

Grade 12

College Resource Guide

Everything you need to know
to take the next big step in
your life...going to college!



i know
i can

DREAM BIG. WORK HARD. WE'LL HELP.™

Your future begins now

Congratulations! You've made it to senior year, and now the excitement REALLY starts building as you realize the rewards of your hard work and prepare for college.

Keep this guide handy as you navigate through everything necessary to choose a college that's right for you, apply, get financial aid and begin your exciting college journey.

From college entrance test scores to college brochures and financial aid applications, you'll have a lot of information to keep track of throughout the year. So, get out your college binder to store important information and get going.

Remember, your I Know I Can College Advisor is always there to help with answers to your questions and advice to make the process easier.

In this guide you'll find:

- What colleges want: tips on what colleges look for in prospective students
- Finding the right fit: chart to rate and compare schools
- Application checklist
- Financial aid information
- Resources to guide you
- College planning checklist
- College To Do List

What colleges want

Getting into college has become increasingly competitive. Grades are obviously important, but there's more to you than just your GPA. Colleges consider a variety of factors in selecting the ideal applicants for each freshman class.

Academic Record	Colleges look at the breadth and diversity of coursework as well as the difficulty of courses.
Grades	Consistent performance is important. If grades are not good initially, colleges look for signs that significant improvement has been made.
Extracurricular Activities	Well-rounded applicants stand out. You can demonstrate this as well as initiative, creativity and commitment through involvement in school activities, community service and/or work.
College Essay	Many colleges require an essay for admission. Be sure to spend time writing it and ask a teacher or counselor to review it.
Recommendations	Many colleges require a recommendation from the high school counselor. Some ask for references from a teacher or another adult.
Standardized Test Scores	Colleges look at ACT and/or SAT test scores. You can often find the average score for incoming freshmen on college web sites.
Class Rank	Your academic standing in relation to others in your class demonstrates how well you performed among your peer group.
College Interview	Most colleges with highly selective admission procedures require an in-person interview.

*Be the best you can be in all the areas that matter.
It will make you the applicant that colleges really want.*

Finding the right fit

By senior year, you should narrow your choices to 4-6 schools. Now it's time to look at each school closely, to see which ones truly fit your needs, interests and ambitions.

Here's a chart to help you make the right decision for your future. Enter what you know about each college and score them, 1-5 (1 being fair, 5 being excellent), based upon characteristics that are important to you.

	SCHOOL 1:	SCHOOL 2:	SCHOOL 3:	SCHOOL 4:	SCHOOL 5:	SCHOOL 6:
Student Body						
Location						
Faculty						
Degree Programs						
Facilities						
Extracurricular						
Internships/Work						
Housing						
Tuition						
Financial Aid						
Chances						
Other						
Overall Average						

STUDENT BODY Size? Male/female ratio? Do most students live on campus or commute? **LOCATION** Close to home? Easy to get to? Size of the campus? Large city? Small town? **DEGREE PROGRAMS** Interesting majors? Independent study opportunities? Class sizes? **FACULTY** Reputation? Student/faculty ratio? Faculty availability/office hours? **FACILITIES** Classrooms? Labs? Libraries? **EXTRACURRICULAR** Athletics? Cultural offerings? Organizations? **INTERNSHIPS/WORK** Availability? Convenience? **HOUSING** Dorms? Apartments? **TUITION** Quarters? Semesters? Books? Fees? Costs? **FINANCIAL AID** What's available? **CHANCES** What are the chances of acceptance? **OTHER** What else matters to you?

Application checklists

Once you've narrowed your choices to 4-6 schools, use this chart to keep your application information organized.

If you have a "dream school" in mind, GO FOR IT! But make sure at least one of your choices is a college where you know you will be accepted and you can afford to attend.

Study each school's application requirements carefully, and make sure you provide everything that is asked. Proofread everything before you send it—you want to be certain to make the very best impression. Make sure you get your applications in before the deadlines. Take your completed application to the guidance office so it can be sent with an official transcript. If the college asks for letters of recommendation, they should also be included.

SCHOOL	APPLICATION DEADLINE	APPLICATION FEE	SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE	ACT/SAT SCORES REQUIRED	FAFSA DEADLINE	CSS PROFILE? (YES/NO)	APPLIED DATE	RESPONSE DATE

ACT	DATE REGISTERED	DATE TAKEN	ENGLISH SCORE	MATH SCORE	READING SCORE	SCIENCE SCORE	WRITING SCORE

SAT	DATE REGISTERED	DATE TAKEN	CRITICAL READING SCORE	MATH SCORE

If you have a "dream school" in mind, GO FOR IT!

Financial aid

You have what it takes to get accepted; now it's time to find the funding that will help you afford it.

Don't rule out any college that interests you because of cost alone. Financial aid is available for qualified students to help meet both educational costs (tuition, fees, books, etc.) and personal living expenses (food, housing, transportation, etc.). I Know I Can College Advisors offer guidance and assistance in finding and applying for these financial aid opportunities.

There are 5 basic types of financial aid.

Scholarships	Awarded on the basis of merit, skill or a unique characteristic. Repayment is not required. Most scholarships require that you maintain a certain level of achievement, e.g., a 3.0 GPA.
Grants	Usually awarded on the basis of financial need. Repayment is not required.
Work-Study	Allows you to earn a paycheck for working a limited number of hours throughout the school year at the college you attend.
Loans	Many students and parents borrow to help pay educational expenses. Think of loans as an investment in your future. Loans must be repaid with interest, usually after your education is completed.
I Know I Can Grants	Awarded to CCS graduates who meet a particular set of eligibility requirements and demonstrate financial need. Visit iknowican.org to apply.

In order to be eligible for most student aid programs, students must complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), which is available online at fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA cannot be processed prior to January 1. FAFSA requires every student as well as one parent to each have a PIN (Personal Identification Number), a four-digit number that allows you to access your personal information on Federal Student Aid web sites. Make sure you record the PINs below.

I Know I Can holds free FAFSA workshops in late January and February to help you and your family complete the FAFSA. Check with your I Know I Can College Advisor or school counselor for dates and times. Never pay for someone to help you complete or submit your FAFSA.

DATE APPLIED FOR PIN	DATE RECEIVED	PARENT 4-DIGIT PIN	STUDENT 4-DIGIT PIN

Resources to guide you

There are many different places to go for information that will provide insight and guidance as you plan for college. Always visit the web sites of colleges you are interested in attending. Most college sites have detailed, up-to-date information about courses of study, student life, activities and lots more. Here are some additional web sites that offer useful information. Of course, your I Know I Can College Advisor is always available to help you along the way.

General Advice	
iknowican.org	Our web site is a great place to start
collegeapps.com	Help with your college application essays
collegeboard.org	Advice about the SAT test and college searches
knowhow2goohio.com	Tips on the right steps to prepare for college
csopportunity.org	College preparation resources and guidance
act.org	Advice and tips about the ACT and college planning

College Searches	
campustours.com	Take virtual tours of colleges all over the country
collegelink.com	Download applications for hundreds of colleges
collegenet.com	Review information on many different schools
collegesearch.schoolguides.com	Search all kinds of information about colleges
collegeview.com	Another good site to search for colleges
socollegecenter.org	Search for college programs and admissions information
ncaa.org	Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse if you are considering playing college sports

Financial Aid	
columbusfoundation.org/scholarlink	Research local scholarship opportunities
fafsa.ed.gov	Free Application for Federal Student Aid web site
finaid.org	Great source of information on student financial aid
pin.ed.gov	Create a personal ID number, required for aid applications
studentaid.ed.gov	Information on funding your education
students.gov	Education resources from the federal government
studentservices.com/fastweb	Another source for financial aid information
blackexcel.org/100minority.htm	Shows scholarships available for minorities

*You're ready to start on the adventure of your life.
We hope this guide will help make it easier for you.*

College planning checklist

September-December

- Meet with your I Know I Can College Advisor to get started on the right track. There's a lot to accomplish, but your hard work, commitment and organization will pay off.
- Make sure you have taken or are enrolled in all the courses necessary for graduation and college admission. Take challenging courses. They will better prepare you for college.
- Continue to work on your grades. Take a full course load your senior year. An easy senior year of high school = a tough freshman year of college. The good study habits you're developing now will help you make a much smoother transition to college.
- If you haven't taken the ACT or SAT, register now. If you have taken the tests, talk to a counselor about whether you should repeat them to improve your scores.
- Get involved in student government, clubs and volunteer opportunities in your community. Focus on activities that demonstrate initiative, creativity, commitment and leadership.
- Read whenever you have time. You can keep up with current events on the Internet at a wide variety of web sites.
- Obtain letters of recommendation. Many colleges require recommendations from counselors, teachers, employers or other adults.
- Read all the mail you receive from colleges. Consider the different characteristics of each school that interests you – degrees, size, public or private, location, cost, etc.
- Attend as many area college fairs as possible. Sign up to meet with college representatives who visit your high school.
- Narrow your college choices to four to six schools. Use the school ratings chart in this guide to help you compare.
- Apply to colleges early. Make sure you have applied to one college that you are sure you can afford and will accept you.
- If you have a favorite school, check for an early admission program which admits a higher percentage of early applicants than regular applicants. The college may require you to promise to attend if you are accepted.
- Write to the colleges of your choice for their institutional financial aid applications (some require separate forms).
- Complete and submit your college admission and financial aid applications (some require separate forms) by winter break. Keep copies of everything you send in your college binder.
- Search and apply for scholarships and grants. Visit the Internet, your school counselor and I Know I Can College Advisor for more information. Check iknowican.org for scholarship updates.
- Apply for a Federal Student Aid PIN (Personal Identification Number) for you and one parent at pin.ed.gov. Make sure you record these numbers.
- Male students must register for selective service on their 18th birthday to be eligible for federal and state financial aid.

- ❑ Register with NCAA Clearinghouse if you are planning to play sports in college. See your high school Athletic Director for details.

January-February

- ❑ Ask your I Know I Can College Advisor for specific college FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) deadlines.
- ❑ Collect personal financial and tax information in preparation for completing your financial aid application.
- ❑ Register for and attend an I Know I Can FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Workshop held in January and February. Ask your IKIC College Advisor for details.
- ❑ Complete the FAFSA which is available online at fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA cannot be processed before January 1.
- ❑ Make sure all forms necessary for admission and all possible financial aid applications have been submitted and keep copies. Use the application checklist in this guide.

March-April

- ❑ Look for your acceptance packets in the mail and share your success with your teachers and advisors.
- ❑ When you receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) and the financial aid award notice from your colleges, review them with your I Know I Can College Advisor.
- ❑ If possible, visit your college of choice before you make your final selection. If you can't visit, many schools provide e-mail addresses of students who will share their experiences and answer your questions.

- ❑ Finalize your college choice. Return acceptance forms for admission and financial aid along with the appropriate fees to the college you plan to attend.
- ❑ Get an I Know I Can Grant application online or from your I Know I Can College Advisor.
- ❑ Submit your I Know I Can Grant application along with all of the required documents. Visit iknowican.org for more information.

May

- ❑ Withdraw your application for admission and financial aid from the colleges you have decided not to attend.
- ❑ Complete all follow-up paperwork for your college, such as scheduling an orientation session, housing selection and deposit, medical exam, etc.
- ❑ Notify the guidance office about your college of choice and request a final transcript be sent to the college in June.

June

- ❑ Receive and review information on the orientation session, scheduling and housing from your college.
- ❑ Write thank you notes to those who wrote recommendation letters for you.

Congratulations!

Your hard work has paid off.

Notes

A series of horizontal white lines on a yellow background, intended for writing notes.

Since 1988, I Know I Can has provided Columbus City Schools students the advice, counsel and financial support they need to achieve their dreams of earning a college degree. Beginning in elementary school, I Know I Can College Advisors and volunteers encourage children to dream big and work hard.

One of the largest and most successful college access programs in the nation and the only one in Columbus, I Know I Can gives students a chance to realize their full potential and make their dreams come true by:

- Motivating students to stay in school and focus on academics
- Promoting the opportunities and benefits of college
- Offering college awareness programs, resources and activities
- Advising students and families on college selection, admission and financial aid processes
- Providing I Know I Can Grants to qualified students
- Helping students stay in college and complete their education

