



COLLEGE POSITIVE VOLUNTEERS



Helping K–12 Youth
Take Steps Towards
Postsecondary
Education



A TOOLKIT
for College Students
Volunteering with K–12 Youth



Campus Compact
Montana

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations on completing the College Positive Volunteer (CPV) training and certification process!

You are now a support person who can help K-12 students take steps toward postsecondary education. No matter what you do as a CPV—whether you are participating in an event or volunteering for an extended period of time—you are making a difference.

Don't forget to check mtcompact.org

This website contains updates and helpful resources. It also has downloadable copies of some of the CPV activities included in this guide that you can modify and share.

While working with K–12 youth, always remember the CPV Mindset and Motto!

THE CPV MINDSET

The belief that college is attainable for all students and that you are willing to do whatever you can to help those students prepare for and enroll in college.

THE CPV MOTTO

**CPVs do not ask: “Are you going to college?”
Instead, they ask: “Where are you going to college,
and how can I help you get there?”**



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Michigan Campus Compact is affiliated with Campus Compact and Michigan Nonprofit Association and is supported by the ConnectMichigan Alliance Endowment.

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Funding for the original College Positive Volunteerism toolkit was provided by Michigan Campus Compact through the Michigan College Access Network and the U.S. Department of Education College Access Challenge Fund, and the King-Chavez-Parks Initiative's GEAR UP/College Day within the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth. National Campus Compact and the Lumina Foundation provided supplemental support for the design of the tool.

The publication of this toolkit was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Education College Access Challenge Grant. Contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department, and should not be assumed as endorsed by the federal government.

A special thanks to Massachusetts Campus Compact for guiding the initiative with their work and publications: *A Guide to College Access and the College Positive Volunteer*, and *Emerging Themes in the Fields of College Access and Civic Engagement: College Access Fellows Mapping Report*. The term "College Positive Volunteer" was first introduced by Massachusetts Campus Compact.

INTRODUCTION

This manual has been created as a tool to assist in your preparation for working with youth as a College Positive Volunteer. It is intended to be as encompassing as possible but is not inclusive of all possibilities and tools that exist for working with K-12 students. As a CPV, the main focus is stimulating student awareness of the opportunities college affords, sharing strategies for college preparedness, and encouraging students to pursue a college education. Every time you engage a student as a CPV, it is crucial to remain flexible. You will likely need to utilize various strategies as you build a relationship with a student. The tools and strategies outlined in this manual provide a guide to support a positive experience as a CPV. However, you will always need to assess the appropriateness of the activities and conversations planned for use at your sites. Once you get to know your student(s), you will be able to tailor activities to meet their needs. As a CPV, you have a unique opportunity to be an advocate for students and an advocate for education; linking the two for a powerful experience. Last but not least, be ready to learn! The students you encounter will yield incredible, engaging stories filled with ideas and experiences. Listen, learn and enjoy a wonderful experience as a CPV!

NAVIGATING THE CPV MANUAL:

This manual is divided into sections with the intention of serving as both an extensive information source and a quick reference guide. The opening section provides general information helpful in preparation of your CPV assignment and for understanding the diversity of students. Following are three sections divided into the age groups of elementary, middle and high school. These sections outline college preparatory behaviors for students in these age ranges and suggest activities that volunteers can conduct with students to reinforce these behaviors. The remaining sections provide college preparatory resources helpful for volunteers and students such as information about paying for college, taking SAT/ACT tests, a glossary of terms and sample forms.

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UNDERSTANDING ALL STUDENTS

BEING INCLUSIVE IN YOUR COLLEGE ACCESS EFFORTS

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Understanding All Students

When working with diverse groups of students, it is crucial to understand that students bring a multitude of life experiences with them to school each and every day which, in turn, can greatly influence their experiences with education. For many reasons, students face challenges in life, leading them to become at-risk of dropping out of school. This section is intended to provide a basic foundation to alternative education in order for CPV's to be better prepared and more understanding when working with at-risk youth.

What is alternative education?

Alternative education programs are subsets of the traditional K-12 program. They are designed for students who can be better served in an alternative educational delivery system or who have been identified as having specific needs and/or are at-risk of not graduating. These programs seek to provide added flexibility and alternative instructional models and often include expanded services from the traditional setting such as online learning, institutional programs, counseling, childcare, and transportation in an effort to help students overcome barriers.

What is at-risk?

An “at-risk” student is “any [student] who is unlikely to graduate, on schedule, with both the skills and self-esteem necessary to exercise meaningful options in the areas of work, leisure, culture, civic affairs, inter/intra personal relationships, [and who may drop out of school because of low academic performance].”² A common misconception of at-risk students is that they are part of a homogeneous group. They are not a specific group within society rather; the term at-risk encompasses a very diverse population of individuals. At-risk students cross every race, social class, gender, sexuality, and religion as well as urban, suburban and rural lines. This group is an extremely diverse group sharing the commonality of being at-risk of dropping out of school.

What does it mean to be at-risk? (One or more of the following may apply³)

- Challenges or troubles at home
- Learning challenges
- Substance abuse or addictions
- Physical abuse
- Intimidation
- Teen parent
- Lack of emotional support
- Sexual abuse
- At risk of dropping out of school
- Socioeconomic struggles
- Health issues
- Fear
- Hunger
- Single parent or non-parent household
- Lack of financial support
- Foster care youth

1. Sagor, Richard and Jonas Cox, *At-Risk Students: Reaching and Teaching Them* (New York: Eye on Education, 2004) 1.

2. The characteristics and behaviors displayed above are not exhaustive of all possibilities when identifying at-risk students.

What types of behaviors might I encounter? (One or more of the following may apply)

- Refusal to participate
- Apathetic
- Withdrawn
- Toughness
- Quiet
- Irritability/loss of temper
- Drug or alcohol use
- Disruptive/outbursts in class
- Threatening others
- An “I don’t care” attitude
- Depressed
- Aggressive or violent
- Toughness
- Argumentative
- Marked decreased performance
- Lack of sleep / drowsy
- Rejected by peers
- Inappropriate conversation / comments

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Understanding All Students

What can I do to help connect with at-risk students?

UNDERSTAND TERMINISTIC SCREEN: Terministic screens are vocabularies or perspectives that are particular to members of specific socioeconomic, cultural, professional, or other social groups. Group members utilizing these vocabularies understand aspects of “reality” in different ways because each terministic vocabulary encourages members to “select” portions of “reality” while “deflecting” others.⁴ In other words, it is the manner in which people view and interpret the world around them based on their social class, race, gender, level of education, etc. For example, one person may believe that racism no longer exists because he/she has never experienced it nor witnessed it personally. Another person may be a frequent victim of racial discrimination or may witness it on a regular basis. Both have two very different perspectives on racism based on their terministic screen. If these two people meet and discuss the issue of racism, they could potentially encounter conflict or “butting of heads” regarding their differing perspectives. These perspectives, fueled by the vocabularies and personal experiences surrounding each person’s life, stem from their terministic screens. It is terministic screen that can make it difficult to fully understand others’ perspectives.

As a CPV, your position requires you to be open and non-judgmental as you are learning the terministic screens of the students with which you work. The goal is not to be “convinced” or to adopt or match a student’s terministic screen, but rather to withhold judgment and resist the temptation to be “right”. Simply attempting to see the student’s point of view and realizing how it differs from yours is a good first step. Then, you can gain an understanding of how the student’s experiences have shaped their view of the world. Understanding at-risk students’ terministic screens will allow you to connect with and understand them with more depth, allowing you to make connections and build stronger relationships.

BE CLEAR WHY YOU ARE WORKING WITH THE STUDENT: At-risk students may not be accustomed to people genuinely interested in helping them and may be suspicious of your motives. Be clear about why you are working with them and speak directly to them. Do not assume that they know why you are working with them or where you come from. This clarity will help build trust between you and your student(s).

BE AUTHENTIC: To connect with students, you must let them see you for who you are and be authentic in your interactions with them. It is common for volunteers to be anxious about how to connect with students. It is important to be yourself as students are perceptive and will not trust an adult who they feel is being “fake”. Begin by sharing something

4. Naomi Rockler, “Race, whiteness, “lightness”, and relevance: African American and European American interpretations of Jump Start and Boondocks,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 4 (2002), 398.

about you, or an experience that is meaningful to you. Being honest and open is more important than being the same. It is even okay to share with the students your own feelings of uncertainty, as it might put the student at ease and establish a human connection. Most importantly, be ready to listen. Ask questions about things that authentically interest you and resist the temptation to “correct” a student’s response or point of view. Listen for something you relate to and build upon that connection.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Understanding All Students

ASK COMFORTABLE QUESTIONS: Start with general, lighthearted questions to get to know the students and allow students time to ask you questions. Don’t make assumptions about students’ lives or upbringing rather, use general questions to reveal details about their lives. If students provide a surprising or shocking response, do your best not to react negatively, but ask additional questions to inquire how they feel about what they’ve shared, if it feels appropriate. At the very least, resist giving your opinion, brushing over the student’s sharing with positive banter, or making empty promises to the student. Show that you are someone safe for them to speak to without judgment.

SHARE ABOUT YOURSELF: Tell students about your college experience. Include information like how you chose your college and what life experiences led to your interest in your major. If the student challenges you, make inquiries about the student’s challenge, rather than reprimanding them. Most likely, such behavior is the result of a defense mechanism and, if explored, can lead to a better understanding of your differences.

TAKE BABY STEPS: Do not worry if you do not feel an immediate connection. Each time you meet with the student(s), remember something about the last visit or interaction to use to attempt to build a relationship with them. This will help students realize that you listen to them and care about what they say.

DON’T GIVE UP: Use different approaches as you work with the student(s). It may take time to build trust with students. Be patient and continue to let the students know you are there to provide information, answer questions, and help them get to college. If one approach doesn’t work, try another the next time.

MAKE TOPICS RELEVANT TO THE STUDENTS: Remember that your world and that of the student(s) may seem very different. Do whatever you can to make conversation relevant to your student(s) to help them feel comfortable. Even if you aren’t sure what topics may be relevant, ask questions and attempt topics that the student has indicated an interest in. By communicating topics of interest, you can begin to break down barriers.

BE WILLING AND EAGER TO LEARN FROM THE STUDENTS: Many of the students you will be working with will have strengths and knowledge surrounding things or topics with which you may not be familiar. Embrace these strengths and allow the students to take on the role of teacher and get a glimpse of how the student sees the world. Encourage them to share their viewpoints, ideas, and knowledge.

Strategies to approach interactions with at-risk students

Start off with what you know and be authentic. You must be comfortable in order to help the student(s) feel comfortable. Start off with the basics; names, interests, similarities to you. If the student approaches the interaction negatively or highlights the differences between the two of you, then you must show the student that you are interested in learning. Ask questions, inquire about the student’s interests and life, and show that you are trying to develop a connection and that you also have goals for learning. You must establish that you are an equal, rather than someone there to solely “teach” or “help” them. You must begin by establishing a “we” approach – “We are in this together” and “We are going to work together”, etc.

Apathetic Student:

If a student seems apathetic or displays an “I don’t care, I’m not interested” attitude, do not force the student to participate. Do not be too focused on your “agenda”. Taking time to build rapport and connection with the student is able, and will allow for more efficient exchanges once the student is comfortable with you. Rather than solely talking about college, try to have informal conversation with the student and share why you are working with him/her and share your passions. When attempting conversation, start with a broad topic that you think may connect to some experience

or emotion of the student. Once you have established mutual ground or connection begin the process of funneling the conversation back to education using the connections you have established.⁵ By making the conversation relevant to the student, you will see a spark of interest from them. Build upon this spark to expand conversation.

Argumentative/Aggressive/Intimidating Student:

Whatever you do, do not engage in a similar behavior. Do not argue back and do not try to reason with the aggressive or intimidating behaviors of the student. You must stay calm and attempt to find a way to help the student feel comfortable enough with you to let their guard down. Once again, start by asking general questions or tell a story about yourself or your experience that will help break the ice. Remember that baby steps are still steps forward, and with time, you will build rapport with the student. (See Apathetic Student above)

Withdrawn/Shy/Quiet Student:

Students displaying these characteristics may have encountered a negative past experience which could lead them to feel weary of their interaction with you, making it difficult to establish a connection. A student who is withdrawn, shy and/or quiet (introverted) does not mean that the student is not interested in you or what you have to offer. Thus, you must be creative and comforting as you approach your work with him/her. Similar to apathetic or aggressive students, you can begin by sharing why you are there, tell stories about something that may relate to an experience of the student, and/or ask general questions. It often helps to share about yourself to help the student feel at ease and not feel pressured to speak or share at first. Bring activities that can offer a focus for conversations and take the focus off of the student. This may help him/her feel more comfortable.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Understanding All Students

5. Paul Hernandez, “Alternative Pedagogy: Empowering Teachers through Real Talk” (PhD diss., Michigan State University 2010).

BEFORE VOLUNTEERING CHECKLIST

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Before volunteer checklist

- **PEOPLE BEFORE STUDENTS:** Remember first and foremost that the youth you are working with are people before they are students. It is easy to become captivated by our roles as volunteers, teachers, mentors, etc., but it is crucial that you focus on your shared human experiences as people first. This will help you establish a comfortable, trusting, and meaningful relationship with the youth.
- **SMILE:** Authentic smiles can help break down barriers by helping to show that you care, removing fear, and creating a more comfortable atmosphere between you and the student.
- **CARE:** Although a number of personal goals may be tied to why you are a volunteer, make a choice to care about the postsecondary achievement of the K–12 students you work with. Many at-risk students have never thought about college as an option or may not be familiar with college at all. You have an opportunity to authentically influence college dreams. Be careful to not seem overbearing or pushy as this could distance students from you.
- **BE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE:** A student’s community may be different than your home community; be sensitive to those differences. Do not impose your cultural views on the students but rather attempt to understand the student’s perspectives in order to better understand how to connect college within their lives. (Review “Understanding All Students” on page 2)
- **BE EMPATHETIC:** Try to understand the manner in which students view the world and try to be empathetic to their experiences and respectful of their opinions.
- **BE READY TO LEARN:** Be ready to learn about yourself and others throughout and as a result of your volunteering experience. Remember that you must be open to learning in order to maximize your learning experience. As you work with the students, they will learn from you while at the same time, you will have an opportunity to learn many things from them.
- **WEAR YOUR COLLEGE GEAR:** This is a simple but effective way to promote college. This not only demonstrates school pride, but it also sparks conversation about college. However, be aware that certain colors carry strong meaning in some schools and communities. Certain colors may represent a specific gang or group affiliation. Wearing the wrong colors may negatively impact your connection and work with students. If you are unsure which colors are inappropriate, select neutral clothing colors (grey, white, tan, etc.) that highlight your schools’ name or mascot or ask an administrator or teacher at the school prior to your participation.
- **BE PREPARED:** You are more likely to be successful if you prepare.
 - Print off necessary activities and materials from the MTCC website: mtcompact.org
 - Know about your college and be able to talk about it by filling out “Talking Points about Your College” on page 17.
 - Feel better prepared to answer students’ questions by reviewing “Frequently Asked Questions” on page 8 and “We Don’t Know What We Don’t Know” on page 12.
- **BE SUPPORTIVE:** Encourage students to do well in school, to pursue their dreams, and to attend postsecondary education, by responding with “yes, you can”, not “maybe you can’t.” Positive encouragement is crucial for first generation college-interested students. Remind students that it is never too late to improve grades and strive to learn more. College can be an option for any student with determination and effort!

- **HAVE A MUTUAL GOAL:** Each time you engage with a student, have a personal and mutual goal for the session. This goal can be something stated with the youth, or it can be a goal you have in mind to achieve during the interaction.
- **BE INTROSPECTIVE:** Be aware that sometimes you will respond to a moment, the context, or the K–12 students based on the things that have shaped you, not what actually is or has occurred. Often times, ideas will be born from your interaction with the student if you are willing to listen and allow them to arise.
- **LISTEN:** Effective listening will help you develop appropriate CPV strategies for the students. Listen intently when students speak to you as you may potentially be the only person they have that is willing to listen to what they have to say.
- **BE FLEXIBLE:** Things may not go as planned, but that does not mean you have been unsuccessful. Flexibility fosters an environment inclusive to all students’ unique needs and characteristics.⁶ Do not be afraid to adjust your plans or activities when interacting with students. Don’t take it personally if you experience negative interactions with or behaviors from students.
- **AVOID JUDGEMENT:** Many factors contribute to an individual’s life history. Take care not to judge the backgrounds, socioeconomic level, aspirations, parents/guardians, etc. of the K–12 student(s). Remember that the lives of many students may look very different than what you might expect or what you may have experienced.
- **BE INNOVATIVE:** Utilize the provided suggestions from the CPV manual, but modify them to fit the youth you work with. Create discussion points and use tactics that will be relevant to the youth. Be willing to try ideas/activities that the student suggests.
- **BE CONSISTENT:** If you say you will be somewhere, show up. Nothing says “I don’t care” like not being there.
- **BE PROFESSIONAL:** When volunteering, you represent that organization and your institution.
- **BE REAL:** Authentically share your personal stories based on your experiences. Being “real” will help to build trust and connections with the youth. Don’t try to be someone you are not based on fears of the student accepting you or making assumptions.
- **BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL:** As a role model, you should also be aware of how your actions outside of your volunteer experience may impact your presence at the community site.
- **EXERCISE CAUTION:** The youth are looking at you as a role model, but they may also look at you in ways you are unaware of. Try to avoid and discourage inappropriate emotions or actions. Stay positive and do your best to never react negatively to interactions with or information revealed by the student.
- **AIM HIGH BUT HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS:** A crucial role of a CPV is to have the expectation that all students are capable of entering and completing postsecondary education. Aim high but have realistic expectations about your influence on a student to avoid leaving both of you feeling frustrated and defeated.
- **FOLLOW UP:** Don’t make promises to the K–12 youth that you cannot keep or do not intend to keep.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Checklist

6. Paul Hernandez, “Alternative Pedagogy: Empowering Teachers through Real Talk” (PhD diss., Michigan State University 2010) 37.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

It is common for college educated people to take for granted knowledge and vocabulary about the college experience and its benefits. Many first generation college students are unfamiliar with college terminology and/or aspects relating to college and the process of applying to and going to college. In preparation for your CPV experience, review these questions that K–12 youth might have about college. The rule of thumb is to never assume a student has the same understanding as you of beliefs, processes, and terminology related to college.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Frequently asked questions

Why should I go to college?

The simple answer is money. College graduates earn more money and are less likely to be unemployed. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor figures, during the latter part of 2011, full-time workers age 25 and over earned these wages:

EDUCATION ATTAINED	MEDIAN WEEKLY EARNINGS	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ⁷
Professional Degree ⁸	\$1,665 ⁰⁰	2.4 percent
Doctorate Degree	\$1,551 ⁰⁰	2.5 percent
Master's Degree	\$1,263 ⁰⁰	3.6 percent
Bachelor's Degree	\$1,053 ⁰⁰	4.9 percent
Associate Degree	\$768 ⁰⁰	6.8 percent
Some College, No degree	\$719 ⁰⁰	8.7 percent
High School Graduate	\$638 ⁰⁰	9.4 percent
Less Than High School Diploma	\$451 ⁰⁰	14.1 percent

Although the ability to earn more money may be an easy answer to the question of why college is important, it is by no means the only answer. A college education provides a number of economic and social benefits for individuals and society in general. Following is an array of the potential benefits of a postsecondary education:

The Potential Personal Benefits of Postsecondary Education⁹

PERSONAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS	PERSONAL SOCIAL BENEFITS
Higher salaries and benefits	Improved health/life expectancy
Employment	Improved quality of life for offspring
Higher savings levels	Better consumer decision making
Improved working conditions	Increased personal status
Personal/professional mobility	More hobbies, leisure activities

The Potential Public Benefits of Postsecondary Education

PUBLIC ECONOMIC BENEFITS	PUBLIC SOCIAL BENEFITS
Increased tax revenues	Reduced crime rates
Greater productivity	Increased charitable giving and community service
Increased consumption	Increased quality of civic life
Increased workforce flexibility	Social cohesion/appreciation for diversity
Decreased reliance on government financial support	Improved ability to adapt to and use technology

7. Source: http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm

8. A professional degree is a special degree that allows someone to be a medical doctor, dentist, pharmacist, etc.

9. Source for two charts: Institute for Higher Education Policy (1998). Reaping the Benefits: Defining the Public and Private Value of Going to College. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Additionally, a college education can lead to a sense of personal fulfillment and empowerment, an increase in self awareness, a better grasp of local and world events, more efficient problem solving skills, and exposure to and appreciation for various cultures and worldviews.

What do you mean by “college”?

Colleges include a range of postsecondary institutions that offer career-based training for students after they finish high school. These may be two-year or four-year institutions or career-focused institutions where students learn specific trades.

What is college like?

It can be fun and exciting, but the coursework can also be challenging. To find out more about college and college life, talk to several people who have been or are currently in college. (Reference “We don’t know what we don’t know”)

What are professors like?

Professors have much diversity in their styles and abilities and are often very different than what you may have experienced in middle or high school. Professors are heavily involved with research and service outside of their classrooms; thus, tend to be very busy. The number of students each professor serves is based on how many classes they teach. This can range drastically from twenty students to several hundred. Professors sometimes have teaching assistants who teach a portion of their course or answer questions from students. Most professors have designated office hours to meet with students and answer questions. In some cases, professors will meet on an appointment only basis. Ultimately it is very important to try to speak with your professors during each semester and make sure they know who you are. Establishing communication and relationships with professors is beneficial to your experience, success in college, and the process of seeking a job or applying to graduate school.

Is a 4-year college just like high school, except that you live on campus?

The differences between college and high school are much more extensive than living on campus. In high school, most students take the same general subjects. In college, all students are required to take some general courses, but the majority of courses are specific to each student’s fields of study/career paths. In college, students have far more options when selecting courses and professors. College students can use resources (talking to other students, online resources, friends, etc.) to find professors that best fit their styles and preferences for learning. In college students are required to push themselves on a daily basis to make sure assignments are completed as no one is there to monitor or supervise their progress. Instructors are often less forgiving than high school teachers. For example if an assignment is not completed, you may not have an opportunity to hand it in later. In college, you are expected to be adult-like and take responsibility for your decisions and actions.

When should I start preparing for college?

Right now. Look over the college prep checklists within the appropriate age section for details on how to prepare. You can find out about the steps from your high school guidance counselor, a teacher, or mentor. It is never too late to start thinking about and/or preparing for college.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Frequently asked questions

When should I apply for college?

You should begin making steps toward applying for college in your junior year. Begin by making a list of colleges you would like to attend and get admission requirements for each school. If possible, you may want to visit some college campuses. You will also need to take college entrance exams in your junior year. Usually by November of the senior year, applications should be submitted. Check each school's application guidelines to make sure you do not miss any application deadlines as deadlines vary from school to school. Also refer to the High School Preparatory Checklist on page 45.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Frequently asked questions

Where should I go to college?

The size, location, cost, and course offerings, among other things may all play a part in the decision making process of choosing a college. There are many different types of colleges and you will have to find a college that is a good match for you. Regardless of your grades, there are colleges that can be a match for you and that will help you move forward with your education. Ask teachers or others who have attended college about where they attended college or about their experience.

What kind of classes should I take in college?

It depends on your chosen career path or field of interest/major. If you want to get an idea about the type of classes you would have to take for a particular major, check out a college's website. Most colleges have required general education categories and courses. Students choose from these categories to complete their required general education courses. In addition to these courses, students choose their major (specific area of interest) and then must take specific courses within that area to meet the requirements for the major and degree. Students who have struggled in high school may want to begin part time and take classes in subject areas they enjoy to set themselves up for success in college.

What if I don't know what I want to be before I have to apply for college?

Don't panic. Many students don't know what they want to be after they graduate from high school. Most 2- and 4-year schools require students to take general education courses before taking courses for specific career paths/fields of study. That time can be used to explore possible fields. Many students enter college and change fields several times before graduating. To learn about careers that match your interests, take a career aptitude test (see your school counselor) or the career paths self-inventory on page 75.

What should I do if I haven't done that well in high school?

No matter what your grades, you can still go to college! There are different types of colleges for people of all skill levels and interests. Maybe a 4-year school isn't for you. You can still choose to attend 2-year colleges or other post-high school career training programs. 2-year colleges, like community colleges, and most career training schools usually accept all students who apply. Many students begin at these institutions to transition to higher education and gain experience before later choosing to transfer to a 4-year college to finish their degree. Additionally, remedial classes are available at many colleges for under-prepared students. Remedial courses may not count for credit but help students catch up academically so they can perform successfully in traditional classes.

How much does college cost?

It depends. You will have to visit the website of or contact each school's registration office to find out specific costs. In general, 2-year schools, such as community colleges, cost less to attend than 4-year institutions. However, don't make a

decision about a school solely based on stated costs. Some schools may cost more but also may offer more scholarships and financial aid, making them just as affordable as less expensive institutions. Typically tuition for colleges in the same state where you live (in-state) is cheaper than if you choose to attend a college in a state other than where you live (out-of-state).

How will I pay for college?

Even if you are unsure about whether family resources are available to pay for college, you can still get a college education. There are a number of options when considering how to pay for college, such as financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, and work study programs. Approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of all college students receive one or more of these types of financial aid.¹⁰ Check with your high school counselor and the financial aid office of the college you plan to attend to find out more information about potential funding options. The financial aid section of this toolkit on page 60 is a great resource.

Where are the colleges in Montana?

The Montana Post Secondary Educational Opportunities Council maintains an excellent internet resource that lists all of the 2-year and 4-year colleges in Montana (<http://montanacolleges.com/>). Using the Montana Colleges website is a great way to compare colleges, examine scholarships and financial aid offered, sign up for reminders, compare costs of attendance, academic offerings, look at photographs of the campus and learn about the Montana's College Fairs.

Should I go to college in Montana?

The decision to attend college in Montana or in another state is up to you and your parents/guardians. The state has excellent colleges to choose from. Be sure to make an informed decision about the college you plan to attend based on what you want to study and if the college campus and community feels like a comfortable match for you. Colleges have a less expensive tuition rate for residents from their state (in-state tuition) versus a higher tuition for non-residents coming from another state (out-of-state tuition).

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Frequently asked questions

10. <http://chronicle.com/article/Two-Thirds-of-Students-Get/42736>

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

*We don't know what we
don't know*

LAYING A FOUNDATION

For first generation college-interested students, it is crucial that information about college and terms related to college are broken down in an understandable, comfortable manner. Often times, questions relating to college aren't comfortable or understood because the terminology is new thus leaving students without the foundation needed to begin asking questions. Begin with the basics and help paint the picture of college! Below are key terms and examples, often not understood by students, to help you provide explanations. Use these definitions and examples to reinforce conversations with students about college and to help you gain a foundation of what types of things may be unknown or misunderstood regarding college and the college process. Many students do not know that they don't know about college, thus, this is your opportunity to help them gain needed tools to visualize and realize a future with college!

2-YEAR COLLEGE: This is a community which students can attend for vocational training, certifications, 2-year (associates) degrees, take courses to later transfer to a university, or take courses at while attending a university in order to save money.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A community college is a 2-year public institution that provides higher education and lower-level tertiary education. Many types of degrees are offered including associates degrees, certificates, diplomas, and continuing and adult education. Community colleges offer opportunities to transfer to 4-year institutions, workforce preparation, developmental education (remedial education) for academic preparation for college, and industry training (certificates of skills or trades). Many community colleges have articulation agreements with specific 4-year institutions which facilitates the process for students of transferring credits towards a bachelor's degree. Community colleges are typically supported by local tax revenue. Because of the plethora of programs offered which vary greatly in duration and needed qualifications, for anyone driven to continue with education, community colleges offer opportunities, regardless of previous grades and performance.

4- YEAR COLLEGE: Also known as a university. These are the schools that can range in size from as small as 300 students to as large as 50,000 students where students can receive a bachelor's degree.

CAREER-BASED TRAINING: Career-based training typically includes specific training for trades or careers that take a short period of time for completion (several weeks to several months). Examples of this type of training include phlebotomy (drawing blood), Radiology Technician (x-rays), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA), heating and cooling certificates, welding certificate, etc.

PRIVATE VERSUS PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: Community Colleges are public colleges supported by state and local taxes and are usually smaller in size than universities. Public universities are partially supported by state taxes and are typically the largest universities in the country. The majority of Division I (highest level of college sports) college teams come from public universities which tend to be more affordable than private institutions. Private institutions do not get tax payer money but receive the majority of their funding from investments, donors, and tuition. Private institutions also differ from public universities in that they are typically more expensive to attend, smaller in size, and often have higher prestige when compared to public universities. Both public and private institutions have their pros and cons and it is important to make your selection based on what best suits your needs as a potential college student.

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS: For example, law degree/jurisdoctorate (J.D.), masters in business administration (M.B.A.), medical degree (M.D.), doctor of veterinarian medicine (D.V.M.), and doctor of dental surgery (D.D.S.) are just a few of many different types of professional degrees. Professional programs require at least a 4-year bachelor's degree and often require a master's degree or professional experience for admittance.

ADMISSIONS: Every college has an admissions office that determines the requirements and procedures for applying to each institution. Typically the admissions office collects all application materials for review and makes all final acceptance decisions.

APPLICATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS (FEE WAIVERS): The application process is determined by each college. However, typically the application process follows a similar structure for the undergraduate level (at a 4-year institution). Often online, each applicant must fill out an application for admission. In addition, students must provide 2 - 3 recommendation letters, 1 - 2 written essays, statements surrounding extracurricular activities, school transcripts (GPA), and standardized test scores (ACT, SAT, etc.). For each institution's application, a fee ranging from \$25.00 - \$100.00 is typically required. Students can request an application fee waiver (a pass based on individual family finances that waives the fee for admission) from the institution and/or should request information from the admission's office, their high school counselor, teacher or mentor, or search for details on the college's website.

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS: For admittance to most 4-year colleges, students are required to submit recommendation letters from teachers, administrators, or community members. These letters are often required to explain the person applying to college, their activities, work ethic, personality, qualities, academic ability, etc. There are typically standardized recommendation forms that the student gives to individuals who will write the recommendation letters and submit them directly to the college.

CUMULATIVE GPA: The cumulative grade point average (GPA) is the average of all grades of a student for all semesters and classes taken up to the moment of calculation. Most colleges consider GPA as part of the admissions process.

COURSE VERSUS CREDIT: A course is the actual class that you are taking for example History 101. History 101 can be worth 3 credits as every course you take is worth a certain amount of credits ranging from 1 to 6 credits. In order to graduate you may need 120 credits which would mean you need 40 courses (give or take) to graduate. Some course credits can transfer from dual enrollment programs (college credit for courses taken in high school) from high school. Check with your advisor or school counselor.

MAJORS AND MINORS: A college major is a specific area of concentration of classes that leads to a college degree. Majors surround specific subjects, themes, or professional fields like business or biology. A minor is a student's chosen secondary focus of study in college. Typically a minor requires fewer total credit hours for completion.

GENERAL EDUCATION: These are the courses that are referred to as G.E. courses; courses not taken as part of a major. For example some G.E. courses are classes found within mathematics, writing, speech, arts, sciences, and humanities. There is a plethora of G.E. courses offered for students to choose from based on their interests. This leaves most students' course selections to look very different than their peers. G.E. course options are typically split into categories such as writing, social sciences, math, etc. Each student can work with an advisor to determine the most appropriate G.E. course selections. G.E. courses are crucial in helping college students develop a well-rounded knowledge base to become informed college graduates.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

We don't know what we don't know

DEGREE: A degree is the diploma or title received upon completion of all college academic requirements. Common academic degree types include high school diploma, Associates degree (typically 2 years), Bachelor’s degree (typically 4 years), Master’s degree (typically 1-3 years after a bachelor’s degree), and Doctoral degree (typically 4-6 years after a bachelor’s degree, sometimes requiring a master’s degree for admission).

SCHEDULE: A schedule consists of the times and days for selected courses. For example, a college student may choose to take four courses in a semester (16 weeks). These courses may take place on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:15 am - 11:45 am and 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm and then two courses on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am - 10:15 am and 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. When selecting courses to take, students create a class schedule. Using this class schedule, students can create their own schedules based on their preferences and also help stay organized and monitor class attendance, work schedules, extracurricular meetings and activities, etc.

REMEDIAL COURSES: These are non-credit courses, often referred to as developmental courses that offer skills to develop reading, writing, math, or language skills in order to be at an academic level necessary to complete standard degree requirements. Some students entering college are under-prepared in one or more area and utilize remedial courses to help gain the skills necessary to be successful in required courses.

TUITION (IN-STATE VERSUS OUT-OF-STATE): In-state tuition refers to attendance at a school within the state where you live. For someone who lives in Montana, the cost to attend the University of Montana during the 2015-2016 academic is \$6,099. Out-of-state tuition (someone who lives in another state prior to applying to college) to attend the University of Montana is \$22,372.00. For public universities, there is a major tuition cost difference to consider when deciding to attend a school in-state versus out-of-state.

FINANCIAL AID: Please refer to the “Ways to Pay for College” section on page 60-68 for detailed explanations and websites regarding the following types of financial aid. It is crucial that the youth understand what each of the items are and the differences between them as many first generation college students do not have extensive support with the financial aid process and find it intimidating and difficult to navigate. It is also important to share that all colleges have financial aid offices that can assist applicants with the process of applying for financial aid. The earlier students begin the financial aid process, the better their chances of diversified support.

FAFSA: Scholarships, Loans, Grants, Cost of living aid, Childcare grants

CAMPUS LIVING (THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE): Take time to share the details of what campus living is all about. If you lived on campus, then share the things that you learned about while living on campus. Remember that students are often not well informed when it comes to living on a college campus. Help the youth visualize that campus is often very similar to a small town or city.

- **DORMS:** If you currently live on campus and the youth comes to visit your campus, invite them to view your dorm room (accompanied by an approved chaperone or other authorized adult) so they can have an idea of what it is like to live in a dormitory. If you do not live in a dorm, find a friend willing to show your visiting student(s) their dorm room. If they cannot visit your campus, utilize resources like YouTube on the Internet and search for videos called “Campus Cribs” that highlight what living on campus is like for students. Additionally, share details about dorms on campus such as laundry facilities, how many people per room, bathrooms and showers (in your room or a shared bathroom), tv or study lounges, etc. Explain how the common areas are used within the dorms.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

We don't know what we don't know

- **DINING HALLS:** If the youth visits your campus, take them to eat in the dining hall so they can experience how dining halls function and what they are like. If they don't visit, explain how dining halls function, how you pay, how much you can eat, when they are open, types of food, etc.
- **GYM:** If possible take the student to the university athletic center or exercise facilities on campus or in your residence hall.
- **COMPUTER LAB ACCESS:** All students on campus have access to public computer labs and Internet access. Most buildings have Wi-Fi access that students can use during class or in the public areas on campus. Students are given a log in and password to have access to campus computer-based resources. Many professors utilize the Internet and online based programs to communicate with students about their classes.
- **CLASSROOMS:** Classrooms are typically spread across campuses and are found within dorms, office buildings, libraries, etc. Classrooms range in size and style and usually have available Internet access.
- **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** There are hundreds of activities that provide opportunities to get involved on campus and within the surrounding community. Most colleges have registered student organizations (RSOs) that encompass groups from ping pong clubs to dance troupes, intermural athletic teams to business groups. Check for opportunities on each campus as each offers something unique.

After sharing campus living experiences with the youth or describing the different components above, they should have a better understanding of how living on campus is a self-sustainable home away from home.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

*We don't know what we
don't know*

KNOW TALKING POINTS ABOUT YOUR COLLEGE

To help you be prepared with answers about your college, complete this talking points worksheet.

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Know talking points about your college

GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Type of institution, 2-year or 4-year, public or private:

Approximate number of students (undergraduate students if you are at a 4-year institution):

Demographic breakdown of the school's student population:

European American: Latino/Hispanic: Other:

African American: Asian:

Percentage of international students: Institution's mascot:

Minority Student Services/Diversity Office:

Academic support services:

Collegiate sports teams (Varsity and Club):

The name(s) of any famous individual(s) who graduated from your college (i.e., individuals with notable accomplishments):

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Student clubs, intramural sports, music groups, cultural clubs, fraternities, sororities, and other groups that may be of interest:

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.....
.....

The name of your school newspaper/radio station:

CAMPUS LIVING

What makes your school unique:

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.....



The number of dormitories on campus and what they are like (roommate requirements, bathrooms and showers, dining halls, TV and study lounges, music rooms, movie rentals, gyms, etc.):

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.....
.....

What dorm living is like:

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.....

What college students do for fun at your school:

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.....

Information about where the student center is and what is inside of it:

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.....

Whether or not your school has a fitness center students can use:

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.....

What types of opportunities are available to get involved with the community:

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.....

What types of student organizations students can join:

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.....

Study abroad/Study away opportunities:

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.....

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Know talking points about your college



INSTITUTION REQUIREMENTS, APPLICATION LOGISTICS, AND FACTS

Where to get an application for your school and the application deadline for the current school year:

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The application fee (Is there a waiver process? If so, what is it and what is the process?):

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Whether your school offers the field of study the student is interested in or not:

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Any professional programs offered by your college (i.e. a medical school, a law school, a school of pharmacy, a school of dentistry, etc.) and explain what a professional program is:

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The estimated cost to attend your college, whether a student is living on campus or at home and commuting to college; check out your college website or try <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>:

Whether your school accepts the SAT and/or the ACT for admission requirements:

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Whether most of the students at your school live on campus or commute:

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BEFORE YOU VOLUNTEER

Know talking points about your college



OTHER

Other information that may interest students:

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Your favorite thing about your institution:

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**BEFORE YOU
VOLUNTEER**

*Know talking points about
your college*



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

College preparatory checklist

College Preparatory Checklist

You can use this checklist as a reference for talking with students, or print it for students to use as a resource.

- Make school a priority. Go to school every day, on-time. If you are having trouble at home that prevents you from getting to school every day, talk to a teacher or counselor and let them know your situation.
- Develop good study habits. Pick a specific time and place to do your homework every day. If you don't have homework, read a book, write a story, draw, or do a puzzle during your study time. Set goals with your homework. Make lists of all of the homework that you have and when it is due and check off assignments as they are completed. Keep all of your homework and assignments in a folder or notebook (same place every time) to help stay organized. Remember to turn in your assignments by the given due dates.
- Get good grades. Turn in all assignments, even if you do not fully understand them. Try your best to learn as much as possible. Know where your grades come from (tests, homework, participation, attendance, etc.).
- Read often. Read as often as possible from range of types of texts, including books (fiction and nonfiction), newspapers, and magazines to increase your vocabulary.
- Ask Questions. Don't be afraid to ask questions when you don't understand something. Chances are other students in your class have the same questions. Ask questions before tests or assignments (what you are unsure of) and after tests and assignments (about questions that you answered incorrectly).
- Ask for help when you need it. Don't wait until you've failed a test or assignment to ask your teacher or your family members for help in a subject area. Don't be afraid to say "I'm not sure how to do or begin this" or "I am not sure what questions to ask, but I don't understand". If there is no one at home that can help you, ask your teacher to help you find a mentor or a tutor.
- Participate in extracurricular activities. This includes sports, band, choir, book clubs, scouting and/or various clubs (anything available at your school or in your community). Doing this will give you opportunities to expand your experiences and will help you find out what you might like to participate in throughout middle and high school.
- Use the summer months to brush up on school subjects. Use study skills books or online resources. Join a reading program at your local library. Don't let what you learned the previous year slip away. Prepare for the coming school year. Limit the amount of time you spend watching TV and playing video games. Draw, paint, read, write stories, help your family members or friends cook or work in the garden, create games for you and your friends to play, or read to your younger brothers, sisters, cousins, etc.

ACTIVITIES FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

The following activities are examples of things you can do with students to foster their awareness of college preparatory behaviors. Be empathetic, supportive, engaging, energetic, non-judgmental, understanding, creative and innovative! Activities can be tailored to any age and any length of service. The goal is that you actively do something to help students take steps toward postsecondary education. Help students feel comfortable with the different activities you have them do. Remain positive and supportive even if they refuse to be involved with the activity.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Event-based activities

Length of Service

- **EVENT-BASED:** 1-day event or a week-long camp
- **SHORT TERM:** 12–15 week semester or several months
- **EXTENDED TERM:** 6 months or longer

Event-Based

(A 1-day event or a week-long camp, etc.)

College Event Field Trip

Take students to a college event, i.e., a basketball game, a football game, an art fair, etc. Talk about college attendance at the event, how they can live on campus and be a part of the college community, and that they can get involved with anything that interests them while in college. Invite other college students to participate in the event with you and the younger student(s). Encourage the college students to talk to the elementary student(s) and ask college positive questions.

“What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?” Activities

- Actively listen to students and ask questions about their futures; share your process of thinking about a future/occupation and picking a college.
- Do not respond negatively if a student shares that he/she wants to be like someone who is involved in illegal activities or deviant behavior. Try to identify what aspects of that lifestyle interest the student and steer the conversation toward careers that may generate interest in the student. Connect the career opportunities to ways in which they can help themselves, their families, and/or communities. Extract skills from the student’s initial interests to lead the student to awareness of a new type of career.
- Encourage them to think about future career paths. If they express no specific interest; ask them about what they like to do or what someone they admire does for a living (remember not to discourage or talk negatively about any profession).
- Research with the student what it will take to become successful in a particular field; the goal is to help students become aware of various types of careers and fields and help them to see these are attainable.
- Provide relevant role models by sharing examples of people who grew up in similar circumstances as the student who have become successful in careers that interest the student.
- Use magazines, newspapers, or websites to provide visuals and discussion starters for different types of careers. Reinforce the student’s interests by showing pictures or details about the field of interest.

Create a Poster with the Student

- Highlight a role model including information about his/her occupation and training, i.e., the college they attended, their field of study, etc.
- “What I want to be when I grow up.” Include information on the steps to get there.
- Favorite subjects and the types of careers associated with those subjects.
- If students are unwilling to create a poster, help them create it or create one that depicts your role model or what you want to do when you finish college. Help lead them if they are hesitant but do not be overbearing.

Read about Role Models

Get and read books about role models the students can relate to; discuss the career paths of the role models and the educational steps it takes to reach those goals. Emphasize how often hard work and determination are the key factors in someone becoming successful, despite their outside circumstances. When possible, do not choose “larger than life” role models (movie stars or sports stars), but research stories of “regular people” that achieved a successful career despite having an under-privileged background. The goal is not to present “fairy tale” situations that seem unattainable or hard to relate to.

Campus Visit

- Take students on a campus tour or arrange a tour for them. Include locations on the tour that would interest young students, i.e. the student center, football field, basketball arena, student center, theater, dormitory, dining hall, etc. Arrange for them to interact with college students, and perhaps give the students a college t-shirt, keychain, cup, hat, pennant, or poster. Include a colorful college brochure with the give-a-way item.
- Take the time to research what different universities have to offer beyond traditional campus tours. For example, some campuses may have programs designed to introduce at-risk students to higher education. These programs specifically focuses on working with at-risk students teaching them how to combine their passion with education to create an avenue for success in their lives. Other universities may have similar programs so research and call to find programs on campuses that cater to different populations of students.
- Try to set up meetings in advance with professors to meet with you and the student(s). Find professors from fields in which your student(s) have shown interest and research the faculty. Faculty may vary in how they accommodate the needs of your students.
- Rather than merely being observers, give students the option of getting involved in events that are available to college students. This involvement will generate a more memorable experience for many of the students who choose to participate.

Virtual Campus Tour

If you can’t take students on a physical tour, take them on a virtual tour of a range of institutions, i.e., 4-year schools, 2-year schools, and vocational, technical, and business schools. Look for resources on a college’s website or www.campustours.com.

Good Habits Poster

Explain to students that they need to begin to develop the good habits and self-discipline they will need to be successful in college. Have them create a list of “College-Bound Behaviors.” If you have time, create a poster of the list of

behaviors. Share your own personal habits that you have learned and developed to become successful in school and/or eventually translated into skills you use in college. Do not generalize but take time to explain the steps on how you developed these skills and were able to maintain them over time.

Peer Discussion

Gather a small group or class for discussion on how to foster good study habits at home. Students can discuss obstacles that prevent them from studying or completing assignments and assist each other in brainstorming solutions. To ensure a safe environment for struggling students, you might gather typical obstacles that students are facing from private discussions. You can then be the one to introduce these anonymously into the discussion. For example, you might mention that you know sometimes it can be hard to concentrate on your homework when you have younger siblings that “bug” you and ask the group if they have any solutions to this problem. That way, the student(s) with the sibling problem do not have to be singled out or have the courage to speak up, but can still hear possible solutions.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Event-based & Short term activities

Short Term

(Longer than an event: a 12–15 week semester or several months)

Film/TV/YouTube Discussion/Interviews

- Work with the students to select films that show individuals overcoming obstacles and succeeding, or films on historical figures. If possible, show films with characters of the same ethnicity or culture as the students but make sure to be culturally sensitive. After the films have been shown, discuss the steps the hero or heroine took to overcome obstacles and the character traits that allowed them to persevere. Make sure to discuss the film with students, maybe even stopping throughout the film to question how the student relates to the film.
- Show students short but powerful YouTube clips of contemporary autobiographies or stories about people who overcame obstacles (preferably similar to the ones the students may face) by empowering themselves through education.
- Try to find interviews of the creator(s) of some of their favorite cartoons, TV shows, or movies where they may share their educational background or you can introduce their educational background so they may see the connection between education and shows they like to watch.
- Similarly, find interviews of people who have contributed to the neighborhood in which the student lives, such as government officials, local business owners or service workers. If possible, arrange for yourself and the student to actually conduct an interview with such a person, making sure to question the person how education played a role in getting them to their current position.

Guest Speaker

Invite guest speakers from the community to meet with the student(s) to talk about their profession and training. Let the students participate in the process of speaker selection when possible. Have the students select a few careers they might be interested in. If you are unable to find community members to speak, use other resources. For example, try a local community college, university, organization, or business who knows the community or are from the community who may come and speak to the students.

Team Games

Play games with the students and name teams after local colleges; you may want to have one team represent your institution. Become familiar with what different colors represent for the students in the school and community. Sometimes colors are directly connected to gangs or other group affiliations that may have negative consequences or negative responses from some students if worn. If you find that specific colors should be avoided, then wear a neutral color that represents the university.

- Play indoor or outdoor games, like charades, relay races, sports, ice breakers, or party games.
- Separate the students into two teams, such as Montana State and the University of Montana. Have the students create posters or banners for their teams that reflect the logos and colors of each institution. Go to the college websites to show the students the logos of each institution or print the logos beforehand. If you can plan in advance, have students wear clothing to school or the event to match the colors of their university team if the colors are appropriate to wear in the school.
- While setting up the university teams, share facts about going to college and about each institution which may require research prior to meeting the students.
- Academic games such as spelling games, around the world with math, or concentration
- Group building games like the knot game (stand in circle, grab hands from across the circle, try to unknot without letting go of hands)

Tutor

Help students with projects or homework. Emphasize that good grades are important when planning to attend college or any postsecondary training program. Use and exemplify study habits, tools for organization, strategies for completing assignments in a timely manner, methods to stay focused, etc. Make the connection for students between good grades and receiving free money (scholarships) as incentives to instill the importance of good grades for college. Give them examples of scholarships based on grades and how much money can be awarded. Have discussions with the student to ascertain their home study environment and habits. Without judging or criticizing the student's family or living situation, help strategize with the student how to overcome barriers in order to create good study habits at home. This will take sensitivity and flexibility on your part, but often a student is the most capable of developing appropriate solutions if someone takes the time and interest to explore an issue. Truly listening to the student, and simply asking clarifying questions that may lead them to an idea/solution is much more powerful than offering a stream of pre-determined or "one size fits all" solutions based on your own experience.

Write Career Stories

Assist students in writing and illustrating a two-part book with the theme, "When I Grow Up I Could Be..." Have the student identify three to five possible career paths and the training needed for each occupation.

- Part I: What I like to do, what I am good at, and/or what I think I would like to do...
- Part II: Because I like to (what's listed in Part I)... when I grow up, I could be a...

If the student is not comfortable sharing what he/she wants to do as a grown up or makes statements of not having any future aspirations, then take initiative and introduce a variety of careers. Ask the student to share something he/she has seen on TV or in a movie that was enjoyable. Connect what is shared to college and how the student can major in or get involved in things that will allow interests to become careers that pay for doing something interesting and likable.

Magazine Careers

Have students cut pictures from magazines of people in different occupations. Ask students to select a career that seems interesting from the assortment of magazine pictures. Use a digital camera to take a picture of each student and help students place their faces over the faces in the magazine. If a digital camera is unavailable have students draw pictures of themselves. Ask students write sentences or a paragraph explaining why they selected the occupation and what type of training is needed to be successful in that field. If the students are reluctant to put themselves as part of the magazine picture, have them take a picture next to the items they have cut out from the magazine so at least they have a picture of them in the process.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Short term activities

Career Brainstorm

- Students are often simply unfamiliar with the wide-range of available careers. A young student often is aware of highly visible careers like sports/movie stars or firefighters, and careers they come into frequent contact with like doctors or teachers. Begin with such a career that the student is interested in, then help them to brainstorm the myriad of careers associated with it. For example, a sports newscaster. Draw a sketch of the newscaster at the anchor desk, then begin to discuss all the other people “behind the scenes” such as writers, editors, camera operators, directors, technicians, etc. Place these people on the sketch and discuss what roles they play in the overall production.
- Another way to introduce students to a range of careers is to create collages of places they may like to visit, such as the zoo. Gather pictures, draw, or simply write brief descriptions of all the various positions people do to make the zoo run. Allow the student to place these on a map or diagram of the zoo while you discuss the various jobs.
- If there is an opportunity to take the student to a place of business, you could provide a career brainstorm field trip. Tour the student around the company and point out all the different roles/careers that the employees have.

College Bookmarks

Make bookmarks for different colleges. Help students research state institutions to find their logos. During the exercise, discuss fun facts about each institution, i.e. interesting facts about where they are located, how many dorms they have, dorm life, the school mascot, the records of sports teams, etc. Be prepared to take a hands-on approach with students if they are confused about how to navigate through a university’s website or how to specifically find information that they may find interesting.

College Fun Facts

Conduct a map reading exercise in which students identify the location of colleges within their state, country and/or city/town where the university they have selected is located. Ask students to draw a map (or use a pre-drawn map) to mark where schools are located. Allow students to investigate and learn about the area to compare and contrast it with their own communities. Help students find interesting things about the area so they can see positive aspects of the many different communities surrounding universities. Teach the students how they can compare and contrast university communities from their own (e.g. urban or rural). Help students look up key facts about each school and write about or list their findings. Give an opportunity to share/present the map.

Extended Term

(A longer term commitment: 6 months, a year, or longer)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Extended term activities

Peer Support Group

Host a small group that meets regularly for discussion on how to foster good study habits at home. Students can discuss obstacles that prevent them from studying or complete assignments and assist each other in brainstorming solutions.

Peer Tutoring Group

Students can lend support to each other if given the time and space to meet with adult supervision.

College Positive Rewards

Look for opportunities to encourage and reward students when they exhibit a college positive behavior, i.e. get good grades, complete a project, or have a leadership moment. Set goals for specific projects and/or grades and reward those goals with college-related items, such as t-shirts, hats, stickers, mugs, pennants, key chains, and posters (you can sometimes get these items donated by the admissions office, special academic support departments, or bookstores at your university). Be supportive if a student does not perform well in school or if he/she has behavioral issues in a class. You may be the only person the student has that is willing to listen, so be empathetic while helping them focus their efforts back on their school work. Remember that goals of all sorts can be set and met thus set obtainable goals to help build the student's confidence.

Awards Event

Create an award system, and possibly an awards event, for students who excel or make marked improvement. Clearly establish the achievement goals, i.e. increase the letter grade for a subject, get a set quantity of A's and B's on a report card, get points for each specific grade (you can even award low achieving students if their grade increases), etc. Outline the goals in a contract for students to sign. Students who meet and/or exceed the goals get rewarded with college gear or a pizza party. Invite the students' families and friends to the award ceremony.

Help ensure that students not meeting any goals do not feel alienated or ostracized from the rest of the class. Make some goals obtainable by a variety of students and abilities (short and long term goals). Spend time with the students to help them find ways to reach the goals set for them in the future and set personal goals.

ACTIVITY:

A Display/Bulletin Board about College Grads

Objective:

To help students “see” college as a goal, to help them understand the connection between college educations/majors and various jobs, and to help them understand what college is like.

Instructions:

1. Ask students to gather pictures of friends, family members, mentors, teachers, guidance counselors, teacher assistants, youth advocates, administrators, etc. wearing caps and gowns at college graduations. An alternative might be to invite a group of adults to the classroom which bring pictures and are prepared to speak about their experiences.
2. Have the student interview this person if possible, or interview another college graduate by using their own questionnaire or the one below.
3. On the display/bulletin board, attach: 1) a picture of the person; 2) a visual representation of his/her college, i.e. a picture of the college logo, a pennant, or something the student has drawn; and 3) a completed questionnaire. Place the display in a hallway or classroom, and possibly have the students present their college research to the class.

Interview Questions:

Your job:

Your degree(s):

.....

Where you went to college: State:

The number of years you went to college:

The hardest obstacle you had to overcome to get to college:

.....

.....

Why you thought you'd never make it to college and what changed your mind:

.....

.....

Some fun things you did in college (i.e., activities, student groups, clubs, sports, etc.):

.....

.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

*Activity: College grad
display/bulletin board*

What you liked most about college and why:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your favorite professor/teacher and why:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your favorite subject and why:

.....

.....

.....

.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Activity: College grad display/bulletin board



Reading Materials for Elementary School Students

Below is a list of books that can be used to support discussions about personal aspirations and careers. The list begins with several fiction books that will work for all age groups, although some of the books are picture-based. Following each book title is the author(s)'s name, followed by the publisher's name and the publication date, unless otherwise noted.

To the following list, you can add any biographical books about individuals from students' ethnic/cultural groups, i.e., individuals who have overcome odds, who have worked to gain education and/or success in their fields, etc. Check with your local library (or the one at the school the K–5 students attend) for a list of such books, and for additional career-related books.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Reading materials

Grades K–5

Amazing Grace. Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch. Dial, 1991

Note: Good for discussions about “you can be anything.”

Dream Big (starring Olivia the Pig). Ian Falconer. Andrew McMeel Publishing, 2006

Note: Great for discussions about following dreams.

Honestly, Mallory. Laurie Friedman. Lerner Publishing, 2008

No Excuses!: How What You Say Can Get in Your Way. 2009

Unstoppable Me: 10 Ways to Soar Through Life. Dr. Dwayne Dyer (author and publisher) 2006

Note: Good for helping students believe in themselves.

Oh, the Places You'll Go. Dr. Seuss. Random House, 1990

Oliver Button is a Sissy. Tomie dePaola. Harcourt and Brace, 1979

Note: Excellent book for students of all ages to encourage them to do what's right for them, not others.

Stand Tall, Mary Lou Melon. Patty Lovell and David Catrow. Putnam, 2001

Note: Good for discussions about believing in yourself.

The Dot. Peter H. Reynolds. Candelwick, 2003

The Little Engine that Could. Watty Piper. Grosset and Dunlap, 1978

Note: Good for discussions about self-efficacy for students of any age.

Grades K–3

A Day with a Doctor

A Day with an Electrician

A Day with Firefighters

(and a series of other *A Day with A...* titles). Multiple Authors. Children's Press, Rosen Works, Inc. (Publication Dates: 2000 and up)

I Want to Be a Builder

I Want to Be a Musician

I Want to Be a Nurse

I Want to Be a Pilot

I Want to Be a Teacher

(and other *I Want to Be A...* titles). Dan Liebman. Firefly Books, 1999 through 2000+

Jobs People Do. DK Publishing 2001

Alicia Has a Bad Day. Lisa Jahn-Clough. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, 1994

A Boy, a Dog, and a Frog (Boy, Dog, Frog). Mercer Mayer, Dial. 2003

Princess Frownsalot. John Bianchi. Pokeweed Press; 1 edition, 2002

Are You My Mother? P.D. Eastman. Random House Books for Young Readers; 1 edition, 1960

Put Me in the Zoo, a Book of Colors. Robert Lopshire. Random House; 1st, First Edition, First Printing edition, 2001

Ebb and Flo and the New Friend. Jane Simmons. Aladdin. 2002

Green Eggs and Ham. Dr. Seuss. Random House Books for Young Readers; 1st edition, 1960

If You Give a Pig a Pancake. Laura Joffe Numeroff. HarperCollins, 2000

Pancakes for Breakfast. Tomie dePaola. Harcourt Children's Books; First Edition edition, 1978

Sam and the Lucky Money. Karen Chinn. Lee & Low Books, 1997

The Treasure. Uri Shulevitz. Perfection Learning, 1986

My Father's Dragon. Ruth Stiles Gannett. Create Space, 2010

Elmer and the Dragon. Ruth Stiles Gannett. Yearling, 2007

The Dragons of Blueland. Ruth Stiles Gannett. Yearling, 2007

Baby Whale's Journey. Jonathan London. Chronicle Books, 2007

Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa. Erica Silverman. Sandpiper, 2006

Day of Ahmed's Secret. Florence H. Parry. HarperCollins; 1st Mulberry ed edition, 1995

Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys. Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard. Aladdin, 2005

Poetry Suggestions

Celebration. Alonzo Lopez. Sundance Publishers & Distributors. 1991

Eloise Wilkin's Poems to Read to the Very Young. Eloise Wilkin. Random House Books for Young Readers, 2001

Favorite Poems of Childhood (Dover Children's Thrift Classics). Authors: Robert Louis Stevenson, Christina Rossetti, Eugene Field, Sarah Josepha Hale, Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, Emily Dickinson, Philip Smith (editor). Dover Publications, 1992

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Reading materials

Informational texts Suggestions

- Clouds* (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science 1). Anne Rockwell. Collins. 2008
- My Five Senses Big Book* (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out). Aliki. HarperFestival; Revised 1st big book ed edition, 1991
- What Makes Day and Night* (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science 2). Franklyn M. Branley. Collins; Revised edition, 1986.
- A Tree is a Plant* (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science). Clyde Robert Bulla. Perfection Learning. 2010
- Germes Make Me Sick!* (Let's-Read-And-Find-Out Science 2). Melvin Berger. Collins; Revised edition, 1995
- Let's Find Out about Ice Cream* (Let's Find Out Books). Mary Ebeltoft Reid. Scholastic. 1997
- Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World*. Selby Beeler. Sandpiper, None edition, 2001
- Martin Luther King, Jr. and the March on Washington*. Frances E. Ruffin. Scholastic, 2004
- Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11*. Brian Floca. Atheneum/Richard Jackson Books, 2009
- So You want to be President?* Judith St. George. Philomel Books, 2001
- Friend on Freedom River* (Tales of Young Americans). Gloria Whelan. Sleeping Bear Press; First Edition, 2005
- Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs!* Kathleen V. Kudlinski. Puffin, Reprint edition, 2008
- Boy, Were We Wrong About the Solar System*. Kathleen V. Kudlinski. Dutton Juvenile, 2008
- Horses*. Seymour Simon. HarperCollins, 2012

Grades 4–5

- A Day in the Life of a Dentist*
- A Day in the Life of a Doctor*
- A Day in the Life of a Veterinarian*. Heather Adamson. Capstone Press, 2000
- Note: Good for young girls; females are on the covers of each of the books.
- See What You Can Be: Explore Careers That Could Be for You (American Girl Series)*. Diane Heiman, Liz Suneby, and Tracey Wood. American Girl Publishing, 2007. Note: Geared toward girls.
- Lights, Camera, Action!: Making Movies and TV From the Inside Out*. Lisa O'Brien. Owl Kids Books, 2007
- So You Want to be a Writer: How to Write, Get Published, and Maybe Even Make it Big!* Vicki Hambleton and Cathleen Greenwood. Beyond Words Publishing, 2001
- The Secret Service (High Interest Books)*. Mark Beyer. Rosen Works, Inc., 2003
- Today's Heroes: Ben Carson (A Detroit Native)*. Gregg Lewis and Deborah S. Lewis. Zonderkidz, 2002
- Just a Dream*. Chris Van Allsburg. Sandpiper; Reprint edition, 2011
- The Real McCoy: The Life of an African American Inventor*. Wendy Towle. Perfection Learning, 1995
- Akiko on the Planet Smoo*. Mark Crilley Yearling; First Printing edition 2001

Bud, Not Buddy. Christopher Paul Curtis. Laurel Leaf; 1 edition, 2004

The Watsons go to Birmingham – 1963. Christopher Paul Curtis. Yearling, 1997

Riding Freedom. Pam Munoz Ryan. Scholastic Paperbacks, 1999

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon. Grace Lin. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition, 2011

My Teacher is an Alien. Bruce Coville. Aladdin, 2005

The Raft. Jim LaMarche. HarperCollins, 2002

Only Passing Through. Anne Rockwell. Dragonfly Books, 2002

The Devil’s Arithmetic. Jane Yolen. Puffin; First Edition, 2004

The Boy who Saved Baseball. John H. Ritter. Puffin, 2005

Tripping Over the Lunch Lady. Nancy E. Mercado, ed. Dial, 2004

Poetry Suggestions

Poetry for Young People: Langston Huges. David Roessel (editor), Arnold Rampersad (editor). Sterling, 2006

Poetry Speaks to Children (Book & CD), Elise Paschen (editor), Dominique Raccach (editor). Sourcebooks Media Fusion, 2005

10 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East. Naomi Shihab Nye. Greenwillow Books, 2005

Informational Text Suggestions

Birds: Nature’s Magnificent Flying Machines. Caroline Arnold. Charlesbridge Pub Inc, 2003

No More!: Stories and Songs of Slave Resistance. Doreen Rappaport. Candlewick, 2005

The Kid’s Guide to Money: Earning It, Saving It, Spending It, Growing It, Sharing It. Steven Otfinoski. Scholastic Trade, 1996

Pigs Aren’t Dirty, Bears Aren’t Slow. Joanna Boutillier. Annick Press, 2005

A History of US: 11-Volume Set. Joy Hakim. Oxford University Press, USA; 3 Revised edition, 2006.

Lands of Mystery. Judith Herbst. Lerner Classroom, 2004

Let’s Investigate Marvelously Meaningful Maps. Madelyn wood Carlisle. Barrons Juveniles, 1992.

One More Border: The True Story of One Family’s Escape from War-Torn Europe. William Kaplan. Greenwood Books, 2004

Adventure at the Bottom of the World, Adventure at the top of the World. Shelley Gill. Sasquatch Books, 1997

The Biography of Chocolate. Adrianna Morganelli. Crabtree Pub Co, 2005

In a Sacred Manner I Live. Neil Philip. Sandpiper, 2005.

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2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Reading materials

Grades 5–6

Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Adventure

Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Animals and Nature

Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Computers

Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Math and Money

Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Music

(and other *Career Ideas for Kids Who Like...* titles). Diane Lindsey Reeves. Checkmark Books, 2007

Discovering Careers for Your Future (Computers, Art, Health, Math, etc.—a different book for each field)
Ferguson Publishing, 2000+

Exploring Careers: A Young Person's Guide to 1,000 Jobs. United States. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003

How to Do Your Homework Without Throwing Up. Trevor Romain. Free Spirit Publishing, 2006

Note: Humorous book that can be used to promote discussions about good study habits; author/illustrator has an inspiring personal story about being told by one of his art teachers that he could not draw. Other school-related books are available by the same author.

When I Grow Up: A Young Person's Guide to Interesting and Unusual Occupations. Jessica Loy. Henry Holt and Company, 2008

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Reading materials

MIDDLE SCHOOL

1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8

MIDDLE SCHOOL

College preparatory checklist

College Preparatory Checklist

You can use this checklist as a reference for talking with students, or print it for students to use as a resource.

- Make school a priority. Go to school every day, on-time. If you are having trouble at home that prevents you from getting to school every day, talk to a teacher and/or counselor and let them know your situation.
- Develop good study habits. Select a place and time to study each day. Start with small blocks of time (e.g. 30 minutes). As you become more comfortable with studying, increase the amount of time. Make a list of assignments and their due dates. Check off assignments as they are completed. Keep all of your homework and assignments in a folder or notebook (same place every time) to help stay organized. Remember to turn in your assignments by the given due dates.
- Get good grades. Turn in ALL assignments even if you think you did not do well on the task. Know where your grades come from (tests, homework, classroom participation, attendance, etc.).
- Take advantage of opportunities that may exist to help strengthen your grades. Your school may provide after-school tutoring, mentor programs, or other activities that can offer needed help. If you are embarrassed or experience peer pressure to not participate in such activities, confide in a caring adult at school. They may be able to help you devise a solution to getting the help you need, without having other people know your business.
- Look for free resources in your neighborhood for homework help and tutoring such as community centers or churches. Look on the internet or ask a school counselor about such places.
- Take classes you find challenging. Whenever possible, sign up to take the most advanced subjects, such as math, English, foreign language, etc.
- Find material you like to read and read for enjoyment. Try reading magazines, newspapers, novels, blogs, memoirs, etc. Read often and a range of texts, including books (fiction & nonfiction) to increase your vocabulary.
- Ask questions when you don't understand something and or need help. It is easy to ask for help and telling your teacher that you do not understand something will not impact your grade negatively. Don't wait until you've failed a test or assignment to ask your teacher or your family members for help in a subject area.
- Participate in extracurricular activities, including sports, band, choir, student government, and various clubs (drama, debate, chess, etc.). Doing this will give you opportunities to expand your experiences and will help you find out what you might like to participate in when you're in high school.
- If you have time during the school year and/or summer, volunteer with a local organization or school. Volunteering can be fulfilling and fun and is good experience to strengthen your application for college.

- ⑨ Use the summer months to brush up on school subjects. Use study skills books or online resources. Join a reading program at your local library. Don't let what you learned the previous year slip away, and prepare for the coming school year. Limit the amount of time you spend watching TV and/or playing video games. Draw, paint, cook, plant a garden, and create games for you and your friends to play. Read, play math games, or do puzzles.

At the End of 8th Grade

- ⑨ Meet with your high school guidance counselor (name):
- ⑨ Make sure you take the right college preparation classes during your high school years. Take the most advanced classes possible and find out if there are any other college preparation steps you need to take. If you struggle with a particular class, ask your guidance counselor for summer school opportunities or available tutoring in your district to get additional help.
- ⑨ Ask your high school guidance counselor what type of clubs, volunteering opportunities, sports teams, academic teams, etc., are available. Your guidance counselor can help you plan your schedule to accommodate extracurricular activities or work while in high school.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

**MIDDLE
SCHOOL**

*College preparatory
checklist*

ACTIVITIES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Be creative and innovative! Activities can be tailored to any age and any length of service. Review the previous section, “Activities for Elementary Students,” as many of those activities can be used for middle school students. The goal is that you actively do something to help K–12 students take steps toward postsecondary education.

1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Event-based activities

Length of Service

- **EVENT-BASED:** 1–day event or a week–long camp
- **SHORT TERM:** 12–15 week semester or several months
- **EXTENDED TERM:** 6 months or longer

Event-Based

(A 1–day event, a week–long camp, etc.)

“What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?” Activities

- Actively listen and question students about their futures. If the students do not share any future aspirations, ask them what they enjoy doing or are interested in learning more about. This will help to create positive scenarios regarding their futures.
- Talk to students about potential career paths and the steps it takes to get there. Share your career plans with students and what steps you plan to take to get there.
- Visit the Montana Department of Education’s Career Development: www.mt.gov and search “Career Development.” This helpful chart outlines interests, career paths, school courses, and required education.
- Explore these National Service websites with the student: americorps.gov and peacecorps.gov,
- Visit www.mappingyourfuture.org with the student; click on “Middle/HS Students.”
- Visit www.knowhow2go.org. Click on “Middle School” and then “Explore Your Interests.”
- Go to www.mt.gov/employment, and you can search through different career areas.

Discuss Advanced Classes

Take time to explain that getting the highest grades possible will help strengthen college applications and increase chances of acceptance to college and the reception of scholarships (free money). Explain to students that if they are comfortable and confident with their understanding of a specific subject they should consider taking advanced classes in that area. Advanced courses will be more challenging and will benefit them with being better prepared for high school and eventually, college classes.

Try to arrange a meeting with a teacher who teaches an advanced course in the middle school with a subject that the student has interest. With the permission of the student and teacher, attend the meeting to support the student and ask questions to help the student. This meeting will provide the student a better understanding of what teachers expect and what type of work is given in advanced classes. If there is a syllabus or class agenda, ask if you and the student can have a copy. If the teacher agrees, ask the student if he/she would like to sit in on an advanced class to observe how the class functions.

After introducing students to the idea of advanced classes, ask them how they feel about taking this type of class. Be

supportive and encourage them to challenge themselves with advanced courses if they are comfortable. If they are unsure, be supportive and help them focus on their current classes to achieve the highest grades possible. Once students have shown improvement or achieved high marks in their classes, revisit the idea of enrolling in an advanced class for the following term or year.

Talk about Your College

To help students identify with you and the school you attend, talk about your college/university. Fill out “Talking Points about Your College” on page 16. If possible, give students an item from your school, such as a t-shirt, hat, cup, pennant, keychain, etc.

Sports Games

Play games and name teams after colleges in Montana or the mascots of those colleges. If you don’t know the name of the college mascots, look them up with the students. Show highlights from YouTube or the internet of your college’s or university’s sports teams or mascots.

Discuss College Life

Share your experiences (be mindful of appropriate versus inappropriate experiences) in college. Examples of appropriate experiences include a positive surprise about college, what you wish you would have known about college life before you started, your most memorable moments of college thus far, what has helped make you a successful college student, etc. Be authentic in what you share and be sincere as you elaborate on your college life experience. Review your school newspaper, admission guides, brochures, etc. with the students and discuss college life, activities, and admission processes.

The Importance of Adults

Speaking with adults is very important but before you encourage students to speak with adults, help identify adults that would be receptive to the needs of the students. In some cases if the adults with which they speak are not aware of the situation or challenges the students face, they may unknowingly alienate or discourage at-risk students from pursuing postsecondary training.

Encourage students to talk to their counselors, parents or guardians (if applicable), and/or other adults important in their lives about pursuing postsecondary training after high school. If the students feel they don’t have access to an adult, help them by contacting different adults that you think would be appropriate for them to speak with about postsecondary training after high school.

Campus Visit

Invite students to your campus for lunch or an on-campus activity or event. A campus visit checklist can be found on pages 69-70.

Virtual Campus Tour

- Take students on a virtual tour of your campus. Find out if your school has an online tour. Visit your school’s website or www.campustours.com. Take virtual tours of other colleges in Montana or other states.
- Check YouTube or other internet sources for videos like “Campus Cribs” to give more popular culture-based virtual tours for students if you feel it would be beneficial. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9Zs-JxPKBQ>)

Pre–College Programs

Explore pre–college programs or summer camps that are available on your campus. Research the programs to gather program qualification requirements for students. Find out the details of direct and incidental costs for participating in the program. If there are direct costs for students to participate, ask if there is a fee waiver or another form of financial aid for students who may not be able to afford to pay the program cost. Some examples of incidental costs are the costs of transportation, meals, lodging, or any other personal costs that students may incur. Once you have determined all potential costs and have gathered resources to reduce the cost for the student, let him/her know about the programs and help them sign up, if possible.

1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Event-based & short term activities

Short Term

(Longer than an event, like a 12–15 week semester or several months)

Career Path

Ask students what careers they are interested in pursuing for their future. If they do not share ideas or interest in any future careers, ask them what careers they may be curious about or complete the career brainstorming activities listed in the elementary activities section on page 25 which can be easily modified to a higher age group.

Discuss potential financial earnings or educational or training requirements for specific careers. Research with the students what it will take to have a career in a particular field by reviewing employment ads online at sites like www.monster.com or <http://www.careerbuilder.com/>. Highlight the connection between careers and educational requirements with salaries of specific positions to reinforce the connection between education and monetary compensation.

Introduce students to fringe benefits or employer benefits. Define these terms if needed to help the student understand what they are and how they impact people's lives. Give examples of fringe benefits, for example, employer contributions toward retirement, medical insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, and/or other benefits offered by employers. Fringe benefits can have a significant impact on lives and it is important to share this with students to connect how higher levels of education often result in better opportunities for high paying careers with supportive fringe benefit for employees.

To ensure that students understand the importance of education for their career path, play a game of compare and contrast with the students. Have students search for high paying careers that require a bachelor's degree or higher while you search for lower paying careers that do not require a college degree. Focus on the difference in pay and the gap in fringe benefits between the careers.

Next, talk about the many non-monetary benefits of different career paths. For example, some career paths may be physically demanding, taking a toll on one's body over time. Certain career fields are more physically accommodating. Other jobs may not offer daily satisfaction leaving much stress, frustration, etc. However, there are many careers that can be very satisfying. Everyone has different desires with their careers and it is important to remember the many facets of benefits beyond financial compensation.

Tutor

Help students with projects or homework emphasizing that good grades help significantly when planning to attend college or any postsecondary training program. Take time to explain that it is okay if they are not fond of a specific subject but that their objective should be to try their best to understand the subject matter while aiming for the highest grade

possible. If further help is needed you can assist by seeking out available resources for free tutoring services for students within their schools, community, local community college, or non-profit organizations.

You may encounter that students are reluctant to utilize tutoring services due to a perceived stigma or peer pressure. If you've developed rapport with the student and feel the conversation is appropriate, discuss the student's reluctance and help them to devise solutions. It may be appropriate to help the student realize that his/her goals and priorities can take precedence over others' opinions of them. In addition to academic tutoring, you might direct students to counseling resources or texts that deal with themes of building self-esteem and standing for one's beliefs in the face of criticism.

1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Short term activities

Peer Discussion

Described in detail in the elementary activities section (page 23), this suggestion is applicable to middle school students as well. Do not forget the power that students have to resolve obstacles in their own lives when adults give them space and encouragement to seek solutions from their own wisdom. Teenagers are often more likely to take up suggestions made by their peers than those from adults, so this can be a valuable tool if conducted in an appropriate manner in which students are not singled out or put on the spot.

Read a Book

Recommend that students read books about individuals who have overcome obstacles and succeeded, and/or have students read non-fiction texts about potential career fields. Discuss and have students create short reports, lists or posters about the books they have read.

One on One with a College Student

Plan an outing (i.e., a campus tour, a sports event, etc.) where middle school students can interact with college students on a one-on-one or small group basis. Have the student explore the careers they may be interested in and if possible, pair them with a college student going into that field.

Career Scrapbook

Work with students to create a career notebook/scrapbook. After completing career brainstorming activities, have students identify 10 possible careers they might be interested in pursuing. Let the students create information sheets/collages about each career with pictures of individuals doing the job or pictures of something related to the job. Ask students to provide a brief paragraph about or description of the job responsibilities of a person in the field, information about the type of required career training and how long the training lasts, and the name of a few colleges or universities that provide the training. Review the notebook/scrapbooks with students to discuss possible career paths. If they are reluctant to do this on their own, take initiative and create your own scrapbook as an example for them so they see that you are also a part of this activity.

Career Inventory:

Initiate discussions with students about potential career paths by having them complete the Career Inventory included in the resources section of this toolkit on Possible Career Paths Self Inventory on pages 75–82.

College Fun Collage

Create a collage of the fun things you can do in college: study abroad, attend sports events, fraternities or sororities, participate in community service, live in a dorm, etc. As you help them create the collage, explain the different categories (e.g. study abroad, fraternities, etc.), how they function and their purpose at your university.

Online Personality Test

Have students take a free online personality test. Explain that these tests provide ways to think about future careers. There are no absolutes about what one can or must do but some of the sites are just fun ways to get youth thinking about their futures.

- www.funeducation.com Students should visit this site with their parents'/guardians' permissions because address information is requested.
- www.kidzworld.com Search: "Careers." This site has two kid-friendly, short quizzes with fun questions.
- www.career.missouri.edu Search: "Career Interests Game." Review this site with the student. It's a little complex, but provides interesting information about personality types and careers. It's best suited for older middle school students.

Extracurricular Encouragement

Encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities through their middle and high school years. Such activities include sports, band, drama, student government, community service, and other leadership opportunities. If you were a part of any of extracurricular activities while in high or middle school, share your experiences with the students and describe how they helped you with college. If the students are hesitant to join or explore an extracurricular activity, offer to accompany them to different offered opportunities and help them select one of interest to join at their middle school and/or high school. If possible and the student approves, join them in signing up for a chosen extracurricular activity to help him/her develop a strong pre-college portfolio.

Online College Scavenger Hunt

If you have access to computers, let students participate in a scavenger hunt about colleges. A sample exercise about colleges in Montana can be found on page 71.

Role Model Study

Have students study the life of a famous individual or a role model: What is the person's occupation? What training did he/she need for that occupation? What characteristics made that individual a success? Why did the student choose that particular individual? How can the student follow in the individual's footsteps?

Extended Term

(A longer term commitment: 6 months, 1 year, or longer)

Students Invite Speakers

Have students decide which careers they are interested in and help them find and invite individuals in the field to come speak to their class. Before visiting with the students, be sure to notify the speaker of any crucial information or special

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

Short & extended term activities

needs regarding the students with which they will speak during their visit. The speaker can talk about his/her career, steps toward the career, as well as how to study, interview, show self-confidence, etc.

Famous Person Film Series

Obtain student input regarding the individuals they would like to learn about. Show a film on the desired individuals and discuss the traits that helped them achieve their goals. Select films (with the approval of a teacher or other school official) regarding famous individuals that focus on behaviors or actions that contributed to negative activities or consequences and how these decisions and choices impacted their lives. Look for other films that highlight the challenges famous individuals faced and how they overcame obstacles to become successful. Discuss alternative choices the characters could have made to experience different results.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

Extended term activities

College Positive Rewards

Look for opportunities to encourage and reward the student when he/she does a college positive behavior, i.e., gets good grades, complete a project, or has a leadership moment. Set goals for specific projects and/or grades and reward those goals with college-related items, such as t-shirts, hats, stickers, mugs, pennants, key chains, or posters. (You can sometimes get these items donated by the admissions office, special academic support departments, or bookstores at your university.) Be supportive if the student does not perform well in school or has any behavioral issues in a class. You may be the only person the student has that is willing to listen, so be empathetic while helping them focus their efforts back on their school work. Remember that goals of all sorts can be set and met thus set obtainable goals to help build the student's confidence.

What Color Is Your Parachute for Teens (or similar career guide books):

If funds allow for the purchase of materials, work with students to complete the reading, exercises, and worksheets in a career guide/manual for teens. These publications walk students through self-assessments to identify skills and possible careers, help students identify a college major, and provide job hunting tips.

Peer Support Group

Host a small group that meets regularly for discussion on how to foster good study habits at home. Students can discuss obstacles that prevent them from studying or complete assignments and assist each other in brainstorming solutions.

Peer Tutoring Group

Students can lend support to each other if given the time and space to meet with adult supervision.

Career Presentation to Family

Host an event for students, their parents/guardians, and families in which students give presentations about their research of particular career paths. If the student has no parent/guardian/family, gather a group of teachers/counselors/social workers that are important to the student or invite a small group of other CPV's to be the audience for the presentation. Also, allow the student to invite friends or others that may be supportive. Recommend that the students dress their roles for their presentation. Have the students do research on careers they may be interested in. The research could include:

- Why the student chose the career
- The schooling required for the profession
- Which college(s) the student might attend and why
- What the student could accomplish in the field, e.g., a student who wants to be a teacher could aim for being “Teacher of the Year” in Montana or nationally, or could aim for establishing a particular after-school club or training; a doctor could choose to work on a cure for juvenile diabetes
- Individuals who have done something great in this area, e.g., the student could conduct research about the most current “Teacher of the Year”; the future doctor could find out who made the latest breakthrough in the fight against juvenile diabetes, etc.

The goal of this project is to encourage students to think big. Because this is a venue in which students, families, relatives, close friends, teachers/counselors/social workers they respect, and other CPV’s can attend, the final speaker for the night could be someone from the financial aid office of your school to explain how to explore alternatives for paying for college and/or how to make the students’ aspirations possible to the students’ parents/guardians/social workers.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

Extended term activities

Reading Materials for Middle School Students

Below is a list of books that can be used to support discussions about personal aspirations and careers. The list begins with several fiction books that will work for all age groups, although some of the books are picture-based. Following each book title is the author(s)'s name, followed by the publisher's name and the publication date, unless otherwise noted.

To the following list, you can add any biographical books about individuals from students' ethnic/cultural groups, i.e., individuals who have overcome odds, local success stories, people who have worked to gain education and/or success in their fields, etc. Check with your local library (or the one at the school the middle school students attend) for a list of such books, and for additional career-related books.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

Reading materials

Grades 6–8

Lights, Camera, Action!: Making Movies and TV From the Inside Out. Lisa O'Brien. Owl Kids Books, 2007

So You want to be a Writer: How to Write, Get Published, and Maybe Even Make it Big! Vicki Hambleton and Cathleen Greenwood. Beyond Words Publishing, 2001

The Secret Service (High Interest Books). Mark Beyer. Rosen Works, Inc., 2003

Today's Heroes: Ben Carson (A Detroit Native). Gregg Lewis and Deborah S. Lewis. Zonderkidz, 2002

Discovering Careers for Your Future (Computers, Art, Health, Math, etc.—a different book for each field.) Ferguson Publishing, 2000+

Exploring Careers: A Young Person's Guide to 1,000 Jobs. United States. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003

How to Do Your Homework Without Throwing Up. Trevor Romain. Free Spirit Publishing, 2006

Note: Humorous book than can be used to promote discussions about good study habits; author/illustrator has an inspiring personal story about being told by one of his art teachers that he could not draw. Other school-related books are available by the same author.

When I Grow Up: A Young Person's Guide to Interesting and Unusual Occupations. Jessica Loy. Henry Holt and Company, 2008

"Career Ideas for Kids Who Like..." (10 Book Series). Diane Lindsey Reeves. Checkmark Books, 2007

Some Fictional Readings for Reluctant Readers to Get them Reading! Grades 6–8

Birth of a Killer. Shan, Darren. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010.

Dirty Little Secrets. Omololu, C.J. Bloomsbury/Walker, 2010.

Fear: 13 Stories of Suspense. Stine, R.L. Speak, 2010.

Girl Stolen: A Novel. Henry, April. Macmillan Children's Publishing Group/Henry Holt, 2010.

Lockdown. Myers, Walter Dean. HarperCollins/Amistad, 2010.

Outrunning the Darkness. Schraff, Anne. (Urban Underground #1). Saddleback Educational Publishing, 2010.

Scrawl. Shulman, Mark. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter, 2010.

Secret Saturdays. Maldonado, Torrey. Penguin Group/G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2010.

The Maze Runner. Dashner, James. Random House/Delacorte Press, 2009.

Thirteen Days to Midnight. Little. Carman, Patrick .Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

Reading materials

HIGH SCHOOL

College Preparatory Checklist

You can use this checklist as a reference for talking with students, or print it for students to use as a resource.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

HIGH SCHOOL

College preparatory
checklist

Throughout Your High School Years

- Make school a priority. Go to school every day, on-time. If you are having trouble at home that prevents you from getting to school every day, talk to a teacher and/or counselor and let them know your situation.
- Get good grades. Research the minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) needed for acceptance for the college of your choice by searching the college's website or asking for help. Once you know the needed GPA, set goals to elevate and maintain your GPA above the minimum to be a strong candidate for acceptance. Don't skip classes as it could negatively impact your GPA. If your school doesn't provide GPA on report cards, find out how to calculate it from your school counselor.
- Talk to your parents/guardians, relatives, mentors, teachers, or guidance counselor about college and options for paying for college.
- Visit your school counselor at the end of each school year (or during the first two weeks of a new school year) to make sure you are on track for high school graduation and college by taking the right courses and being aware of any key testing dates or deadlines. Ask questions about the process or details.
- Practice good study habits. Don't wait until the last minute to begin working on an assignment or to study for a test. Cramming can get you into trouble when you get to college, which requires more in-depth subject knowledge. Check with your counselor about free tutoring available at your school and/or find a study buddy or study group to review your notes and talk with about what you are learning in your classes.
- Use resources available to you for homework help, counseling, or any other assistance you need to be successful in school. There are often free sources of tutoring through churches and community organizations. Speak to a trusted teacher or counselor about getting a mentor that can assist you and provide guidance. If studying is hard to do at home, develop a routine of going somewhere such as a library or coffee shop where you can concentrate.
- Do the right thing. Don't get in disciplinary trouble or damage your good record of behavior. If you have made bad choices in the past, find out what you need to do to get your record clean. Follow through and do those things.
- If peer pressure or social stigmas are preventing you from doing/being your best at school, seek a trusted teacher or counselor to speak with. Even if you feel other teachers are "against" you, there is usually someone willing to listen to your side and guide you in being more successful in school. You might identify such a person at church or the community center.
- If you work part-time or full-time while in school, inform a teacher or counselor with whom you are comfortable. You may be able to get help with your academics if you are struggling to balance work and school.

HIGH SCHOOL

College preparatory checklist

- Study for the college entrance examinations (ACT and SAT). Practice tests are available via many online resources. If you take assessment tests for the exams early, you can target areas needing additional practice. Like your GPA, look up what SAT or ACT scores are recommended and acceptable to be a strong candidate for acceptance to the university of your choice. Use this information to set goals to prepare for the tests. (See All About the ACT and SAT on page 56).
- Participate in extracurricular activities like sports, drama, school choir, band, yearbook club, chess club, homecoming committee, student government, community or neighborhood events or activities, or activities at your place of worship. All of these things are positive additions for your college application.
- Be a leader. Whenever possible, be on the leadership team for any activities you participate in.
- Volunteer in your local community or for other civic projects, especially during your junior and senior years of high school. You can list these activities on college applications. (Taking care of a sick grandparent or younger siblings may be considered community service.)
- Use the time between each school year to brush up on school subjects and read books, magazines, newspapers, websites, or anything of interest that helps practice reading! Your English teacher or local library may publish a recommended reading list.
- See yourself as successful in school and in whichever career you are interested in pursuing. Think about obstacles you have overcome. If you believe, you will push through moments of difficulty and achieve your goals. Ask others about their successes and what it took to get them there. Ask questions!
- Visit a couple of college campuses. Some colleges offer unique opportunities for visiting college campuses such as a College 101 program. Ask questions about anything you are not familiar with or about the process of going to college.

During Your Sophomore Year

- At the beginning of the year, talk to your high school counselor about the upcoming PSAT test, the preliminary version of the SAT. Ask the counselor about your district's practices and how to sign up for any tests.
- Try to take an ACT and/or SAT preparation class over the summer before you enter your junior year. If you cannot, get a study guide from a bookstore, library or visit <http://montanalibrary2go.org/>; and search for "ACT Test" You need a driver's license (yours or your parents') or a library card to use it.
- Remember if you did not do well your freshman year academically you still have your entire sophomore, junior, and senior years to increase your GPA. Do not let a challenging freshman year or a low GPA from your freshman year discourage you because you have time to increase it and become more involved with school if you are willing to put in the effort. This effort will pay off when you are accepted to college and begin an unforgettable positive experience that will prepare you to be successful within a career of your choice.

During Your Junior Year

- Check with your high school counselor to make sure you are taking the proper courses to graduate.

HIGH SCHOOL*College preparatory
checklist*

- Begin studying for the ACT and/or SAT in the fall of your junior year. Your school may offer a course, you can take a course from an independent provider (usually for a fee), or you can get a study guide from a bookstore or library. You may want to visit <http://montanalibrary2go.org/>; search for “ACT Test”. You need a driver’s license (yours or your parents’) or a library card to use it. Pay special attention to tips for success such as whether or not you lose points on the test for guessing at an answer. See the ACT / SAT sections on pages 56–59.
- All Montana students take the ACT during their junior year, free of charge.
- If desired and/or if your scores from the PSAT indicate possible eligibility for a National Merit Scholarship, take the SAT at least by the spring of your junior year so you will have time to take it again if you would like to improve your scores.
- Talk to your teachers, counselors, administrators, and/or college positive volunteers, regarding your career aspirations, academic interests, and location you would be comfortable living in so they may help you in the selection of 10 colleges you would like to attend. Once you have selected the schools, begin to explore the different schools’ websites to look at every aspect of what they have to offer their students. Ask your college positive volunteer to help you look for other resources that would help further inform you about the different schools you selected. If possible, begin exploring the idea of visiting some of the schools you have selected. If it is not feasible for you to visit a school, talk to your teachers, counselor, or other school official to explore any possibilities of receiving help to allow you to visit a school(s).
- If desired and/or if your scores from the PSAT indicate possible eligibility for a National Merit Scholarship, take the SAT at least by the spring of your junior year so you will have time to take it again if you would like to improve your scores.
- Talk to your high school counselor about financial aid so that you will be familiar with the federal (FAFSA) and state financial aid forms that you will need to submit during your senior year. Visit the official federal and state financial aid website <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> to familiarize yourself with the necessary steps to apply for financial aid. Remember that applying for FAFSA is free. Be aware there is only one real FAFSA website so be careful to avoid fraudulent websites that promise financial support.
- Students should utilize the FAFSA4Caster (via the www.fafsa.ed.gov website referenced above) to estimate your financial aid eligibility.
- Between your junior and senior years, study for the ACT and/or SAT so that you can take or retake it in the fall, if applicable. If you do not do as well as you anticipated or had hoped, do not allow that to scare you away from retaking the exam. Assess what areas you struggled with on the exam and ask a teacher, counselor, or college positive volunteer if they can help you find a way to study in order to strengthen the area you need to improve.

During Your Senior Year

- Take or re–take the ACT and/or SAT in the fall of your senior year so that you will have your results in time to apply for college (deadlines vary). Make sure you do not procrastinate, forget, or wait until the last minute to register for and take the ACT and/or SAT because if you miss the deadlines to apply for the colleges of your choice, you will not be able to apply again for 6 months to 1 year, depending on the school’s enrollment policies. Be sure to complete the section on the answer sheet of your tests or registration to have your scores sent to any colleges you are interested in applying to and attending.

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HIGH SCHOOL*College preparatory
checklist*

- Work hard to earn good grades. You can't let go of your college focus!
- Do the right thing. Don't get in disciplinary trouble or damage your good record of behavior. If you have made bad choices in the past, find out what you need to do to get your record clean. Then, follow through and do those things.
- At the beginning of the school year seek out your favorite teachers, employers, etc. to ask for college recommendation letters. Teachers and employers can testify to a student's character and work ethic that may not be apparent from academic transcripts. Be sure to inform the teacher or employer of any accomplishments or behaviors you would like them to highlight in their letter of recommendation.
- Make sure you submit applications to college by December. Check the colleges you are interested in attending to find out their specific application deadlines. Some colleges have early submission dates that start in October therefore acceptance can be announced by December.
- Complete your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 and prior to March 1. Also be aware of state and college deadlines for completing the FAFSA. While it is important to complete the FAFSA early to be eligible for the maximum amount of aid, FAFSA can be submitted at any time during the year.
- Take advantage of College Goal Montana where families can visit local colleges or universities and get help filling out financial aid forms. If your parents/guardians/families cannot attend, talk to your teachers, counselors, administrators, or other school officials about your situation of not having anyone to accompany you. They may have different ideas or solutions to help you attend the College Goal Day. For information about the date and locations of the upcoming event, go to <http://www.smartaboutcollege.org/college-goal-montana/>.

ACTIVITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Be creative and innovative! Activities can be tailored to any age and any length of service. Review the previous sections, “Activities for Elementary and Middle School Students,” as many of those activities can be used for high school students if slightly adapted. The only goal is that you actively do something to help K–12 students take steps toward postsecondary education. Keep in mind that at times you may be one of few people supporting the student’s aspirations to attend postsecondary education. This means that you must stay positive and supportive even when the student wants to give up on his/her desire to become a college student.

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HIGH SCHOOL

*Activities for high school students;
event-based activities*

Length of Service

- **EVENT-BASED:** 1-day event or a week-long camp
- **SHORT TERM:** 12–15 week semester or several months
- **EXTENDED TERM:** 6 months or longer

Familiarize yourself with the sections of this toolkit entitled “Ways to Pay for College” (page 60). It’s important that you become aware of the alternate ways students can pay for their education. Encourage all students to pursue higher education without thinking they won’t be able to afford it. Explain to them that they should talk to the counselors at their high schools and the financial aid personnel at the colleges they are interested in attending to find out more information about ways to finance their education. The sections in this toolkit about paying for college will give you a basic overview of possible alternatives you can discuss with students. Provide additional information about financial aid when possible. Some suggestions are included in the following sections.

Event-Based

(Limited time interaction, a 1-day event, a week-long camp)

Show a Video on Your College

Discuss student life and show a video (use an existing one or create one) of your college or university. If you have time to create your own video, use your friends to help you make it fun. You could also use any videos posted on your college website. Be sure to include on-campus resources for as many types of students as possible. For example, African-American and Latino fraternities and sororities, organizations that support LGBTQ students, and campus religious organizations. The idea is to highlight the diversity found within your university and what it offers people who may be interested in the specific organizations mentioned above.

Virtual Campus Tour

Take students on a virtual tour of your campus and other schools via www.campustours.com or use YouTube and utilize any videos about your school that will give them a tour of campus. Discuss some of the things first-year students would need to know such as how to buy books, where to go for registration information, etc.

College Application Discussion

Bring college applications and discuss the process and the components with students. Help students fill out a practice application that can be used as an example for other college applications.

HIGH SCHOOL*Event-based activities***Resources to Prepare for Standardized Tests**

- Free practice tests for the ACT, at www.number2.com and www.march2success.com
- General information about tests, test taking tips, information about accommodations for students with disabilities, and other free and fee-based products, www.ACTStudent.org
- Preparing for the SAT, www.collegeboard.com/testing and www.march2success.com
- Look for other reliable resources that may be helpful for students preparing to take a standardized test.

Long-Term Mentor Connection

Connect the student to someone who might serve as a long-term mentor to offer ongoing academic guidance. Find someone who is receptive, non-judgmental, and understanding of the unique needs of the student.

Resource for Persons with Disabilities

Pacer Center: Champions for Students with Disabilities: www.pacer.org and type “college planning” in the search box for a list of resources.

Financial Aid Form Help

Provide the student with information about College Goal Montana, <http://www.smartaboutcollege.org/college-goal-montana/>; a day when students and parents can visit local colleges or universities and get help filling out financial aid forms.

Discuss College Life

Review your school newspaper, admission guides, brochure, etc. with the student and discuss college life, activities, and admission processes. Describe how college is different from high school. Talk about how credit hours equate to time and money. Explain how 12 credit hours is considered full time at most colleges as opposed to 30+ hours as full time in high school. Talk about study time expected outside class. Discuss how colleges have many clubs and organizations where students can meet classmates with common interests and goals.

Importance of Adults

Encourage students to talk to their counselors, teachers, parents and other important adults in their lives about getting a college education after high school.

Financial Aid Options

Reinforce to students that they can get a college education, even if they are concerned about cost. Include in that discussion a review of the different types of colleges, i.e., two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and other career preparation institutions. Many students do not understand that a community college is funded by local tax dollars as well as state tax dollars and that is why they are less expensive than a state school. In return, most community colleges accept all students and then place them into classes based on entrance exams. Encourage students to seek out information from their counselors, the financial aid office at various colleges, and from the Internet. Discuss the possible funding options. See the “Ways to Pay for College” section on page 60.

Advocate

Volunteer to assist students in having conversations with teachers, counselors or other school personnel that the student may be intimidated to speak to alone. Connect the student with resources such as tutoring and/or counseling programs offered through school, local churches or community centers.

Advanced Class Discussion

Encourage students to replace classes with harder, more advanced classes whenever possible. The more difficult classes will better prepare students to take the college entrance examinations, the SAT and/or the ACT. Colleges take note that students were enrolled in more challenging courses when reviewing students' transcripts. Tell students to talk to their counselors/teachers and parents/guardians/family member about taking the advanced classes. Remember to not be pushy. Focus on helping the student understand how the more challenging classes can have a positive impact with college. If they ultimately decide to not take advanced classes, remain supportive in helping them achieve the highest grade they can in their classes.

Options for At-Risk Students

Be sure students who do not feel confident with school understand that there are many different options for postsecondary training or education. For example, they can start with a 1-year certificate program where they learn a skill but are not required to take general education credits. After students feel success from completing a 1-year program, students could continue on with general education requirements to earn an associate's degree then transfer to a university to earn their bachelor's degree if they desire. Students who have been in foster care or receive Medicaid may qualify for tuition vouchers through the Student Assistance Foundation of Montana (safmt.org) and Department of public Health and Human Services.

Online College Scavenger Hunt

If you have access to computers, let students participate in a scavenger hunt about colleges. A sample exercise about colleges in Montana can be found on page 71.

Short Term

(Longer than an event, like a 12–15 week semester or several months)

College Fair Attendance

Encourage students to attend college fairs. Find out schedules for college fairs in the local area. Plan to meet the student and his/her parent or guardian at the event if possible.

Campus Visit

Before setting up a campus visit, make sure that the students have reliable transportation or suitable transportation is provided for them to attend the visit. Schedule a campus visit for students and use the campus visit checklist on page 69-70.

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HIGH SCHOOL

Event-based & Short term activities

College Application Essay

Help students write a sample essay or critique the student's actual college application essay. If the student does not have a specific school in mind, use the Internet to get an application from an institution to use as a template. Remind students that they should carefully write and re-write their essays to make sure they eliminate any errors (spelling & grammar check). Also encourage students to have others help them create a college application essay or review them, such as guidance counselors, school administrators, parents or guardians, and/or writing teachers.

Guest Speakers for Students and Their Parents/Guardians

Find speakers who are engaging, charismatic, and familiar with alternative education/at-risk students.

- A professional to talk about his/her career, career preparation and training.
- An EEO/Minority Recruitment Officer from your university, primarily for minority students.
- Someone from the Special Needs Office at your college if the students have disabilities.
- Someone from a special interest group on campus, i.e., a fraternity, sorority, an ethnic student group; to talk about some of the social/fun aspects of college life.
- A professor to discuss professor/student interactions, the role/responsibilities of a professor, what classes are like, and how they differ from teachers/teacher interactions that students are used to from high school.

Financial Aid Assistance

Take the student and his/her parent or guardian to the financial aid office at your school. If this isn't an option, provide contact information for a person who can talk to the group about the financial aid process. You can also obtain handouts that may be needed for the financial aid process from the Financial Aid office at your school.

Alternate Routes of Payment

Remind students that there are alternate ways to pay for a college education. Review the section entitled "Ways to Pay for College" on page 60 with the student.

SAT and ACT Discussion

Discuss when students should take various college entrance examinations (ACT and/or SAT). See the "All About the SAT and ACT" section on page 56.

Tutor

Help students with projects or homework, emphasizing that good grades are important when planning to attend college or any postsecondary training program.

Resources for Standardized Tests

- Free practice tests for the ACT, www.number2.com and www.march2success.com
- General information about tests, test taking tips, information about accommodations for student with disabilities, and other free and fee-based products, www.ACTStudent.org
- Preparing for the SAT, www.collegeboard.com/testing and www.march2success.com

Future Planning Websites

- www.mappingyourfuture.org, click on “High School Students”
- www.collegeanswer.com
- www.collegeboard.com, click on the “Student” link
- www.college.gov
- www.educationplanner.org

Choosing a College

Discuss the process of choosing a college with students. Share how you chose your university and how many other schools you considered. If you only had one school in mind, then give examples of other people you know who may have applied to more than one school and how they chose the different colleges.

- Visit Student Aid on the Web: <http://studentaid2.ed.gov/gotocollege/collegefinder>
- Visit www.campustours.com to take a virtual tour and/or get information about U.S. colleges & universities
- Visit www.collegeanswer.com, and click “Selecting”

College Sports Event

Attend a college sports event with students and invite other college students. Discuss college and extracurricular activities.

Postsecondary Options

Share your plans and how you chose your specific career/major. If you were unsure of what you wanted to do when you first started college or changed your major, share the experience. Many alternative education students/at-risk students think that college students have their majors/career choice/life all figured out by their freshmen year in college. This is not the truth for many college students and it is important to debunk this notion so students understand that it is okay to be undecided on a major or have a desire to explore different fields.

For an understanding of career paths and types of education and training options, go to www.ed.gov and click on the “Student” link. Then click on “Career Colleges and Technical Schools.”

- Visit Your Education Planner, www.educationplanner.com, and click on “Discovering.”

Extended Term

(A longer term commitment, like 6 months, 1 year, or longer)

“How to...” Training

Conduct a training session on how to write a winning essay and/or how to get good recommendations for college applications.

Montana Colleges

If you have access to a computer, register students on the MontanaCollege.com. Navigate the portal with the students to familiarize them with the college preparation process. The site includes available scholarships, college selection tools, career interest activities, resume-building and more. Check the site frequently throughout your work with the student.

www.montanacolleges.com

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HIGH SCHOOL

Extended term activities

Reward the Student

Look for opportunities to reward students for a job well done, e.g., any activity that helps them move closer toward higher education. When they do well in a class or for a school-related project, treat them to a pizza party or give them some college gear, such as a t-shirt, cap, mug, etc.

Peer Support Group

Host a small group that meets regularly for discussion on how to foster good study habits at home. Students can discuss obstacles that prevent them from studying or complete assignments and assist each other in brainstorming solutions.

Peer Tutoring Group

Students can lend support to each other if given the time and space to meet with adult supervision.

Tutor

Help students in a particular subject area or find someone else to help tutor the student. Good grades and study habits are helpful for acceptance to and success in college. Any efforts to support school success are CPV efforts.

Video Resumes

Help students who excel in sports or performance-based areas (i.e., the playing of an instrument, such as the violin; theatre, etc.) develop video resumes of their talents that they can burn to DVDs. These DVDs—which should include a label that has the student’s name and area of expertise—can be sent to the directors of the sports/performance departments at various colleges or universities along with a letter of interest that includes a request to be considered for a scholarship. Before sending the DVDs and letters of interest, work with the student to find schools with programs in their areas of expertise that are known to offer scholarships and/or schools with programs that are of interest to him/her. You could also help the student locate a contact person at the school and find out if that individual will accept the video DVD. If you are unable to help the student with the actual production of the video, you can at least help the student develop the “interest” letter and think through the type of performances the student should include in the video. The video should include an overview of the student’s competency and should reflect the type of skills the colleges or universities require and focus on in their programs.

Read and Discuss Books

Read books with students about famous or everyday individuals who have overcome obstacles, about what it takes to be successful in any field or area of life, or targeting reluctant readers. Discuss the books with the students at various intervals or after completion. Use the book as a springboard to establish a consistent form of communication with the student.

Some Readings for Reluctant Readers

Dark Song. Giles, Gail. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2010.

Hope in Patience. Fehlbaum, Beth. Westside Books, 2010.

Immortal. Barnes, Erica. Urban Books, 2009.

NatGeo Amazing!: 100 People, Places, and Things That Will Wow You. Bellows, Melina Gerosa. National Geographic, 2010.

Rooftop. Volponi, Paul. Puffin. 2007.

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HIGH SCHOOL

Extended term activities

All about the ACT and SAT

As part of the college application process, students must take at least one of two standardized tests, the ACT (originally the American College Testing Assessment Test) and/or the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test).

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HIGH SCHOOL

The ACT

About the ACT

The ACT measures what you know about the subjects you studied in school. According to ACT, Inc., the test includes the following:¹³

- The ACT is administered on 6 test dates within the 50 United States and District of Columbia—in September, October, December, February, April, and June.
- The ACT is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in: **English, Mathematics, Reading and Science**
- The ACT Plus Writing includes the **four subject area tests** plus a **30-minute writing test**.
- The ACT includes **215 multiple-choice questions** and takes approximately **3 hours and 30 minutes** to complete, including a short break (or just over four hours if you are taking the ACT Plus Writing). Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes (plus 30 minutes if you are taking the ACT Plus Writing).

Cost of the ACT (as of April 2014):¹⁴

ACT Plus Writing: FREE

Through a partnership between Montana’s Offices of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Higher Education and GEAR Up, every high school Junior in Montana is able to take the ACT at no cost to them nor their family. Includes reports for the student, the student’s counselor (if student authorizes reporting), and up to four college choices

Visit the ACT website for more information: www.actstudent.org.

When to take the ACT

It is strongly suggested students take the exam during their junior year. Taking the test during the junior year will allow time to take it again to improve scores and make any wanted adjustments to the student’s senior year curriculum. It can also be used to notify colleges of the student’s interests and score so that they will mail information about their schools, scholarships, etc. However the ACT testing organization

13. ACT, Inc: <http://metnet.mt.gov/OPIPR/I0351B007>

14. ACT, Inc: www.actstudent.org/regist/actfees.html

states that the test can be taken at least two months ahead of the application deadlines for the colleges, which means the test can be taken during your senior year.

Sign up for the ACT

Registration can be done online or via mail. Registration should be completed at least 1½ months prior to the testing dates. For specific registration information, the student can visit the counseling office at his/her high school or the websites for each test: www.actstudent.org.

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HIGH SCHOOL

About the SAT

The SAT

The test is administered by the College Board (www.collegeboard.org), a nonprofit membership organization. The test focuses on reading, writing and math, with a leaning towards logical reasoning and verbal skills. The College Board offers the following facts about the SAT.¹⁵

The SAT is a national college admissions examination that:

- Is offered 7 times a year in the United States and 6 times a year at international sites
- Assesses critical thinking and problem-solving skills in 3 areas: **Critical reading, Mathematics, & Writing**
- Takes 3 hours and 45 minutes and three planned breaks are provided throughout the testing period
- Consists of 10 separately timed sections (6 - 25 minute sections, 2 - 20 minute sections, a 25 minute essay, and a 10 minute multiple choice Writing section): **three sections test critical reading** (70 minutes total), **three sections test mathematics** (70 minutes total), **three sections test writing** (60 minutes total), **one variable (unscored) section tests critical reading, mathematics or writing** (25 minutes total)
- Includes three kinds of questions: multiple-choice questions (machine-scored), student-produced responses (mathematics only, machine-scored), essay question.

Check with the college you are interested in to find out which tests you should take to fulfill application requirements because additional SAT subject tests may also be required.

When to Take the SAT

Students can take the test as many times as they want. However, research shows that taking the test more than twice may not significantly improve the score. Many students take the test in March of their junior year so they can take it again in the fall of their senior year if needed.

Cost of the SAT (as of Fall 2012)¹⁶

SAT: \$50

SAT Subject tests:

- Basic registration fee: \$23
- Language Tests with Listening: add \$23 to basic fee
- All other SAT Subject Tests: add \$12 per test to basic fee

15. The College Board: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about/sat/FAQ.html#quest20

16. The College Board: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenefees/fees.html

Other fees may also apply. Visit the SAT website for more information: www.collegeboard.com.

NOTE: Some students are eligible to have test fees waived. Visit the websites for both tests for details. Waivers are typically issued to high school guidance counselors so ask at your school!

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HIGH SCHOOL

*The ACT & SAT:
Which test to take & how
to study for it*

Sign up for the SAT

Registration can be done online or via mail. For specific registration information, visit the counseling office of the high school or the websites for each test: www.collegeboard.com.

Which Test to Take

Currently, most schools accept either test. Be sure to look up the testing requirements for each school of interest.

When possible, the student should take preliminary versions of both tests as a sophomore and/or junior. In addition, the student should try to complete full practice tests of both the SAT and ACT. If the student wants to limit his/her study focus, compare scores of both tests and focus on the test that will net the best possible score.

Students can take the fee-based preliminary version of the SAT, the PSAT, in either their sophomore or junior years. The National Merit Scholarship Program uses the results of the PSAT tests that students take in their junior year to determine if students are eligible for various scholarships.

Because the tests measure different things, some students may do better on one versus the other. The Princeton Review offers a list of pros and cons. Visit their site to read the seven differences they note between the two tests: <http://www.princetonreview.com/college-education.aspx>. The site offers an assessment class that measures which test is right for each specific student. Students can also study for and take both tests.

How to Study for the Tests

There are multiple ways to study and prepare for the ACT and SAT. Below is a list of some preparation options:

- Take advanced classes to provide a knowledge base, habits, and skills for success on these tests.
- Take the preliminary tests, the PSAT and the ACT PLAN, when you are a sophomore and/or junior.
- Purchase preparation software. Attend a preparation class. Get a one-on-one tutor.
- Look for resources that students may qualify for that would help them purchase or significantly reduce the cost of books, software, courses, or one-on-one tutoring.
- 4 Tests: www.4tests.com; March 2 Success: www.march2success.com; Number2.com: www.number2.com

- The ACT: www.ACTStudent.org
- The College Board, Preparing for the SAT: www.collegeboard.com/testing

What to Expect on Testing Day

Talk to the student about things to expect on testing day (long lines so they need to arrive early, what to bring and not to bring to the test, policies [no hats, food, etc], calculators, registration [where to go, what to bring], etc.) The SAT and ACT websites offer excellent test day simulators that can help you prepare the student for test day expectations. (<http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-test-day-checklist>)

Tips for Taking the ACT and/or SAT Tests

Provide as many tips as possible for taking the SAT or ACT tests. Remind the student to stay calm, monitor their testing pace, practice prior to the test, and be familiar with the sections of the test, their duration, and to be familiar with strategies for finding the correct answer. Try to help the student combat fear of the tests. Let the student know that it's ok to not know all of the answers but to do what they know and then try to make a best educated guess on the rest. Help familiarize the student with test strategies such as when is it appropriate to leave questions blank versus taking a guess (will it help or hurt their score), process of elimination, etc. (www.actstudent.org/testprep/tips)

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HIGH SCHOOL

*The ACT & SAT:
Which test to take & how
to study for it*

WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

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WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

Family/personal savings & scholarships

Helping K–12 students make the decision to go to college is just one piece of the puzzle. The other piece—and a very important one—is to make sure they understand that there are alternate ways to pay for a college education. Underrepresented students often think college is not an option for them because they think they can't afford it. College can be expensive; however, there are several available funding options for students and their parents/guardians.

This section of the toolkit includes an overview of available funding options and key information about the financial aid process that you can share with students and their parents/guardians. Reading this section will not make you a financial aid guru. It is designed to help you be a well-informed resource who can point individuals in the right direction, one that includes college as an attainable goal.

Family/Personal Savings

Use your discretion regarding any information you have learned about the student(s) with which you work before you present information. You may encounter an overwhelmingly large percentage of students whose families are in lower middle class, working class, or in poverty thus may struggle to afford any contribution to their children's education. If you simply move forward assuming that their families can afford to contribute financially, you may offend or embarrass the student(s). Make sure you are informed before discussing this resource. If you feel it is appropriate to discuss this option, follow the advice below to help students understand how their families can help pay for school.

Some families prepare for their students' college education by establishing a savings fund. The best way to do this is to start a savings account as soon as possible, right after a child is born. However, it's never too late to begin saving. A good way for families to save for college is through a 529 Savings Plan. The plans are named after Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code and are administered by state agencies and organizations.¹⁷ There are two types: pre-paid tuition plans and savings plans that offer tax advantages.

- Savings plans that offer tax advantages allow individuals to contribute to investment accounts in which earnings grow tax free (federal and state) and remain tax free if distributions are used to pay for qualified higher education expenses. For information about savings plans visit the Montana University System's website: https://mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/529/Montana_529_Plan_FAQ.asp

Scholarships

Scholarships are offered by a wide range of organizations for countless reasons. Scholarship awards can be as little as \$25.00 or cover all tuition and expenses for four years of college at one of the nation's most expensive institutions. Finding scholarships and applying for them can seem overwhelming; therefore it is beneficial to talk to high school counselors and the financial aid office of the student's college of interest. The Internet is also a free source of scholarship information.

The search can seem daunting. Help students by working with them to find a few scholarships for which they qualify and help them begin the application process. This will allow the students to become familiar with the process and

¹⁷. The College Savings Plan Network. What is a 529?

remove any overwhelmed feelings. After you have encouraged the search for scholarships, remind students to not to give up the search, it will be worth it.

Below are a few of the many FREE websites available to help students find scholarships. While searching for scholarships, it's important that students not fall for scams requesting fees.

- Visit www.fastweb.com for a free search engine that will match the student to potential scholarships; search the site for some unique scholarship opportunities.
- Go to www.educationplanner.com, and click on “Paying for College.” Then click on “Scholarship Search” under “Find Money for College.” Students provide information to generate a list of available scholarships.

Here are some suggested Internet search categories for potential scholarships:

- Scholastic Achievement (grades, honor society membership, etc.)
- Race
- Gender
- LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning)
- Economic Need
- Religious Affiliation
- Organizations parents/guardians may be affiliated with (sororities, fraternities, Kiwanis, Rotary Club, etc.)
- The state in which students live
- The high school students attended
- Sports students participated in
- Community service students participated in
- The college a student wants to attend
- The field/major a student intends to pursue
- Disabilities or handicaps students may have
- Special talents students may have, like art or music
- Whether students' parents have served in any branch of the military

Students should begin searching for scholarships during the fall of their junior year, even if they cannot apply for the scholarships until they are seniors. Students should keep a file of scholarship application requirements and their forms as well as a calendar of deadlines. Doing this will give students plenty of time to hone their application information and any necessary application essays.

Grants

Grants, like scholarships, are free money to help pay for a college education. They are usually issued by colleges, non-profit organizations, or government agencies and given to individuals based on financial need, whether they meet certain criteria or are in response to a commitment to complete a particular project or study a particular field. Project-based grants require the submission of a proposal and evidence that the project was completed. Most of the time, grants are tax free and do not have to be repaid, unless in special circumstances when an individual does not keep a commitment.

WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

Scholarships & grants

Below are examples of the types of grants and scholarship available to help students pay for college:

- Montana Grants, like the Montana Higher Education Grant Montana Tuition Assistance Program, the Governor’s “Best and Brightest” Scholarship, Montana University System Honor Scholarship, National Merit Semi-Finalist Scholarship

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WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

Grants, work study & Paying as you go

- Federal Grants, such as the Pell Grant, a need-based grant for low-income students, the Academic Competitiveness Grant, etc. All federal grants require the completion of the federal financial aid form (FAFSA); www.fafsa.ed.gov
- The federal Teach Grant program for undergraduate and graduate students who plan to pursue a teaching career and who agree to teach in a low-income area and/or a high-need field for a specified period of time following graduation; www.studentaid.ed.gov, click on “Federal Student Aid Programs” and then “Grants”
- Students should also search for grants available for particular ethnic groups, such as African Americans, Latin Americans, Asian Americans, Irish Americans, Jewish Americans, Italian Americans Arab Americans, and Native Americans; for women; for individuals from particular religious groups; for first-generation college students; for high-needs fields; for specific fields, such as engineering, math, and science; and for students whose family members have been in the military.

College Work Study Programs

College work study programs are paying jobs offered to certain students based on their financial needs as part of federal, state or college-based financial aid packages. Students usually work on campus or locally for at least the current minimum wage. The amount of aid available is based on pay rate and number of hours worked.

If you currently have work study or have had it in the past, you should share your experience with the student so they can make a more personal connection to work study. You can give them the details of what types of jobs were available to you and other students, what positions you held, what positions your friends held, and how work study jobs usually are good at accommodating your school responsibilities.

Working and Paying as You Go

One way students can pay for their college education is to attend part-time and pay as they go. In other words, students take a limited number of classes per term (typically one or two), possibly live at home to keep expenses minimal, and pay the tuition for their college classes out of their earnings.

This method may not work for everyone because it takes much longer to get a 2- or 4-year degree by going to school part-time. However, the benefits of getting a degree outweigh the additional time it might take to get one. For example, it’s still better to take six years or more to get a 4-year degree than not to get one at all. Additionally, students will not have or have significantly reduced postsecondary debt.

If students are considering the option of paying for their own college education, they may want to begin at a 2-year community college and then transfer to a 4-year college. To make sure that a community college is the cheaper alternative, students should check the costs of all schools they are interested in attending. Sometimes a 4-year college can cost the same as a 2-year college. Additionally, if a student decides to go the community college route first, he/she should check the transferability of their courses to the 4-year school they plan to attend. Contact the registration office at the community college and the 4-year school to ensure credit transferability. Some community colleges have transfer partnerships with local 4-year colleges, making the transition between schools easier for students.

Loans: Private and Bank

Students and their parents should exhaust all of their federal and/or state loan options before seeking private loans. Loans from private lenders, such as banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions, may be the easiest but least cost-effective way to finance a college education. These loans are offered to students and/or their families based on their credit ratings and current interest rates. Some loans made directly to students may be deferred. If a student does not have a credit history, he/she may need a cosigner to get the loan. Take the time to explain what a cosigner is if they are not sure what the term means.

The benefit of applying for such loans is that no FAFSA is required, and students can borrow up to 100% of the cost of college (assuming they qualify for the loan) less any other aid they have received from other sources. However, these types of loans are usually less beneficial than federal or state loans/programs because they are based on an individual's credit rating and are less flexible, i.e., they usually do not have the range of repayment options that are available under federal or state loans, such as income-based repayment plans, additional deferment if a student returns to school, and loan forgiveness. Encourage students to visit the "Federal Aid First" website for a discussion of the benefits of federal loans versus private loans; the address is www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/federalaidfirst/index.html.

What type of Loan is best for me, Federal or Private?

- Federal Aid First: www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/federalaidfirst/index.html
- Next Student: www.nextstudent.com
- The Project on Student Debt: www.projectonstudentdebt.org

Loans: State and Federal

If students have applied for other sources of funds, such as scholarships, grants, and state and federal financial aid, and still have a needs gap to pay for college, they should apply for low-interest state and federal loans.

following are some important things to know about these loans:

- Some loans are offered directly to students; others are available to students' parents/guardians.
- All loans must be repaid, but those offered directly to students can have deferred payment options. Deferment means that the repayment does not begin until after students have graduated from college, usually six months after graduation. Such loans also include a range of repayment options, such as income-based payment plans, additional deferment options for when students return to school, and loan forgiveness. If a student chooses to leave college prior to graduation, loans still must be repaid.
- Payments on loans made to students' parents/guardians usually begin shortly after all funds have been distributed. These loans, although offered at reduced rates, are not deferred.
- Subsidized federal loans are loans where the government pays the interest on the loan and are based on financial need. Unsubsidized loans are loans where the student is responsible for the interest accrued on the loan and are not need-based.
- Most federal loans are available to students and their parents regardless of income level or credit history.

It is imperative that students and their guardians read all of the loan stipulations and repayment options when applying for this type of funding. Students can find out about state and federal loan programs by visiting the Montana Student Aid website: https://mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/Apply_For_Aid.asp. To find out information about federal loans only,

WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

Private, bank, state & federal loans



the FAFSA website, www.fafsa.ed.gov. When in doubt, the financial aid officers at each institution can be a wonderful resource to answer questions.

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WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

State & federal loans, financial aid & the FAFSA

Before making a decision about applying for a loan, students and their parents/guardians may want to read information from the Project on Student Debt, a non-profit organization working to increase public understanding of loans as means to pay for college. The Project's goal is to identify cost-effective solutions that expand educational opportunities, protect family financial security, and advance economic competitiveness. For more information about the Project visit: www.projectonstudentdebt.org.

Federal and State Financial Aid

Applying for state and federal financial aid is the first thing students should do when there is a gap between how much college costs and how much their families are able to contribute toward those costs.

Montana Financial Aid

To find information about state financial aid programs and how to apply for those programs, students should visit their high school guidance counselors or visit the state student aid website, "Types of Financial Aid," at https://mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/Types_Of_Aid.asp

Federal Financial Aid

Getting federal financial aid begins with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Types of federal aid include grants, work-study programs, and low-interest loans.

The FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid

This section of the toolkit is designed to provide College Positive Volunteers (CPVs) with a basic understanding of the FAFSA and the application process.

All federal financial aid is tied to the correct and timely completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the FAFSA. Information from the FAFSA is used to determine whether students are eligible for grants, work study programs, and low interest loans. Students applying for state of Montana aid do not need an additional application to be

considered for those programs, except for those eligible for the Children of Veterans Tuition Grant, which has a separate application process.

Federal aid is available for students planning to attend 4-year colleges, 2-year colleges, and other career-focused schools. It's critical that students not assume they will be ineligible for aid based on where they want to go to college or their financial resources; there is no harm in applying.

Several good sources of information about the FAFSA and federal financial aid are:

- High school guidance counselors
- College financial aid offices
- The Federal Student Aid website, www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov
- The free federal aid publication, *Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid*. An electronic copy of the publication is available. Go to www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov, click on "Students, Parents and Counselors," click on "Tools and Resources." Scroll down to "Publications," and click "Go." The publication is available in English or Spanish.
- College Goal Montana, a day when students and parents can visit local colleges or universities and get help filling out financial aid forms; to find out more about the event and the next College Goal Montana, visit <http://www.smartaboutcollege.org>

The Federal Student Aid Website

The website is an excellent resource for information about federal student aid. Via the website, students can:¹⁸

- Find information on federal student aid.
- Use "MyFSA" (a free, personalized student portfolio) to create a folder to record interests, careers, and the college search process, to help them decide on a career and locate schools offering majors in that field. Students can track their progress in the college planning and application process by applying to schools online, accessing other sources of non-federal aid, and storing their personal information to populate fields for FAFSA on the Web.
- Apply online using FAFSA on the Web, the online version of the FAFSA.
- Obtain a Federal Student Aid PIN to sign their FAFSA on the Web.
- Use FAFSA4caster (found on the home page of www.fafsa.ed.gov) to get an early estimate of their eligibility for federal student aid and to get an early start in the financial aid process. When they're ready to apply for aid, much of the information they enter in FAFSA4caster will populate FAFSA on the Web.
- Look up the status of their federal student loan.

Completing FAFSA on the Web

If possible, students and their families should complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. If the student does not have parent/guardian/family member that can help them, then encourage and help students find resources within their school in order to have someone help them complete the FAFSA. Students who do not have access to tax information may apply for an exemption. Students should contact a financial aid representative from the school they wish to attend. Advantages to completing the FAFSA online, according to the government publication, *Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid*, 2012-2013, include:

- A downloadable and printable FAFSA on the Web Worksheet.
- The online application, FAFSA on the Web, looks at the answers provided to previous questions and uses skip-

logic to only display questions that apply to each person's individual situation. This makes the application process shorter.

- FAFSA on the Web identifies potential errors right away and prompts on-the-spot corrections.
- There are online instructions for each question and live help is available for additional questions.
- Based on the information provided, screens appear to determine eligibility for various grants.
- Application information can be sent to up to ten schools; the paper form is limited to four.
- Once the application is submitted, the information is immediately sent to the U.S. Department of Education and will be sent a confirmation notice.
- The online application will be processed quickly, if students or their parents provide electronic signatures using the PIN. The PIN is an electronic access code that serves as a personal identifier. Students and their parents can apply for a PIN at www.pin.ed.gov.

Completing the Paper-Based FAFSA

Students and their families do not have to complete the FAFSA online. Paper-based copies of the form can be obtained by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) or by downloading a PDF version of the form from www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov. The paper-based version of the form includes the same information as the online version. Students can open the PDF file, complete it on their computers, and print it out; or they can print out the form and complete it by hand. Completed forms should be mailed to the address provided on the form. (See sample paper-based FAFSA in Appendix on page 90)

When to Complete the FAFSA

It depends. Students planning to attend college immediately after they graduate from high school should complete the FAFSA during their senior years once tax forms have been received (1040). Because the FAFSA can also be used as a basis for aid for the planned college of attendance and for state aid, students have to be aware of all possible submission deadlines.

Applications can be submitted as early as January 1, and no later than June 30. Colleges must have the students' complete and correct FAFSA information by the last day of their enrollment of the school year. Other dates may apply based on how students submitted their FAFSAs, electronically or by mail.

The FAFSA Deadlines for Some Montana Colleges:

Students must check with college financial aid offices or their websites to find out when to submit their FAFSAs. The dates below are priority deadlines, however students may file at any time. The University of Montana uses February 15 as its priority deadline but typically, Montana colleges and use March 1st for their FAFSA priority deadline. These priority deadlines will likely change as the FAFSA timeline changes.

The range of dates indicates that students must be diligent about contacting the financial aid offices of the colleges they plan to attend so they will not miss any important submission deadlines. Help students obtain the details regarding dates from the schools they are interested in or help gather the contact information and have the student call to gather the information.

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WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

Completing the FAFSA: On the Web & paper-based

What is needed to complete the FAFSA?²⁰

For students and/or their parents/guardians to complete the FAFSA, they will need to have several records/documents on hand to fill out application questions. This information is used to determine families or individuals financial contributions to students' postsecondary education, referred to as the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is a calculation based on income and assets and a pre-determined formula.

To complete the FAFSA, students and parents should have the following on hand:

- Social Security card
- Driver's license (if any)
- Permanent Resident Receipt Card (if applicable)
- Alien Registration Card (if applicable)
- W-2 forms and other records of money earned
- Income tax return (see the instructions on the FAFSA if the tax return has not been completed)
 - IRS 1040, 1040A, or 1040 EZ
- Your Parent's Federal Income Tax Return (if you are a dependent student)
- Your untaxed income records
- Records of child support paid
- Records of taxable earnings from Federal Work-Study or other need-based work programs
- Records of the student's grant, scholarship and fellowship aid, including AmeriCorps awards, that were included in the student's (or the parents') adjusted gross income
- Current stock, bond, and other investment records
- Current business and farm records
- Current bank statements

Help for Completing the FAFSA

Students and their family members may need to seek help completing the FAFSA. It's critical that the form be completely correctly so students will be able to get all available aid.

Because of the critical nature of the document and the personal data that must be provided, it is not likely that students and their parents/guardians will ask for your help to complete the FAFSA (and for these reasons, you should not help to complete a student's FAFSA.) However, they will need to know where to go to get professional help. Remember to remind them to be cautious of fraudulent websites. The individuals and resources to help them successfully complete the

form are some of the same ones they can go to for information about financial aid in general:

- College financial aid offices
- Information available on the Federal Student Aid website: www.fafsa.ed.gov/help.htm
- The Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)

WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

*FAFSA deadlines;
materials required to
complete the FAFSA*

20. U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid. www.fafsa.ed.gov/help.htm

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

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Campus Visit Checklist

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A campus visit will allow you to see the college and learn specific information that will help you make an informed decision about the school. This activity can be found on and printed from the CPV website for K–12 students.

Campus visit checklist

Before Your Visit

Research the college to find out:

- If they offer the major you want to pursue
- Where the school is located, i.e., in the city, the country, or the suburbs
- The size of the school
- The school's reputation; a number of reports are available online that rank colleges and universities based on a number of areas, i.e., cost, size, type, etc.
- Extracurricular sports and activities offered
- If there is a mentoring program with staff, adjunct faculty, administrators, or faculty to help undergraduate students succeed in college and their careers.
- What kind of minority student and/or LGBTQ offices and support the school offers
- What type of student services are offered to help students succeed in college (e.g. tutoring, writing centers, computer labs, etc...)
- The background of its faculty in your field of interest.
- Schedule an appointment with someone from admissions and/or financial aid and a representative from the department that offers the major you are thinking of pursuing.

During Your Visit

For Financial Aid/Admissions ask:

- Would you be accepted to the school based on your grades and activities?
- Are there any specific programs that offer intensive academic and supportive student services for underrepresented/underprepared students (College Assistance Migrant Program, Supportive Services, etc.)?
- When should you apply? When and how will acceptance notifications be distributed?
- Are there any scholarship programs you can apply for or are qualified for? If so, how can you apply?
- What type of financial aid is available for students? When and how can you apply for that aid? When will notices of aid be distributed?

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Campus visit checklist

- Is there a designated financial aid advisor for each student or do you call, email, or set up an appointment randomly through the financial aid office?

For the department offering your major ask:

- How large are class sizes (for general curriculum classes and in specific majors)?
- What is the student/teacher ratio?
- What is the graduation rate of students in the department?
- What types of jobs do students get after graduation? How many students get jobs after graduation?
- What are the types of courses you would have to take? Which ones do students find most difficult?
- Does the department offer tutoring for its students?
- Who should you go to if you need support for making class selections? May I choose my academic advisor within the department?
- Does the department offer scholarships specific to its students?
- Are there any opportunities to work as a teacher's assistant or research assistant with faculty of the department?
- Are there internships or work study programs you can participate in while in college that will help you gain experience in your field?

While you are touring the campus:

- Visit a dormitory.
- Visit and dine in the cafeteria. Ask the admissions office if they supply visiting students with a ticket(s) or voucher to experience cafeteria dining on campus.
- Visit the student center.
- Visit the tutoring/academic success center.
- Visit the library.
- Visit the study abroad office to familiarize yourself with opportunities to study in different parts of the world or study away programs exploring different parts of the U.S.
- Visit the volunteer center, which is where students go to sign up for volunteer activities. Getting involved will help you feel like a part of your college and local community. Additionally, staying connected helps encourage students to complete their college degrees.
- Sit in on a class if possible; if not, visit classroom buildings.
- Drive through the area surrounding the campus.
- Talk to current students about what they do or do not like about the campus.
- Get a copy of the student newspaper and other college brochures to refer to later.
- Find out about on-campus recreational activities and student clubs.
- Spend as much time as possible on the campus and ask LOTS of questions.

ONLINE SCAVENGER HUNT

Colleges in Montana

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Online scavenger hunt:
Colleges in Montana*

1. Find and list the names of five colleges in Montana and where they are located. Include at least one two-year college.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Find the name of the university where students and alumni are referred to as “Cats.”

What is the name of the university?:

Where is it located?:

3. Find the name of the college where sports teams are referred to as “Diggers.”

What is the name of the college?:

Where is it located?:

4. What is the name of the oldest college in the United States? Where is it located?

What is the name of the college?:

Where is it located?:

5. What is the name of the state’s oldest university and where is it located?

What is the name of the college?:

Where is it located?:

6. Which college refers to itself as the oldest college Montana?

7. Montana State had two other names before settling on its current name. What were the previous two names of the university?

Other Name #1:

Other Name #2:

8. Which Montana college won six NAIA national football championships between 2002 and 2010?

What is the name of the college?:

Where is it located?:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Online scavenger hunt:
Colleges in Montana*

9. Name at least two colleges in eastern Montana:

First college:

Second college:

9. Former Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer graduated from what Montana institution?

.....

10. What is the former name of Montana State University Billings?

.....

11. Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to hold high political office in the U.S., graduated from what Montana institution?

12. Where did U.S. Senator Jon Tester go to college?

13. What Montana college utilizes the "block system" where classes are held one at a time?

.....

14. Which Montana colleges support rodeo teams?

.....

15. What is a tribal college? Write a definition.

.....

16. What is a private college or university? Write the definition.

.....

.....

17. What is a public college or university? Write the definition.

.....

.....

18. Name the largest private college in Montana:

19. List one possible college major:



20. List the name of two colleges in Montana that offer degrees in that major.

First college:

Second college:

21. Find a college in Montana where you can train to be a Physician's Assistant.

What is the name of the college?:

Where is it located?:

22. Find a police academy in Montana:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

**ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES**

*Online scavenger hunt:
Colleges in Montana*

Online Scavenger Hunt: Colleges in Montana (answers)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Online scavenger hunt:
Answers

1. Answers will vary
2. Montana State University.
Bozeman, Montana
3. Montana Tech of UM, Butte, Montana
4. Some potential answers:
 - 1636 – Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
 - 1693 – College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
 - 1701 – Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
 - 1746 – Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
 - 1754 – Columbia University, New York City, New York
 - 1757 – University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 - 1764 – Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island
 - 1766 – Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey
 - 1769 – Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
5. UM and MSU were both founded in 1893
6. Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Montana
7. Montana College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts and Montana State College, from wikipedia.com
8. Carroll College, Helena, Montana
9. Dawson Community College, Miles Community College
Fort Peck Community College, Little Big Horn College
10. Eastern Montana College
11. The University of Montana
12. The College of Great Falls (now University of Great Falls)
13. The University of Montana Western
14. UM, Western, Dawson, Miles, UGF, MSU, MSUN
Blackfeet and Little Big Horn College
15. A tribal college is a higher education institution controlled by an American Indian tribe.
16. Possible Answer: The term “private” simply means that the university’s funding comes from tuition, investments and private donors, not from taxpayers. From: www.about.com
17. Possible Answer: The term “public” indicates that the university’s funding comes partly from state taxpayers. From: www.about.com
18. Carroll College.
19. Responses can vary
20. Responses can vary
21. Rocky Mountain College
22. the Montana Law Enforcement Academy is located in Helena, Montana.
23. Answers will vary because police academies in Montana are often connected with local community colleges - may also be located within 4-year institutions or other approved agencies.

POSSIBLE CAREER PATHS

A Self Inventory for K–12 Students

The purpose of this self-inventory is to encourage students to think about and assess themselves in ways that will help them choose, or not choose, certain careers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Possible career paths:
A self inventory for K–12 students

Your favorite subjects

LIST YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL IN ORDER FROM FAVORITE TO LEAST FAVORITE.	WHY DO YOU LIKE THE SUBJECT? BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.

Subjects you dislike

LIST SUBJECTS YOU DO NOT LIKE IN SCHOOL FROM THOSE HATED TO THOSE YOU JUST DISLIKE.	WHY DO YOU DISLIKE THE SUBJECT? BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.

Your hobbies or things you like to do when you are not in school

LIST YOUR HOBBIES IN THIS COLUMN STARTING WITH YOUR FAVORITE THING TO DO.	WHY DO YOU LIKE IT? BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.

Make a list that completes the following statement: "I'm really good at..."

.....

.....

.....

.....

1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Possible career paths:
A self inventory for K-12
students*

Make a list that completes the following statement: "I'm not so good at..."

.....

.....

.....

.....

How do you prefer to work? (Check one)

- ALONE**
- IN A GROUP**

Why? (Be as specific as possible):

.....

.....

.....

Would you prefer to work in a big organization or a small one? (Check one)

- BIG COMPANY**
- SMALL ONE**

Why? (Be as specific as possible):

.....

.....

.....

Do you prefer to be the leader or the follower when you are with your friends or when you work in groups? (Check one)

- THE LEADER**
- THE FOLLOWER**



Why? (Be as specific as possible):
.....
.....
.....
.....

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Possible career paths:
A self inventory for K-12 students*

Would you prefer a job where you would make a lot of money or one where you would be happy? (Check one)

- MAKE MONEY
- BE HAPPY

Why? (Be as specific as possible):
.....
.....
.....

Do you like being the person who helps out behind the scenes or do you prefer being the person who is out front getting the attention? (Check one)

- BEHIND THE SCENES
- OUT FRONT GETTING ATTENTION

Why? (Be as specific as possible):
.....
.....
.....

Would you rather create something artistic with your hands or work to get the answer to a complex math problem? (Check one)

- CREATE SOMETHING ARTISTIC
- SOLVE A COMPLEX MATH PROBLEM

Why?: (Be as specific as possible):
.....
.....
.....

Would you rather read a good book or meet a new person? (Check one)

- A GOOD BOOK
- MEET A NEW PERSON

Why? (Be as specific as possible):

.....

.....

.....

Would you prefer to work with people, numbers, or things? (Check one)

- PEOPLE
- NUMBERS
- THINGS

Why? (Be as specific as possible):

.....

.....

.....

Do you find it more enjoyable to complete a project you did by yourself or help someone? (Check one)

- COMPLETE A PROJECT YOU DID BY YOURSELF
- HELP SOMEONE

Why? (Be as specific as possible):

.....

.....

.....

Are you better at writing or math? (Check one)

- WRITING
- MATH

Why? (Be as specific as possible):

.....

.....

.....

1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Possible career paths:
A self inventory for K-12
students*



What do you do when there are conflicts or disagreements? (Check one)

- STEP IN THE MIDDLE AND PROPOSE A SOLUTION
- SHY AWAY AND HOPE THINGS WILL TURN OUT

Why? (Be as specific as possible):

.....

.....

.....

1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Possible career paths:
A self inventory for K-12 students*

How do you respond to pressure when you have a big project due? (Check one)

- I'M EXCITED BECAUSE I LIKE THE CHALLENGE AND PRESSURE
- I FEEL LOTS OF ANXIETY BECAUSE I DO NOT LIKE THE PRESSURE
- I DO NOT DO THE PROJECT BECAUSE I DO NOT LIKE FEELING PRESSURED

Why? (Be as specific as possible):

.....

.....

.....

How do you feel about school and studying? (Respond to each one. Be as specific as possible.)

Finish this statement: "I think school is..."

.....

.....

.....

.....

Personalize and complete this statement: "I do/or do not enjoy studying because..."

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name two individuals who you think have great jobs or who you think of as your heroes. Why? (Explain)

Person #1:

.....
.....
.....

Person #2:

.....
.....
.....

What do others say about your future career path? (Complete the statements. Be as specific as possible.)

“My friends and/or family say I should be a... I agree because...”

.....
.....
.....

“My friends and/or family say I should be a... I disagree because...”

.....
.....
.....

“My teachers say I should be... I agree because...”

.....
.....
.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Possible career paths:
A self inventory for K-12
students*



“My teachers say I should be...I disagree because...”
.....
.....
.....

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Possible career paths:
A self inventory for K-12
students*

Think about what you want to be and why. Be realistic about choosing a career. Use your self-assessment to choose a career based on who you are and what you do or do not like! You may need to do a little research about possible career paths and the traits of individuals in specific jobs before you can complete the following statement. Go to <https://mtcis.intocareers.org>, and find out information about a particular career path and the traits/preferences/interests of individuals who pursue that career.

I am interested in being a(career choice) because (the traits, preferences, and interests you have that will help you succeed in this area)

.....
.....
.....

OVERVIEW OF INTERNET RESOURCES

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Internet resources

This section contains helpful websites and online publications which may or may not have been referenced in other sections of this toolkit.

Use common sense and safe Internet practices when accessing any sites. Always use extra caution whenever personal information is requested. Additionally, as stated in the Introduction, all of the sites included in this toolkit were checked and working when the toolkit was published. Those included have been found useful, but their inclusion here does not necessarily represent endorsement of particular agencies or their practices.

Be mindful that Internet links change and sometimes disappear. Please send an email via the “contact” link within the <http://mtcompact.org> website whenever you have difficulty with a link or website.

NOTE: Many college-focused websites provide information about multiple topics, i.e., preparing for college, applying for college, finding a career, etc. Thus, some websites in the following list appear under multiple categories and could possibly fit under even more. The categories provided are just guides for thinking about the list of sites.

Career Colleges and Technical Schools

- EducationPlanner: www.educationplanner.com. Click on “Discovering.”
- U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov. Click on the “Student” link, then click on “Career Colleges and Technical Schools.”

Career/Personality Tests for Students

For Elementary and Middle School Students

- FunEducation: www.funeducation.com
A number of kid-friendly tests (career, personality, IQ) but some of them can be lengthy even though they are multiple choice; students should visit this site with their parents’/guardians’ permissions because address information is requested.
- Kidz World: www.kidzworld.com
Type “Careers” in the search field for two kid-friendly, rather short quizzes with fun questions.

For High School Students

- Montana Career Information System: <https://mtcis.intocareers.org>

Choosing the Right College

- Sallie Mae, College Answer: www.collegeanswer.com, Click “Selecting.”
- Student Aid on the Web: www.studentaid2.ed.gov/gotocollege/collegefinder
- Virtual College Tours: www.campustours.com

Choosing to Go To College

- Pathways to College, College Planning Resource Directory: www.pathwaystocollege.net/collegeplanningresources

Community College Resources

- Quick Facts About Financial Aid and Community Colleges: www.ticas.org/files/pub/cc_fact_sheet.pdf

Financial Aid: Federal

- Federal Student Aid: www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov
- The FAFSA: www.fafsa.ed.gov
- The Federal Student Aid PIN website: www.pin.ed.gov
- Funding Education Beyond High Schools: The Guide to Federal Student Aid: www.studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/student_guide/index.html

Financial Aid: State

- Montana State University: <http://www.montana.edu/financialaid/>
- University of Montana: <http://www.umt.edu/finaid/>
- Montana University System: https://mus.edu/Prepare/Pay/Types_Of_Aid.asp

Help for Considering Types of Loans, Federal or Private

- Federal Aid First: www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/federalaidfirst/index.html
- Next Student: www.nextstudent.com
- The Project on Student Debt: www.projectonstudentdebt.org

Information for Students About Safely Using the Internet

- Get Net Wise: www.getnetwise.com
- SafeTeens.com: www.safeteens.com

Organizations Supporting this Project and College Access

- Montana Campus Compact: www.mtcampuscompact.org
- The Montana College Access Network: www.mtcollegeaccess.org

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Internet resources

Paying for College

- Know How 2 Go: www.knowhow2go.org
- Mapping Your Future: www.mappingyourfuture.org
- Pacer Center: Champions for Students with Disabilities. Visit: www.pacer.org and type “college planning” in the search box for a list of resources..

Preparing for College

- college.gov: www.college.gov
- Education Planner www.educationplanner.org
- Go College www.gocollege.com

Know How 2 Go: www.knowhow2go.org

- Mapping Your Future: www.mappingyourfuture.com
- Sallie Mae, College Answer www.collegeanswer.com
- The College Board www.collegeboard.com. Click on the “Student” link. Bo

Preparing for the ACT/SAT

- 4 Tests: www.4tests.com
- March 2 Success www.march2success.com
- Number2.com: www.number2.com
- The ACT: www.ACTStudent.org
- The College Board, Preparing for the SAT: www.collegeboard.com/testing

Resources for Students with Disabilities

- Pacer Center: Champions for Students with Disabilities: www.pacer.org. Type “College Planning” into the search box for a list of resources.

Scholarship Search

- Education Planner: www.educationplanner.com, and click on “Paying for College,” then click on “Scholarship Search” under “Find Money for College.”
- Fast Web: www.fastweb.com
- The Federal Student Aid, Scholarship Search Tool: www.studentaid2.ed.gov/getmoney/scholarship/scholarship_search_select.asp?13817/
- Mission Possible: www.thesalliemafund.org/smfnew/sections/download.html

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Internet resources

Selecting a Career

- Know How To Go: <http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/>
- Montana Career Information System: <https://mtcis.intocareers.org/>
- My Majors <http://mymajors.com>
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Jobs for Kids who like... <http://www.bls.gov/k12/>

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Internet resources

The Toolkit Website

College Positive Volunteers: accessible through mtcompact.org This site includes activities, online publications, and links to other websites that can be used when working with K–12 youth.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

'ACT'–'Event-Based
Volunteer'

ACT: The college admission test introduced in the 1950s by American College Testing Program as an alternative to the SAT. It is used by four-year colleges, along with other information about students, to help them determine admissions. Students should check with the colleges they are interested in attending to find out whether the ACT and/or SAT is accepted as part of the admission process. To obtain more detailed information about the ACT, go to www.ACTStudent.org.

COLLEGES: For the purposes of this toolkit, all of the following postsecondary institutions: four-year colleges and universities; two-year community and junior colleges; and vocational, technical, and business schools.

COLLEGE ACCESS: Efforts of nonprofit groups to increase the college enrollment of all students by providing support and information about college preparation, paying for college, career selection, financial resources, etc. Some college access initiatives focus on student groups that are underrepresented in postsecondary education, such as students from certain ethnic groups, students who are the first persons in their families to attend college, and low-income students.

GEAR UP): GEAR UP stands for “Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs.” This U.S. Department of Education program is administered from Montana’s Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. The program provides academic services for underrepresented students with the goal of increasing their preparedness and entrance into postsecondary education. <https://mus.edu/gearup/>

COLLEGE POSITIVE MINDSET: The belief that college is attainable for all students and that you are willing to do whatever you can to help those students prepare for and enroll in college.

COLLEGE POSITIVE MOTTO: College Positive Volunteers do not ask a student: “Are you going to college?” Instead, they ask: “Where are you going to college, and how can I help you get there?”

COLLEGE POSITIVE VOLUNTEER: Individuals who work with or are planning to work with K–12 students with the goal of helping the younger students think about and pursue postsecondary education.

CPV: The acronym for College Positive Volunteer

COSIGNER: Someone whose credit rating and history is better or more established than the person applying for a loan. The co-signer signs the loan application with the borrower as a guarantor that the loan will be repaid. If the borrower defaults on the loan, the cosigner is responsible for repaying it.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY: Recognizing the difference between cultures and viewing those differences objectively, valuing them, and incorporating them into interactions with individuals from those cultures.

DEFERMENT: A postponement of a payment on a loan during which interest does not accrue if the loan is subsidized.

EVENT-BASED VOLUNTEER: Individuals who will only have a limited time interaction with K–12 students, like for a one-day event, a week-long camp, etc.

EXTENDED-TERM VOLUNTEER: Individuals working with K–12 students on a longer term commitment, like six months, a year, or longer.

FAFSA: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid that must be submitted to determine eligibility for federal aid in the form of grants, work study programs, and low interest loans. It may also be used to determine aid provided by colleges and states. For more information about the FAFSA, visit www.fafsa.ed.gov.

FINANCIAL AID: Financial support given to students by federal and state organizations or postsecondary institutions to help students pay for college.

FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS: Those individuals who are the first in their families to enroll in college; their parents have no more than high school educations.

GRANTS: Similar to scholarships as free money to help pay for education. They are usually issued by colleges, nonprofit organizations, or governmental agencies and given to individuals based on financial need, whether they meet certain criteria, or in response to a commitment to complete a particular project or study a particular field. Sometimes grants have to be repaid if recipients do not fulfill their obligations.

K-12: Kindergarten through 12th grade.

LOAN DEFERMENT: When payments of a loan are suspended for the borrower until a later point in time. For example, some federal loans are paid to students while they are in college, but they do not have to begin repaying their loans, or their loans are deferred, until they are no longer in college.

MONTANA CAMPUS COMPACT (MTCC): A non-profit coalition of college and university presidents committed to promoting civic engagement on campuses and in students' academic lives. It currently has 42 member campuses and is part of a national Campus Compact coalition of nearly 1,100 college and university presidents, representing six million students. To find out more about MICC, visit www.MTcompact.org.

MONTANA COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK (MCAN): An initiative to promote postsecondary education in Montana by supporting local college access programs. It will include a one-stop website for students to plan, apply, and pay for college. www.mtcollegeaccess.org.

MONTANA POST SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES COUNCIL (MPSEOC): The Montana Post Secondary Educational Opportunities Council (MPSEOC) is a non-profit organization representing the 25 institutions of higher education across the state of Montana. The mission of the organization is the promotion of higher education to students, parents and guidance counselors, with the awareness of the post secondary opportunities available throughout the state of Montana and beyond. www.montanacolleges.com

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*'Extended-Term
Volunteer'–'Michigan
Education Trust (MET)'*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

‘MYFSA’

MYFSA: A free, personalized student portfolio available on Student Aid on the Web (studentaid.ed.gov/redirects/federal-student-aid-ed-gov). Via MyFSA, students can search for colleges and scholarships, research careers, apply to colleges and store and access financial aid information that can be exported to the FAFSA.

NATIONAL COLLEGE ACCESS NET WORK (NCAN): A non-profit organization that grew out of the networking of individuals and organizations focused on college access. It provides a variety of services to its members—state and local access programs—such as advice, financial support, resource information, etc. The web address for the NCAN is www.collegeaccess.org.

NEED-BASED PROGRAMS/AID: Initiatives that focus on individuals from low-income families. Funding programs and aid that are need-based take into account the gap between the cost of college and what the student and his/her family are able to contribute towards the student’s education.

POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS/EDUCATION: Any institution that offers programs or training for students beyond high school.

PRIVATE/BANK LOANS: Loans offered by banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions to students and/or their parents based on their credit ratings and current interest rates. Some loans made directly to students may be deferred. If a student does not have a credit history, he/she may need a cosigner to get the loan.

PROFESSIONAL DEGREE: A special degree that allows someone to be a medical doctor, dentist, pharmacist, etc.

SAT: The college admission test administered by the College Board. It is the oldest of the two college entrance examinations used by 4-year colleges, along with other information about students, to help them determine college admissions. There is the SAT I, the general test, and the SAT II, which consists of different subject-specific tests. Students should check with the colleges they are interested in attending to find out whether the ACT and/or SAT is accepted as part of the admission process and whether they need to take the SAT II along with the SAT I. The official site for the SAT is www.collegeboard.com.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION: Based in Helena, Montana, Student Assistance Foundation is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing students with the knowledge and tools to pursue and fund their postsecondary education. <http://saftmt.org>

SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEER: Individuals who work with K–12 students for more than a one-time or one-week event, like a 12–15 week semester or several months.

UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS: Students with certain characteristics who, for a number of reasons, are less represented than others in postsecondary education. These include students from certain ethnic groups (often Native Americans, Latinos, and African Americans), low-income students, and students who are the first individuals in their families to apply for and enter college.

WORK STUDY PROGRAM: A type of state or federal aid in which a student is given a job either on or off campus and paid a wage. The amount students earn is based on the wage and the number of hours worked.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*'Underrepresented
Students'-'WorkStudy
Program'*

APPENDIX

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

APPENDIX

The Student
Assistance
Foundation



2500 Broadway · Helena MT 59601
www.SmartAboutCollege.org

Who We Are:

Montana-based nonprofit organization, whose mission is to provide students with the knowledge and tools to pursue and fund postsecondary education.

Locations:

SAF is headquartered in Helena, and has outreach offices in Helena, Butte, Bozeman, Billings, Great Falls, and Bigfork.

Contacts:

Helena Office: Kelly Cresswell, VP of Foundation Activities kcresswell@safmt.org 406-495-7390 Rhonda Safford, Programs Manager rsafford@safmt.org 406-495-7750 Melissa Huntington, College Access & Financial Literacy Program Manager mhuntington@safmt.org 406-495-7672 Emily Flemming, Fund Development Program Manager eflemming@safmt.org 406-495-7391 Darbie Hess, Programs & Development Coordinator dhess@safmt.org 406-495-7393 Lisa Leland, Programs & Development Coordinator lleland@safmt.org 406-495-7552	Western Montana Outreach: Mary Howard, General Outreach Manager, Bigfork mhoward@safmt.org 406-837-7420, x 257 Marti Johnson, Helena mjohnson@safmt.org 406-447-6950 Schylar Canfield-Baber, Butte Scanfield@safmt.org 406-533-2132 Ellen Smith, Missoula esmith@safmt.org 406-728-2400, x 8091	Eastern Montana Outreach: Jennifer Almli, General Outreach Manager, Billings jalmli@safmt.org 406-690-5265 Allen Heisler, Great Falls aheisler@safmt.org 406-952-4340 Katherine Foster, Bozeman kfoster@safmt.org 406-522-6189
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Programs:

A Step Ahead College Prep Summit – A week-long college experience for youth in the foster care system, designed to prepare youth for postsecondary education. The summit includes life-skills workshops, in addition to financial literacy, college preparation, and team building. Eligible youth receive a free laptop to use in their postsecondary studies.

Circle of Success Scholarships – There are two types of scholarships awarded through Circle of Success:

- Graduation Matters Montana Circle of Success: \$1,000 awards to graduates of Graduation Matters Montana schools, or members of Superintendent Juneau’s Student Advisory Board. Requires 2.5 GPA. 25 awards annually.
- Original Circle of Success: \$1,000 awards for students to use in their second, third, or fourth year of postsecondary education. Requires 2.5 GPA, and awarded only to Montana resident students. Number of awards varies, but typically 40-50 awards are given each year.

College Goal Montana – Montana’s version of College Goal Sunday, this program helps students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. Our goal is to increase the number of FAFSAs filed ahead of the priority deadline (March 1 for most schools this year).

Foster Care Education and Training Vouchers – Special funding for eligible youth who have aged out of the foster care system to pay for postsecondary expenses. Eligible youth can receive up to \$5,000 per year in voucher funds.

Montana Money Magic (MMM) – A matched education savings account program that provides sixteen hours of financial education and the opportunity to earn 3:1 match on savings deposited from earnings. Financial eligibility requirements apply. Available to eligible students in the following counties: Glacier, Toole, Pondera, Cascade, Chouteau, Teton, Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweetgrass, Yellowstone, Broadwater, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Gallatin, Park, Meagher, Missoula, Ravalli, Mineral, Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, Granite, Beaverhead, Madison, and Powell. Match funds earned must be applied towards qualifying educational expenses, such as: tuition, fees, books, computer, tools, and supplies.

Outreach – SAF’s outreach staff assist students in their regions with FAFSA completion, scholarship searches, financial literacy, and SAF programs. In addition, staff assist area schools with college preparatory activities, such as College Application Week.

Scholly – SAF funds free access for Montana students to Scholly, and online scholarship search tool.



Michigan | Campus Compact

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