September 2025 Newsletter
collegeapp101.com

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Preparing for October's FAFSA Release

October 1 is this fall's target date for the release of the 2026-27 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Members of the high school class of 2026 and their parents would do well to set aside time on a couple of evenings in early October to complete and submit it (assuming they wish to apply for federal financial aid). It is true that a family can wait until next summer to submit. But those families risk missing the financial aid deadlines of their senior's prospective colleges. Additionally, a common opinion is submitting earlier yields better financial aid packages than submitting later.

What should current seniors and their families do to prepare?

- Step one: access the financial aid websites of a senior's prospective colleges. Each financial aid website should have information on FAFSA, deadlines, and so forth. Make it a point to honor all financial aid deadlines and requirements. If a family anticipates obstacles in meeting deadlines, that family should reach out directly to the financial aid office, provide an explanation, and seek guidance.
- Step two: prior to October 1, create a studentaid.gov account. Students need one, and so do parents. A social security number and email address are required to create this account.
- Step three: gather additional items like federal income tax returns, bank statements (with balances of savings and checking accounts), cash balances, and net worth of investments and businesses.

It is the experience of College App 101 that a college student's main source of financial aid is connected to FAFSA submission more so than individual scholarships that a student finds on goingmerry.com, an outstanding scholarship search engine. Families, who want access to federal financial aid dollars for the 2026-27 academic year, should submit this fall's FAFSA shortly after October 1. Access more resources on studentaid.gov.

Newest College App 101 Service

College App 101 is excited to announce a new career aptitude service: Career Planning Session. This service is for students, who do not know what college major to declare or career path to pursue. The Career Planning Session is a meeting to discuss a high school student's prospective career choices and the education that such career prospects require. A pre-meeting assessment is required. Connect with Dr. Riley at collegeapp101.com and request more information today.

College App 101 Podcasts

Designed for college bound high school students and their parents, these podcasts are brief, informational, and entertaining. They are available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and collegeapp101.com/podcasts/. Recent episodes:

- Admissions Advice from a College Student
- When to Prepare for Highly Selective Admissions
- The Role of Parents in College Admissions
- Hats Off to the Class of 2025

Dates to Remember

- Sept 2: late registration deadline for the Sept 13 SAT (fee increase)
- Sept 6: ACT test day
- Sept 12: regular registration deadline for the Oct 18 ACT
- Sept 13: SAT test day
- Sept 19: regular registration deadline for the Oct 4 SAT
- Sept 24: late registration deadline for the Oct 4 SAT (fee increase)
- Sept 30: late registration deadline for the Oct 18 ACT (fee increase)
- Oct 4: SAT test day
- Oct 18: SAT test day
- Oct 24: regular registration deadline for the Nov 8 SAT
- Oct 28: late registration deadline for the Nov 8 SAT (fee increase)

Click here for SAT registration and here for ACT registration

Past College App 101 Newsletters

Past editions of the College App 101 Newsletter can be found here.