



*Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated*



# TOOLKIT

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SUPREME BASILEUS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS OF: \_\_\_\_\_

You finally made it! As you prepare to walk across the stage and make your mama proud, don't forget you still have to get ready for college. Many students do not realize that your senior year is just as important as your junior year. On this page you will find tips and information on how to make this a productive and successful senior year!

## Tips for your senior year and preparing for college!

- Don't let Senior-itis tempt you into skipping class or stop you from completing assignments.
  - If you miss a certain number of days of class, then your school may prohibit you from graduating.
  - Colleges still require your final transcript, so if they see you barely passed classes your senior year they may take your scholarship away or deny your acceptance to that school.
- Get involved or continue to be involved in extracurricular activities and organizations at school.
  - Not only does this look good on college applications, but it will allow you to meet new freinds and participate in an activity you enjoy.
- Participate in Senior Activities and raise your school spirit.
- Complete college applications early, so you can enjoy your senior year!
- Don't compare yourself to others.
- Celebrate accomplishments throughout the year.
  - Graduating high school is a big deal! Celebrate that you have made it this far!
- Reinvent yourself.
  - Be open to new experiences and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone.
  - Become the person you've always wanted to be and don't let anyone stop you.
- Realize that you may not have all of life's questions figured out quite yet.
  - In college, you are able to change your major and courses. Don't feel like you have to stick to one path.
- Make useful connections.
  - Reach out to individuals for mentoring and for internships.
- Plan ahead as best as you can.
  - This will help alleviate stress and help you feel more in control.
  - You don't have to worry about what will happen tomorrow or next week.
  - Stay true to your word and be accountable to your promises
- Be productive.
- Find where you need to be more proactive.

You will hear repeatedly that your junior year is your most important year of high school; and they're right! When you apply to college you will be reporting all your GPA, accolades, and involvements up to your junior year. So make this year count by following some of the suggestions and utilizing resources on this page to prepare you for a successful admissions process!

## Tips for your junior year and preparing for college!

- Take Advanced Placement (AP) classes.
  - Not only does taking rigorous courses look good on your college application, but you can receive college credits if you score well on your end-of-the-year AP exams.
- Even if you have a good GPA, that doesn't mean you shouldn't prepare to take standardized tests like the SAT and ACT.
  - Use the SAT and ACT official test websites to develop study methods, to register for tests, and to access and send score reports to colleges.
- Begin creating a college list.
  - Review majors and programs in your areas of interest at different colleges.
  - Consider the size and location of the school.
  - Take into account the colleges' campus life such as dining halls, dorms, student life, or Greek Life.
  - How you will pay for college should also be considered when applying.
  - Plan a college tour to view the campus first hand.
  - Attend college fairs to gain information on various schools and what they each have to offer.
- Learn how to effectively balance your time.
  - Don't let your grades suffer because of extracurricular activities and don't be afraid to get involved in organizations just to earn a high GPA.
- Get organized.
  - You will become overwhelmed with test prep materials, homework, and college brochures; create a system to keep your room clutter free!
- Meet with your Guidance Counselor!
  - They have helped countless students before you get into college.
  - Meet with them to ensure you are on the right track to graduate on time and use them as a resource during the admissions process.
- Start searching for scholarships now.
  - There are several scholarships that juniors can apply for.
  - Check out and prepare for scholarships you can apply for during your senior year.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities.
  - By playing sports, becoming a thespian, or getting involved in Student Government you are elevating your college application.
  - Become a part of at least two extracurricular activities.
- Finally, relax!
  - Enjoy your junior year of high school and create lasting memories with your friends.

It's your final year of high school and time to begin applying to colleges! Just by earning a college degree you will earn over \$1 million more than a someone with a high school diploma. So how do you prepare for the next big step? This page will answer those questions and provide resources for the college admissions process.

## How to apply

- Narrow down your college choices until you reach a comfortable amount; at least 5.
- Look up each school's deadline and send in your application early.
- Understand each schools' specific admissions requirements.
  - Check each school's website for their specific requirements.
  - Or use [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com) to review school requirements and more.
- What you'll need for every application:
  - A copy of your high school transcript
  - A list of your extracurricular activities
  - Test scores
    - SAT or ACT
  - Parent/Legal Guardian Information
    - Educational background, occupational information, employer information, etc.
- Start your essay and personal statement early and have it proofread.
- Admissions evaluators only spend about 12 minutes on an application, so make a lasting impression.
- Your personality matters, so prove you're more than your test scores and grades.

## Early Decision vs. Regular Decision

- If you are passionate about one particular school, then you should consider applying as an Early Decision candidate.
  - Early Decision candidates submit their application in November to their top college and receive an admission decision by December.
  - If you're accepted, then you agree to attend that college and accept their financial aid package.
- If you are interested in multiple schools, then you should consider applying as a Regular Decision candidate.
  - Regular Decision candidates submit their application in late December or January and receive a decision in the spring.
  - If you're accepted into multiple schools, then you are able to compare financial aid packages and to pick the college that fits you.

For more information visit: [www.greatcollegeadvice.com](http://www.greatcollegeadvice.com)

## Resources for Admissions

- [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
  - This website allows you to fill out one application that can be submitted to multiple colleges at one time.
- [www.commonblackcollegeapp.com](http://www.commonblackcollegeapp.com)
  - Are you interested in attending an HBCU? Well this website allows you to apply to multiple HBCUs at one time with one, simple application.

## How to write a bomb college application and essay

- Analyze the prompt thoroughly and organize your writing.
  - Read the prompt several times before you begin to draft your outline.
  - See how long each paragraph needs to be to fit within the word count limit.
  - Create a schedule when to write your essay.
  - Start your essays and applications early!
- Use your essay as an introduction to admissions officers.
  - Don't simply state in your essay that you're passionate about something, show them through strong examples.
- Be yourself and tell YOUR story when writing essays.
  - Use college-level vocabulary in your essay, but avoid overdoing it.
  - Since many essays have a word count limit, find advanced words to replace a phrase.
  - Create complex and compound sentences and save simple sentences for when you need to make an impact.
- Have someone read and review your essays.
  - Ask no more than three people to help revise your essays; too many opinions may harm your essay more than help it.
  - Seek out teachers or individuals who have a background in the college admissions process.

### Tips on how to stand out

- Visit the campus.
  - 70% of colleges say by visiting their school it plays a factor in their admissions decision.
- Colleges are looking for well-rounded students.
- Be cautious of your social media presence.
  - Delete posts or tweets that may impact your application if a college admissions officer were to see it.
  - Use social media as a platform to strengthen your brand and application.
- Convey who you are beyond the essay and application.
  - Add a little bit of humor into your essay.

### Finding the best school for you

- Recognize that the "best" colleges in the nation may not be right for you.
  - Find a college that fits your personal lifestyle and goals.
  - Factor in the cost of attendance and the amount of financial aid each school offers you.
  - Research what colleges offer the right courses and the facilities offered for your intended major (i.e. if you're a STEM major, then look to see if the college has updated labs).
  - Consider the ratio of students to teachers and class sizes.
  - Do you want to come home often, or experience a different part of the country? The location of the college is quite important in the decision making process.

To create a college roadmap visit: [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

This page is all about the "Benjamins"! As the cost of tuition continues to rise, it is imperative that you as a student take advantage of financial aid opportunities such as scholarships and grants to alleviate the cost of attendance. As a senior, you can apply now for resources to help pay for college. On this page you will find tips and resources to begin your search!

## What is financial aid?

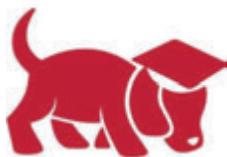
- Financial aid is money that helps pay for college.
- Financial aid can come from the U.S. Federal Government, your local state resources, the college you attend, or a nonprofit or private organization.
- Federal student aid includes:
  - **Grants:** financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid (aka free money!)
  - **Loans:** borrowed money for college; you must repay loans and their interest
  - **Work-study:** a work program through which you earn money to help pay for school

## What is the difference between paying for college with scholarships and grants versus paying with loans?

- Scholarships and grants are basically free money.
  - This is money you will never have to pay back and can go towards anything (i.e. housing, tuition, books, etc.).
- Loans must be repayed with interest.
  - **Federal loans:** provided by the government with a fixed interest rate and income-driven repayment plans.
  - **Private loans:** provided by private organizations such as banks, credit unions, and state-based or affiliated organization.
    - Typically more expensive than federal loans.

## As juniors and seniors you can apply for scholarships and grants now!

- Start your scholarship search early, look for scholarships everywhere, and apply for many.
- Gather letters of recommendation and list your accomplishments and awards.
- Have someone proofread your essays and review your entire application.
- Apply for scholarships you are qualified for first, then some you may not be qualified for.
- Use scholarship matching tools as a database to find scholarships fit for you, like:
  - [www.akaef.org](http://www.akaef.org)
  - [www.uncf.org/scholarship](http://www.uncf.org/scholarship)
  - [www.unigo.com](http://www.unigo.com)
  - [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
  - [www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com)
- Or use apps on your phone to find scholarships on the go, like:



[www.scholly.com](http://www.scholly.com)



[www.raise.me](http://www.raise.me)



[www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

For more information visit: [www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa/](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa/)

## What is FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)?

- A form that determines your eligibility for federal, state, and college-sponsored financial aid; including grants, educational loans, and work-study programs.
- The form must be submitted annually.
  - Opens annually on **October 1** on [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
  - Early submissions = more \$\$\$
- Use the FAFSA website to see when your State FAFSA Deadline is and to see when FAFSA Day is in your state.
- This year you can complete your FAFSA using the new phone app, myStudentAid.

Available on the Apple App Store (iOS)

Available on Google Play (Android)



## What are some common mistakes and tips when completing the FAFSA?

- Gather information early to assist when completing the form online, such as:
  - Your social security number and driver's license (if applicable)
  - W-2 Forms from the past two years
  - Yours and your parents' Federal Income Tax Return from the past two years
  - Current bank statements
- Making mistakes can delay your application and limit the amount of aid you're eligible for, such as:
  - Leaving fields blank
  - Using commas or decimals in numeric fields
  - Entering information like your name or address incorrectly
  - Forgetting to list colleges you've applied to attend

## How can you pay for college if you cannot earn enough scholarships and grants to cover the total cost of attendance?

- If money is a issue consider attending a community college, then applying to a four-year college afterwards.
- Loans should be a last resort, but they can help when you cannot cover the full cost of attendance.
  - Remember to apply for federal loans first before you apply for private loans.
- Types of Federal Loans:
  - **Subsidized Loans:** does not earn interest while you are in school at least half-time.
  - **Unsubsidized Loans:** interest begins to accrue as soon as the loan is taken out.

<b>Federal Student Loans</b>	Direct subsidized loans or Direct unsubsidized loans
<b>Federal Loans for Parents</b>	Direct PLUS loans
<b>Private Loans</b>	<a href="http://www.collegeavestudentloans.com">www.collegeavestudentloans.com</a> <a href="http://www.salliemae.com">www.salliemae.com</a> <a href="http://www.discoverstudentloans.com">www.discoverstudentloans.com</a> <a href="http://www.ascentstudentloans.com">www.ascentstudentloans.com</a>

# Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

## Alabama

Alabama A&M University  
Alabama State University  
Bishop State Community College  
Concordia College  
Gadsden State Community College  
J.F. Drake State Technical College  
Lawson State Community College  
Miles College  
Oakwood University  
Selma University  
Shelton State Community College  
Stillman College  
Talladega College  
Trenholm State Community College  
Tuskegee University

## Arkansas

Arkansas Baptist University  
Philander Smith College  
Shorter College  
University of Arkansas Pine Bluff

## California

Charles Drew University of Medicine  
and Science

## Delaware

Delaware State University

## Florida

Bethune-Cookman University  
Edward Waters College  
Florida A&M University  
Florida Memorial University

## Georgia

Albany State University  
Clark Atlanta University  
Fort Valley State University  
Interdenominational Theological  
Center  
Morehouse College  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
Morris Brown College  
Paine College  
Savannah State University  
Spelman College

## Kentucky

Kentucky State University  
Simmons College

## Louisiana

Dillard University  
Grambling State University  
Southern University and A&M College  
Southern University- New Orleans  
Southern University- Shreveport  
Xavier University

## Maryland

Bowie State University  
Coppin State University  
Morgan State University  
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

## Mississippi

Alcorn State University  
Coahoma Community College  
Hinds Community College- Utica  
Jackson State University  
Mississippi Valley State University  
Rust College  
Tougaloo University

## Missouri

Harris-Stowe State University  
Lincoln University

## North Carolina

Barber-Scotia College  
Bennett College for Women  
Elizabeth City State University  
Fayetteville State University  
Johnson C. Smith University  
Livingstone College  
North Carolina A&T State University  
North Carolina Central University  
St. Augustine's University  
Shaw University  
Winston-Salem State University

## Ohio

Central State University  
Wilberforce University

## Oklahoma

Langston University

## Pennsylvania

Cheyney University of Pennsylvania  
Lincoln University of Pennsylvania

## South Carolina

Allen University  
Benedict College  
Claflin University  
Clinton Junior College  
Denmark Technical College  
Morris College  
South Carolina State University  
Voorhees College

## Tennessee

American Baptist University  
Fisk University  
Knoxville College  
Lane College  
LeMoyne-Owen College  
Meharry Medical College  
Tennessee State University

## Texas

Huston-Tillotson University  
Jarvis Christian College  
Paul Quinn College  
Prairie View A&M University  
Southwestern Christian College  
St. Philip's College  
Texas College  
Texas Southern University  
Wiley College

## Virginia

Hampton University  
Norfolk State University  
Saint Paul's College  
Virginia State University  
Virginia Union University  
Virginia University of Lynchburg

## Washington D.C.

Howard University  
University of the District of  
Columbia

## West Virginia

Bluefield State University  
West Virginia State University

## Virgin Islands

University of the Virgin Islands