses a student enrolls for each semester or quarter. Tuition is paid at the beginning of each semester or quarter, not for a whole year at a time.

Work and study

Most students work while they study to help pay the cost of college. Possible options for work are:

- Not studying during the summer and working full-time during the summer;
- Working part time and studying full time during the school year; and
- Working full time and studying part time during the school year.

Part-time work during college is much easier to schedule than it is in high school when work has to be done at night or on weekends. In college, courses do not meet every day. Some typical organizational formats for courses are the following:

- Course meets three times a week on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for one hour;
- Course meets two times a week on Tuesday and Thursday for one and one-half hour;
- Course meets five times a week Monday-Friday for one hour.
- Course (chemistry, physics, geology) meets one time a week for two hours and has a two- or three-hour lab once a week.

Multiple sections of courses are offered, and students are able to create schedules to accommodate work.

Students need to make sure they do not over extend themselves with too many hours of work and class. While it may seem that a student has a lot of free time in college compared to high school, he or she will be expected to spend many hours studying outside of class to meet course requirements. It is not sufficient to just attend class. Students usually are expected to complete assignments between class meetings such as:

- Complete assigned readings for each class meeting;
- Write papers;
- Do library or Internet research;
- Study for tests;
- Do group projects; and
- Prepare presentations.

First-year students are advised to plan their schedules wisely. Do not underestimate the number of hours needed to prepare for courses when scheduling work.

Seeking financial aid

Money should never keep anyone from going to college. The U.S. Department of Education provides more than \$40 billion in aid for college students each year. Every year, more than half of students in college receive some kind of financial aid.

When your child is ready to apply for college as a senior in high school, have him or her fill out an application for federal financial aid that can be obtained from your school counselor, from your public library or from the U.S. Department of Education web site at: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

For the most up-to-date information about federal financial aid, contact the U.S. Department of Education at: **1-800-USA-LEARN**, or **1-800-4FED-AID**. Also check out the "Think College Early" web site, designed especially for you, at: <http://www.ed.gov/students/prep/college/thinkcollege/early/edlite-tcehome.html>

Here are ways you and your family can pay for college.

- ✓ **Savings** - Start setting aside money for college now, if at all possible. The more your family saves, the easier it will be to pay for college later. One way to save is to set up a tax-free Education Savings Account.
- ✓ **Federal Income Tax Credits** - During the first two years in college, the new HOPE Scholarship tax credit can help cover college tuition by reducing the amount of federal income tax for low- and moderate-income families. Beyond the first two years, the new Lifetime Learning tax credit is available to help low- and moderate-income families pay for tuition and

fees.

- ✓ **Student Financial Aid** - The U.S. Department of Education offers students three major types of aid to help pay for college:
 - **Grant**: money that does not have to be paid back. For instance, the maximum Federal Pell Grant a student can receive for the 2001-02 school year was \$3,750 for families with limited means;
 - **Work-study**: a job during college to help your child earn the money needed; and
 - **Loan**: money available to students and their parents that, like a car loan, must be paid back.

- ✓ **Serving Our Country** - Providing service to our country during or after college is another way to pay for all or part of a college education. Opportunities include:
 - **AmeriCorps** - a community-service program that helps students earn grants or repay loans.
 - **Military Academies** - The U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Merchant Marines, and U.S. Navy offer no-cost education in exchange for a commitment to serve for a period of time.
 - **Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)** offers scholarships in varying amounts to students interested in serving in the military after college.
 - **Other Financial Aid** - Help with college finances is also available from a number of other sources:
 - Many states and colleges offer financial assistance directly to individual students.
 - A number of civic groups, foundations, businesses, and community organizations also provide scholarships to students who meet special requirements or achievement levels, such as doing well in high school or displaying artistic or athletic ability.

Federal Student Aid Programs

Federal Student Aid Program	Type of Aid	Other Information	Annual Award Limits	Disbursement (How the money is distributed)
Federal Pell Grant	Grant does not have to be repaid	Available to undergraduates only	up to \$4,731 for 2008-09	School disburses funds to students
Federal Supplement Educational Opportunity	Grant does not have to be repaid	Available to undergraduates only	between \$100 & up to \$4,000	School disburses funds to students
Federal Work-Study (FWS)	Money is earned, does not have to be repaid	Available to undergraduates only	Can't exceed total FWS award	School disburses funds to students
Federal Perkins Loan	Loan must be repaid	Available to undergraduates & graduates	Undergraduate: up to \$4,000 per year Graduate: up to \$6,000 per year	School disburses earned funds to students
Subsidized Stafford Loans	Loan must be repaid	Available to undergraduates & graduates	Dependent undergraduate: \$3,500 first-year, \$4,500 if completed first-year, \$5,500 if completed two years Independent undergraduate: \$7,500 first-year, \$8,500 if completed first-year, \$10,500 if completed two years	School disburses funds to students
Unsubsidized Stafford Loans	Loan must be repaid	Available to undergraduates & graduates	Graduate or professional: \$20,500 each year	School disburses funds to students
PLUS Loan (Parent Loans)	Loan must be repaid	Available to parents of dependent undergraduates	cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received	School disburses funds to students

Campus-Based Aid Programs

Direct Loans and FFEL Programs

Pathways Calendar for Students

Suggestions to Help in Your Planning Early

	Ninth and 10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
September	Meet with your guidance counselor. Make sure that you register for college preparatory classes.	Plan to take the PSAT. Make sure that you are enrolled in college preparatory classes.	If you have not already, register for the SAT and ACT. Register for SAT II if necessary. Narrow your list of colleges. Request applications. Request teacher and counselor recommendations. Meet with college representatives who visit your schools.
October	Sign up for extracurricular activities and community service.	Visit college fairs at local schools.	Finalize college choices. Work on application essays. Ask teachers and counselors to read essays. Finish Early Action and Early Decision applications. Make sure your resume is updated with latest work experiences, community service, and accomplishments.



Ask your child's high school counselor for listings of scholarships and grants. Make sure your daughter or son seeks help with requirements for scholarship and grant applications. *Begin to request recommendation letters for support.* In some cases, an essay or letters of recommendation from teachers may be required.

Pathways Calendar for Students

Suggestions to Help in Your Planning Early

	Ninth and 10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
November	Keep track of activities, accomplishments, awards, and jobs for your resumé.	Register for SAT. Register for ACT. Register for SAT II if necessary.	Obtain Financial Aid PROFILE application.
December	Start exploring colleges and universities on the Internet.	Visit local colleges and universities.	Send applications that are due in January. Attend college and financial aid fairs at local schools. Meet with visiting high school alumni about their college experiences.
January	Ask college students and alumni about their college experiences.		Research financial aid options.
February and March	Meet with your guidance counselor on a regular basis.	Continue meeting with your guidance counselor on a regular basis.	Be sure that all application materials are in. Continue financial aid search.
April	Identify and correspond with college recruiters who visit your school.		Study for advanced placement exams. Review admissions decisions as they arrive. Visit college choices. Review financial aid packages and talk with college financial aid officers.
May and June	Work on community service projects.	Work on community service projects.	Take advanced placement exams. Notify colleges of your decisions. Thank counselors and teachers for recommendations.
July and August	Work on community service projects.	Work on community service projects.	Work and save for college.

How can I find out more about financial aid?

Web Sites

Financial Aid for Students
www.ed.gov/studentaid

The Student Guide to Financial Aid
www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide

FAFSA on the Web
www.fafsa.ed.gov

Federal resources for education
www.students.gov

Hispanic Scholarship Guide
www.hispanicscholarship.com

Hispanic Scholarship Fund
www.hsf.net

Gates Millennium Scholars Program
www.gmsp.org

College Connection Scholarships
www.college-scholarships.com

FastWeb: Free Scholarship and College Searches
www.fastweb.com

Hispanic College Fund
www.hispanicfund.org

Other Resources

General Information about Federal Student Financial Aid
1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)

The College Board
www.collegeboard.org

The Common Application
www.commonapp.org

Educational Testing Service
www.ets.org

CollegeNet
www.collegenet.com

College Source Online
www.collegesource.org/home.asp

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
www.lulac.org

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
www.maldef.org

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, Inc.
www.chci.org

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
www.hacu.net

ACT College Planning Guide
www.act.org

C3 Apply
www.c3apply.org

U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov

Part Two – Planning for College Workbook

This workbook is meant to be used by students and their families. We have included practical tools for planning and gathering information. You will find helpful step-by-step ways to set goals and priorities, develop action plans, and prepare for college entrance. You can complete these steps in sequence or you can go directly to the ones most relevant to your situation. We hope you will start this workbook with ideas in mind and finish with goals and plans.

Why should you think seriously about college now? Because college can be the key to the kind of life you want.

A college education can take you out of a minimum-wage job and into good-paying work you enjoy. **It gives you choices.** Compared with people who do not continue their education beyond high school, people who go to college:

- ✓ **Have a wider range of job possibilities and options,**
- ✓ **Develop lifelong learning skills, and**
- ✓ **Are in a better position to help their families and communities.**

Even if you are not sure whether or not college is in your future, prepare as if you will be going to college. What you learn will help you get the very most from life.

How to Use This Workbook



This symbol means there is something to think about.



This symbol means there is information to gather.



This symbol means there is something to talk about with family and friends.



This symbol means there is something to do.



This symbol means be alert, or vigilant; persevere or advocate.

Create a “To Do” List



Create a list of things to do and important dates in your application process to the colleges of your choice.

Things to Do	Due Dates
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Developing an Action Plan

How will you accomplish your goal?

What specific steps will you take?

What will be done and by when?



Planning is a process of determining what you want to do and how you will do it. It involves making choices about the goals you will seek, the actions you will take, and the resources you have available or will need. Planning should be continuous and flexible involving people in every phase of the process.

An action plan is a list of steps to take or things to do. It includes the following:

1. A list of specific steps.
2. The order in which the steps will be taken.
3. Notes on who can help you or what information is needed to complete each step.

Develop an Action Plan



Resources Needed	Who Can Help?	By When?	How?	What To Do?

Time Lines



Time lines are important in planning for college. What will you do and when? How much time is available to you? How much time will you need?

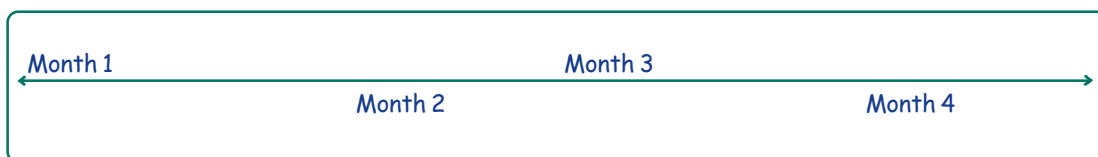
The process below can be used for such things as:

- selecting a college,
- applying for financial aid, and
- getting letters of recommendation.

Time is a resource that gives guidance to your plans and establishes the deadlines for completion of specific steps or tasks.

What Should Be Done? When?

1. Brainstorm the specific steps you need to take and create a "to do" list.
2. Draw a time line like the one below across the next page. Mark off weeks or months along the length of the time line, including the starting and ending dates.



3. Arrange the steps in the appropriate order on the time line.
4. Confirm deadline dates for each step.

Time Line Worksheet



Draw a time line across this page. Mark off weeks or months along the length of the time line, including the starting and ending dates.

Assess Your Choices



The selection of a college is based on personal preferences - large vs. small, two-year college vs. four-year college.

1. How would you assess the importance of these features in the college you attend? (Think about each feature and rate it.)

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Not important</u>
Large	3	2	1
Small	3	2	1
Urban	3	2	1
Rural	3	2	1
Class Size	3	2	1
Availability of Faculty	3	2	1
Cost	3	2	1
Student Enrollment	3	2	1
Student Support	3	2	1
Transfer of Credit	3	2	1
Living Accommodations	3	2	1
Campus "Life"	3	2	1
Proximity/Close to Home	3	2	1

2. List the four most important features in your choice of college.

3. Which colleges have the greatest number of features you feel are important?

College Rating Worksheet



Below, list the colleges you are considering along with their strengths and weaknesses.

Institution	Strengths	Weaknesses	Other Information

Identify Your Circle of Support

Write the names and contact information for people who can help you to make your decision about college.



Name

How they can help

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

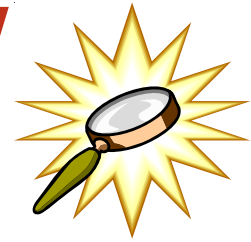
5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

Support and Money



What resources (money, transportation, tuition, housing, living expenses) are available, and what others are needed?

Finances available

Finances needed

Other support available

Other support needed

What is your plan?

Make a Campus Visit

Before making the final decision on a college of your choice, it is wise to make a campus visit. Here is a partial list of information to get and what to ask about during your visit:



- ✓ Check on requirements and dates from the admissions office
- ✓ Get a school calendar and catalogue of courses
- ✓ Find out about financial aid opportunities
- ✓ Tour the campus dorms, library, dining and classrooms
- ✓ Ask about clubs for students, activities and support services
- ✓ Check out transportation
- ✓ Inquire about career planning help
- ✓ Meet faculty
- ✓ Secure phone numbers, names and addresses of key contact people - make a personal "friend" to help you as you follow-up
- ✓ Write a letter of inquiry and/or interest to follow-up (see sample letter on next page)

Follow-up Contacts to Colleges

Sample Letter

Note: Many colleges encourage telephone and e-mail inquiries



Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code
Date

Office of Admission
Name of College
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a student at (name of high school) and will graduate in (month, year).

Please send me an application for admission and information about your college - a general information bulletin, college costs, and program descriptions. I am considering (name of program) as my major field of study.

My parents and I also want to investigate all possible sources of financial aid. Please send us an application form, instructions about how and when to apply, and any other information that might be helpful.

I am interested in visiting your campus, taking a campus tour, and meeting with an admissions counselor. I would like to meet with an advisor in (name of department), if possible. Please advise me of a time on (month, day) that would be convenient.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature)
Name

Source: ACT (2001) *College Planning Guide: A College Presentation for Students and Parents*.

Planning a Budget



Refer to the material you have received from your college of choice for planning.

Expenses	A Semester or Quarter	B Number of Semesters or Quarters	C Annual Total per expense (Multiply Columns A & B)
Basic tuition and fees (such as athletic fees, social activities)			
Books			
Transportation			
Housing			
Living expenses			
Food and meals			
Fun and entertainment			
Health/Medical			
Other			
Cost per semester: (Add Column A)		Annual cost for school year: (Add Column C)	

For More Information

"Getting Ready for College Early: A Handbook for Parents of Students in the Middle and Junior High School Years" (U.S. Department of Education; free online; <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/erlyprep.html>)

"Preparing Your Child for College" (Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education; free online; <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/erlyprep.html>)

"Funding Your Education 2002-03" (Student Financial Assistance, U.S. Department of Education; free online; http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FYE)

"*Cómo Pagar Su Educación 2002-03*" (Student Financial Assistance, U.S. Department of Education; 1-800-4-FED-AID [1-800-433-3243])

"Scholarships, Grants, and Loans for College Students: A Guide of Resources" (Office of Texas State Representative Miguel Wise, District 39; free for students in the Texas Rio Grande Valley; 512-463-0530 or 956-447-9473)

State Graduation Requirements (National Center on Educational Outcomes; free online; <http://education.umn.edu/nceo/TopicAreas/Graduation/StatesGrad.htm>)

The Student Guide: Financial Aid 2002-03 (U.S. Department of Education; free online; <http://www.ed.gov/proginfo/SFA/StudentGuide>)

"Looking for Student Aid" (U.S. Department of Education; toll-free 1-877-ED-PUBS [1-877-433-7827]; free online; http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/LSA)

Appendix – Texas-Specific Information

How can parents help their children plan for college?

Learning begins at home. Valuing the importance of higher education begins with parents, family, and friends encouraging continuing education. Make sure that your child is enrolled in college preparatory classes. Most four-year colleges and universities require the state minimum courses required for high school graduation.

Texas Recommended High School Program for College

Subject	Credits
Inglés	4
English language arts (English I, II & III)	4
Mathematics (to include Algebra I & Geometry)	3
Science (must consist of Biology & Integrated Physics & Chemistry)	2
Social Studies (must consist of World History, World Geography, U.S. History since Reconstruction & U.S. government)	2.5
Economics (with emphasis on the free enterprise system & its benefits)	0.5
Electives	5.5
Academic Elective	1
Physical Education	1.5
Health Education	0.5
Technology	1
Speech (must consist of Communication Applications)	0.5

Source: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074f.pdf>

What tests are required for higher education in Texas?

Getting accepted by college requires certain tests. The following table illustrates tests required for acceptance (Texas Education Code §51.803).

In Texas, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) measures the statewide curriculum in reading, mathematics, algebra, geometry, biology, physics, chemistry and history. Your child must achieve satisfactory performance on the TAKS exit level tests to receive a high school diploma, which is required to attend a four-year university. In most cases, it is required that students have a high school diploma or are working toward a GED to register at a two-year community college.

Tests Required for College

Four-Year College	Two-Year Community College
High School Exit Level Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)	High School Diploma or GED
Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) assesses reading, math and writing skills required by public college and universities	Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) assesses reading, math and writing skills
Scholastic Aptitude Test), which tests math and verbal abilities, or ACT (American College Test), which tests a variety of subject areas including math, science, language, and social studies.	(some will require SAT or ACT)
SAT II Subject Test that tests knowledge and abilities in a certain subject areas.	(some will require SAT II)

The Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) is used to assess the reading, mathematics and writing skills that entering college students should have. Your child must take the THEA, or an alternative test, before beginning classes as a public community college or public university in Texas. In a range from 100 to 300, the minimum score needed to pass the reading and mathematics section is 230. For the writing section, the minimum passing score is 220.

- have an ACT composite score of 23, with a minimum in both English and math tests; or
- have a SAT combined verbal and math score of 1070, with a minimum of 500 on both the verbal and math tests; or
- score 1770 on the TAKS writing test; score 86 on the Texas Learning Index on the math test; and score 89 on the Texas Learning Index on the reading test; or enroll in a certificate program of 42 semester credit hours or less at a public community or technical college.

How do I apply?

According to Texas law, if your daughter or son is in the top 10 percent of his or her high school graduating class, **he or she is guaranteed admission to public universities in Texas**, but the student must submit application materials as required (Texas Education Code § 51.803).

Make sure that your daughter or son has requested applications from colleges and universities through the guidance counselor's office or directly from the college.

Some colleges accept the Texas Common Application, which allows a student to complete one application - electronic or paper - to apply to as many Texas public universities as they like (Texas Education Code §51.762 and § 51.763).

How can families start planning early to pay for college in Texas?

In Texas, the average tuition for attending a full-time public university is \$5,732 (in 2008). The total cost including books, supplies, room and board, transportation and personal expenses is \$17,494 per year. The average tuition cost for private universities is \$17,392 per year. The total cost including books, supplies, room and board, transportation and personal expenses is \$26,909 per year (collegefortexans.com).

The average tuition cost for community colleges is \$1,120, for health related institutions is \$5,520, for technical colleges is \$2,806, for state colleges is \$3,475, and for independent two-year colleges is \$8,548. The total cost including books, supplies, room and board, transportation and personal expenses for community colleges is \$11,570, for health related institutions is \$23,803, for technical colleges is \$12,564, for state colleges is \$11,886, and for independent two-year colleges is \$15,503.

There is also statewide financial aid program called Toward Excellence, Access and Success (TEXAS) Grant Program that provides grant money to well-prepared eligible students to attend public and private non-profit colleges in Texas.

Resources for You

College Planning Resources

The College Board
www.collegeboard.com

The Common Application
www.commonapp.org

ACT College Planning Guide
www.act.org

Educational Testing Service
www.ets.org

CollegeNet
www.collegenet.com

College Source Online
www.collegesource.org

C3 Apply
www.c3apply.org

KnowHow2Go
www.KnowHow2Go.org

College Access
www.Going2college.org

Resource Organizations

League of United Latin American
Citizens (LULAC)
www.lulac.org

Mexican American Legal Defense and
Educational Fund (MALDEF)
www.maldef.org

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute,
Inc.
www.chci.org

Hispanic Association of Colleges and
Universities
www.hacu.net

U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov

National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People
www.naacp.org

United Negro College Fund
www.uncf.org

National Association of Black
Journalists Scholarships (NABJ)
www.nabj.org/html/studentsvcs.html

Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund
www.thurgoodmarshallfund.org/sk_v6.cfm

Free Scholarships for Minorities
www.blackexcel.org/100minority.htm

Financial Aid Resources

Financial Aid for Students
www.ed.gov/studentaid

Federal Student Aid
www.studentaid.ed.gov

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

Federal resources for education
www.students.gov

Hispanic Scholarship Guide
www.hispanicscholarship.com

Hispanic Scholarship Fund
www.hsf.net

Hispanic College Fund
www.hispanicfund.org

Gates Millennium Scholars Program
www.gmsp.org

College Connection Scholarships
www.college-scholarships.com

FastWeb: Free Scholarship and College
Searches
www.fastweb.com

Watch out for scholarship scams
www.finaid.org

College Savings Opportunities
www.scholarshare.com

FAFSA4caster
www.Fafsa4caster.ed.gov

Other State Resources

College for Texans
www.collegeforTexans.com



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