12th Grade - FALL College Checklist

Applying to college and financial aid is a COMPLEX process. This checklist will help you stay on track and not miss key steps or deadlines. For additional college planning information and resources, visit our resource page: https://cep.berkeley.edu/resource-directory

KEY DEADLINES

- ❑ **August 1st - November 30th:** UC application submission period
- ❑ **October 1st - November 30th:** Most CSU applications are due on 11/30. Some CSU deadlines go into Dec/Jan (but your submission goal should be 11/30)
- ❑ **October 1st:** Financial Aid Applications are due! Submit ASAP! The deadline is 3/2!
  - FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
  - CADAA (California Dream Act Application) is for eligible undocumented students.
- ❑ **October 1st:** Early Decision / Early Action
- ❑ **October 1st:** Priority HBCU submission deadline (priority for scholarships)
- ❑ **December 1st:** Priority deadline for CSS profile
- ❑ **December 1st:** Priority private school submission deadline (priority for scholarships)
- ❑ **Scholarships**: Deadlines are YEAR-ROUND - make time for scholarship applications ALL YEAR!

FALL

FUNDAMENTAL:

- ❑ IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, create a professional Gmail account and READ DAILY!
- ❑ Submit a Free/Reduced lunch application - eligible students get fee waivers for college tests and apps!
  - UC Application Fee Waiver is part of the application. If you are denied, eligible students can use the college board fee waiver or NACAC fee waiver
  - CSU Application Fee Waiver is part of the application. No other fee waiver is acceptable.
  - Common App Fee Waiver is part of the application - you can also request it from admission reps.
- ❑ Meet with your counselor to ensure you are on track to complete the A-G course requirements!
- ❑ Keep your grades up! (Colleges do not accept D or F grades). Seek tutoring/support if needed!
- ❑ Update your "Brag Sheet" and "College & Major" list
- ❑ Get organized! Start by creating a Gmail account that you will only use for college and financial aid admission purposes. Keep track of all of the accounts you will create!
- ❑ Notify your counselor if you are undocumented so they can support you as you prepare for college. Eligible undocumented students can receive financial aid! Learn more here!
- ❑ If you are an athlete interested in playing college sports, ask your counselor about NCAA requirements.
- ❑ Are you a TOP student in your class from a low-income household? Ask your counselor about these programs: Questbridge National College Match & POSSE Scholar
- ❑ Continue learning about and researching college (workshops, online tours, field trips, tours, college rep visits, college fairs, etc.)

❑ Email 2-3 teachers asking if they are willing to write you a letter of recommendation for college and scholarship applications. Once they say yes, follow up with your Brag Sheet and update them on your college submissions and deadlines.

❑ Memorize your social security number!

❑ If you took community college courses anytime during middle or high school, request official transcripts from all the colleges you enrolled in (you will add these courses to your college applications)

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS:

❑ Finalize your list to include CSUs, UC, and Privates:

University of California (UC) Campuses	Western Undergraduate Exchange *(save on out-of-state colleges)*
California State University (CSU) Campuses	Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
California Community Colleges	List of Participating Colleges on Common App
All Women's College & Universities	In-state (California) and out-of-state private universities

❑ Don't only apply to the MOST competitive colleges. YOUR CSU campuses should not all be impacted.

❑ You should have a 1st and 2nd choice majors for every school you apply to. Remember that not all majors are available at every college; do your research!

❑ If you need to cut down on the list of private schools, consider keeping those that use Common App.

❑ Once you identify the private schools you will apply to, email their admissions recruiter to introduce yourself and request a fee waiver.

❑ Every college you apply to will give you access to a portal that you need to monitor from the moment you apply until the day you pick a college! Create your college portals as soon as possible, and frequently check the next steps and messages on every portal.

TESTING:

❑ If you are applying to a college that requires and/or suggests the SAT or ACT, register ASAP. *Reminder: UC and CSU do NOT require the SAT or ACT.*

COLLEGE ESSAYS:

❑ Finalize UC Personal Insight Questions

❑ Finalize Common App essay

❑ EOP Biographical Questions (part of CSU App)

❑ Ask 1-2 people to provide you feedback

FINANCIAL AID RELATED:

❑ Create accounts on 1 or 2 scholarship search engines: NICHE or Fastweb

❑ Visit the Federal Student Aid YouTube channel and watch key vides on completing the FAFSA

❑ Understand who is considered a "parent" for financial aid purposes - whose information needs to be included on the FAFSA or CADAA.

❑ Attend a Financial Aid Night at your high school or in your community, such as a Cash for College event

❑ Ask your guardians to request a TAX TRANSCRIPT from 2 years ago and keep it handy (you will likely be required to submit it along with a financial aid application). The easiest way is to select "get a transcript by mail." When ordering, the information (name and address) *must match exactly* as written on your tax returns. **The class of 2025 needs tax transcripts from 2023 - The class of 2026 needs 2024.**

❑ Gather documents
  - Social Security Number
  - Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
  - Guardian Federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned. (Note: You may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.)
  - Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
  - Records of untaxed income (if applicable)

❑ **FAFSA**:
  - Prepare to fill out the FAFSA
  - All FAFSA contributors must create an FSA ID. A contributor is anyone (student, student's spouse, biological or adoptive parent, or parent's spouse) who is required to provide information on the FAFSA form, sign the FAFSA form, and provide consent and approval to have their federal tax information transferred directly from the IRS into the form.
  - FAFSA is available on October 1st and due by March 2nd. The earlier you submit, the better!

❑ **CADAA**:
  - Undocumented students and those with DACA DO NOT complete the FAFSA, you will complete the California Dream Act Application (CADAA).
  - The CADAA is available on October 1st & due by March 2nd. The earlier you submit, the better!

❑ Approximately four weeks after completing FAFSA or CADAA, your family will receive a report with a summary of the info provided on the application. Return and make any necessary changes.

❑ You will need to complete the FAFSA or CADAA every year! File your taxes early!

❑ If you are applying to private colleges, you may need to submit an additional financial aid application called the CSS Profile: https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/.