



*WASHINGTON ACADEMY*

**POSTSECONDARY PLANS  
2025 - 2026 GUIDE**



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**A RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**  
**PRODUCED BY WASHINGTON ACADEMY**  
**SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT**

*A special thank you to the counseling departments at Camden Regional High School and Villanova Preparatory School for sharing their resources and handbook to help create this guide*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

If you will be following a plan other than college immediately after high school,  
skip to page 30.

❖ <b><u>PART I</u></b>	
<b><u>College Applications Timeline</u></b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>The Vocabulary of College Admissions</u></b>	<b>5</b>
<b><u>Web Resources</u></b>	<b>7</b>
<b><u>The College Search and Building Your List</u></b>	<b>8</b>
<b><u>US Military Academies</u></b>	<b>12</b>
<b><u>Community Colleges</u></b>	<b>13</b>
<b><u>Seven Myths about College Admissions...Debunked!</u></b>	<b>14</b>
<b><u>Components of the College Application</u></b>	<b>16</b>
<b><u>Teacher Recommendations</u></b>	<b>17</b>
<b><u>Writing your Personal Statement</u></b>	<b>18</b>
<b><u>College Application Interviews</u></b>	<b>22</b>
<b><u>Early Decision and Early Action</u></b>	<b>24</b>
<b><u>Planning for College Fairs and College Visits</u></b>	<b>25</b>
<b><u>Playing Athletics in College</u></b>	<b>28</b>
<b><u>College Financial Aid and Scholarships</u></b>	<b>29</b>
 <b><u>PART II</u></b>	 <b>31</b>
<b>Post secondary Plans - Military and Work</b>	
<b><u>Resumes and Job Interviews</u></b>	<b>32</b>
<b><u>Career Skills Building &amp; Apprenticeships</u></b>	<b>33</b>
<b><u>Vocational Organizations &amp; Associations</u></b>	<b>36</b>
<b><u>Military Recruitment and Enlisting</u></b>	<b>37</b>
<b><u>Other Job and Career Search Websites</u></b>	<b>38</b>
<b><u>Career Exploration Reflection Survey</u></b>	<b>39</b>

# **PART I: COLLEGE RESEARCH & PLANNING**



## COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR - JUNIOR YEAR

### JANUARY

Prepare for Course Selections that take place in February.

- Look at your transcript in MyBackpack or review your previous courses. Determine if there are any additional courses you need to take in order to meet your graduation requirements and earn all of your credits. Review the Program of Studies that is listed on our website. An updated program of studies with any new courses for the following year will be available in early February.
- Make an appointment with your counselor to discuss your thoughts, your intended courses, and share your postsecondary plans.
- Remember: choose the most difficult courses that you are able to complete successfully: Senior year should be your hardest year for preparation to enter the “real” world of college studies, employment, training, military service, gap year, or travel.

Start to think about colleges that would be of interest to you. Define what it is you want in a college and be able to share why it is important to you. Some factors in the college search to consider are: Location, size of student body, makeup of population (diversity), selectivity in admissions, programs/majors offered, student and campus life offered, cost, scholarships and financial aid, requirements for entry. Help in determining what is important to you can be found at the University of Southern Florida blog

Check out the resources available in the Counseling Office and the wealth of resources online. You will find college handbooks, forms and view books. Through your PSAT score report you can access QuickStart and Big Future on www.collegeboard.com to research careers and colleges.

Create a “Common Application” ( www.commonapp.org ) account and start adding colleges you are interested in that are listed there. Remember - not all colleges are on Common Application! While this makes it easy to apply to many colleges, there are MANY other systems and colleges that have their own application portals or are listed elsewhere. If you don’t see a college you want to apply to on Common App, search for the school’s name and website and then the “apply” tab on the school’s website.

Generate a list of potential colleges that you want to apply to. Usually ten to twelve choices initially (including those to which your profile exceeds their usual acceptance pool, meets their applicant pool, and is a reach to be accepted) is a manageable number. To determine this, look at colleges’/universities’ average GPA, SAT/ACT scores and admission rates. This information can be readily found on the National Center for Education Statistics website

Register to take the SAT’s through www.collegeboard.com. You may also choose to take the ACT through www.actstudent.org. See their websites for deadlines and test dates. While many colleges have marked the SAT or ACT option for admissions, if you do well, it is a good idea to submit it in your application. In addition, some colleges tie their financial aid and scholarships to performance on the SAT or ACT. Another testing option is the CLT, which can be found at cltexam.com.

### FEBRUARY - AUGUST

Consider a college visit during February or April vacation. This is a great time to plan a trip that includes one or several college visits in a close area. Many colleges are in session at this time.

Plan to meet individually with your counselor late in the semester to review what classes you will need to meet graduation requirements. Look out for a letter/email from your counselor about any classes you will need for graduation in August. If you haven't taken the SAT yet, plan to take it in September of your Senior year at WA. Consider who you will ask for letters of recommendation, and start to plan out your time for working on college applications. Look also for enrichment opportunities such as pre-college programs which are traditionally held over the summer

## **SENIOR YEAR**

### **SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER**

Attend WA College Application Bootcamp. More information to come!

Attend the NEACAC College Fair that will be held on WA's campus on September 15.

Develop a résumé listing clubs, activities, sports, employment, and major accomplishments in high school. You can refer to it as you apply to schools and you will need to share it with teachers and your counselor who will be writing your recommendation letters for applications.

Identify colleges and narrow your list. If you are applying to schools that have regular decision deadlines, your list should be completely finalized by November. If you have earlier deadlines, your list should be done even before that! Create a spreadsheet of deadlines and usernames and passwords for any school not in Common App.

Approach your teachers to request writing letters of recommendation. More information about recommendation letters is on page 24. **Give them at least 3 weeks before a deadline to write a letter.**

### **SENIOR YEAR NOVEMBER - JANUARY**

Start working on your main college essay/personal statement and any additional supplemental writing prompts. See if there are any supplemental essays that can share common themes or be reused. Compile your "additional information" statement if there is anything in your academic or social history which contributes to a shift in grades or involvement that would be helpful for admissions officers to know. Get feedback!

Submit your FAFSA through [this FAFSA WEBSITE](#). The FAFSA is FREE and should take about 30 minutes to complete as long as you have tax information with you.

### **SENIOR YEAR FEBRUARY - APRIL**

Submit all of your applications by the deadlines. If recommendation letters are not completed yet, gently remind your teachers and counselor that they need to be submitted. Ensure transcripts and all other documents have been submitted on your behalf.

Fill out your scholarship applications. WA counseling office will send out information to apply for local scholarships - but you can search on your own also.

Once acceptances have been received, review financial aid packages and compare which will be the most cost effective option for you.

### **SENIOR YEAR MAY**

**DECISION TIME!** All schools require deposit by May 1 to hold your acceptance spot.

## THE VOCABULARY OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

### **Testing**

#### **College Board**

This agency is in charge of many tests and services connected with the college admissions process and administers the PSAT and SAT (CHRHS CEEB Code is 200330 for testing registration purposes).

#### **SAT**

This educational testing service examination measures aptitude for college and is required by many colleges for entrance. Students usually take either the ACT or SAT, sometimes both.

#### **ACT**

This is the American College Testing Program examination used to measure aptitude for college work. This test is used throughout the country by college and university admission offices. It is curriculum based and includes tests in the content areas: English, math, reading and science reasoning.

#### **CLT**

This is the Classic Learning Test. It is an alternative to the SAT or ACT (and some colleges prefer it) to showcase critical thinking, logical reasoning, grammar ability, and writing.

### **Admissions Applications**

#### **Early Action & Early Admission**

Allows students to take action applying earlier than regular deadlines. Often, a college will share their admissions decision (acceptance or denial) ahead of regular deadlines or decision timeframes. The student can still decide up until May 1 if they want to attend that college.

#### **Regular Admission**

The usual schedule where students apply to colleges in the fall or winter and receive an answer in the spring. Deadlines vary per college, so be sure to stay organized!

#### **Early Decision**

Allows students to apply in the fall to the school of their first choice and receive an answer by early winter. This is a legally binding agreement through which you agree to attend their school if accepted.

#### **Rolling Admissions**

Applications are acted upon as received and candidates notified within a set turnaround. There are no hard and fast deadlines for the college admissions process in a rolling admissions school.

#### **Waiting List**

Application is neither accepted nor rejected but rather held in limbo in case an opening develops later. Any student who is placed on a wait list for a college to where they want to attend should make an appointment with their counselor to discuss next steps.

### **Special Programs**

#### **Co-op or Cooperative Education**

Colleges that offer Co-Op or Cooperative Education provide alternating periods of study in the classroom and full time work. Students come away from these colleges with classroom experience and real-world career experience. More information about Co-op colleges can be found at [The Cooperative Education and Internship Association](#)

### **Accelerated Program (e.g. BA/MBA, BA/JD, BFA/MFA)**

Earn your undergraduate and graduate degree at an accelerated pace. Typically colleges will accelerate the undergraduate program and allow students to take courses that count for their master's program while in undergraduate level. This usually saves money and allows the student to enter the workforce at a faster pace than the typical 4 year undergraduate and then master's program track.

### **Honors College/Honors Program**

Some colleges allow students to apply to the honors program directly from high school. There are additional requirements to graduate from an honors program but they also come with additional perks and opportunities for the student. Typically these programs require an additional essay or even an interview to apply.

### **Acceptance**

#### **Candidates Reply Date – May 1<sup>st</sup>**

Students are required to let the college of their choice know that they will be attending by this date. Sending a deposit reserves a space in the class. If any institution requires a deposit prior to May 1<sup>st</sup>, it must be fully refundable until May 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Matriculation**

Means “enrolled”

### **Financial Aid**

#### **FAFSA**

Free Application for Federal Student Aid seeks details on your income and assets. It will calculate your Expected Family Contribution at no charge. You can find this form on-line at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and submit it after October 1<sup>st</sup> during your Senior year.

### **Fee Waiver**

Our office can provide fee waivers for limited income students for the SAT test and for applications.

### **Financial Aid Application**

Some colleges require a separate financial aid application after you apply to the school itself. Search for or go to the “Financial Aid Office” tab or page on the college website to learn more

### **Financial Aid Package**

This document outlines the full and complete financial assistance that you will receive, including scholarships, loans, and grants. You must accept the financial aid package at the school you attend - it is not automatic!

## COLLEGE PLANNING WEB RESOURCES

### **Exploring College Options**

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) (“Big Future” very popular college search engine)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<https://www.thecollegetour.com/watch-now/>

### **Exploring Financial Aid:**

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

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

[www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov)

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

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

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

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

### **Test Preparation**

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

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

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

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

[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

### **Student Athletes**

[www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)

### **State of Maine Sites for Financial Aid and Scholarships Information**

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

Please feel free to contact **FAME** with any questions you may have about their programs, services, or the website itself. (1-800-228-3734)

## BUILDING YOUR LIST, RESEARCHING SCHOOLS

### ESTABLISHING YOUR PRIORITIES

With over 3000 colleges and universities in the country, the process of selecting a college is an opportunity to explore a range of new possibilities. It must begin with a true understanding of yourself and what you want to get out of your college experience. There are statistics, rankings, lists, books, and marketing all telling you information about potential schools. What they cannot tell you is what is important to you and what will help you in the next stage of your life.

You might ask yourself:

- Why do I want to be a college student?
- How have I been as a high school student? What are my academic strengths and weaknesses? What have I been involved in at Washington Academy?
- What attracts me to an environment where I might study?
- How will I contribute to the college community wherever I attend?
- Where in my development do I have the opportunity to grow and develop?
- How do I expect an institution to help me achieve my own personal goals?
- Who do I trust to assist me in this process and provide guidance to me?

### Decision Making: Selection of College for Application and Attendance

After thoughtful evaluation of what factors are important to you, here are some additional items to keep in mind as you make your decisions:

- Give time to look over all available resources including college websites and search sites.
- Be honest with yourself about what you want your college experience to look like.
- Make sure your schools are influenced by what **you** want in your own experience. Your friends and family can provide guidance, but you are the one who will live and be a part of the campus.
- Choose those schools that are within your individual and family budget and that best fit your personal needs. Getting set on a school you cannot afford usually leads to heartbreak.
- Be humble and open to schools that you might have never heard of before you started your search. You may find the best school for you is one that no one knows about!
- Apply to at least 1 school that will stretch you to think about yourself and your accomplishments. Allow yourself to dream!

### Remember

- Figuring out what you want in a college is a **process**.
- Your list will change based on the information you collect as you research.
- Your major or focus of study may have different titles and requirements at different schools.

## COLLEGE EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Use the lists and ‘buzz words’ to assist you in researching and evaluating colleges to find what best fits:

### Students

- **Enrollment** – percent of undergraduate students, freshman class size, individual class size
- **Retention** – percent of freshman class who continue into the sophomore year; percent of freshman class who graduate
- **Diversity** – male/female ratio, ethnicity, percent of commuters/ residents, geographic origins, percent receiving financial aid

### Type of School

- Public or Private
- Religiously affiliated
- Liberal arts
- Research, land-grant, space-grant, etc institution
- Pre-professional
- By specific major offering (business, education, engineering, fine arts)

### Demographics

- **Location** – geographic region, distance from home
- **Setting** – urban or rural, weather, cultural and entertainment opportunities, transportation

### Campus Life

- **Student types** – diversity, “the typical student”, legacy, first generation
- **Community** – school spirit, campus issues, crime rate
- **Housing** – dorm size and style, roommate selections, dining options, live/learn communities, substance free housing
- **Campus activities** – emphasis on social life, fraternities/sororities, sports, entertainment, other cultural events

### Academic Environment

- **Faculty** - percent of PhD’s advising undergraduates, emphasis on undergraduate teaching, percent of classes taught by professors, publishing requirements
- **Student – Faculty relationships:** ratio, accessibility, class size, office hours, access to advising
- **Academic demands** – workload, academic competition and pressure, minimum and maximum units allowed, degree requirements, graduation requirements
- **Career preparation** – career advising, internships, percent of students who obtain a job in their field of interest upon graduation, percent who go on to graduate school

### Curriculum

- **Academic offerings** – majors in your area of interest – breadth and depth of courses
- **Required courses** – portion of study dedicated to general education and opportunities for student choice
- **Special study programs** – study abroad, internships, joint degree programs, research opportunities

### Cost and Financial Aid

- **Cost** – total expenditures per year, includes tuition and fees, room and board, books, personal expenses, travel
- **Family resources** – family contribution, your contribution
- **Awards** – percent of students receiving aid based on need, merit, average award, loan and job expectations
- **On and off campus work** – job opportunities, wages and hours, work study opportunities

## BUILDING A COLLEGE LIST

### Choosing a Major

Although there is perceived strong pressure to commit yourself to a major and a career, you should not feel rushed into making such a decision. “Undecided” is an acceptable listing on an application. Keep in mind, however, that the more technical programs such as engineering or architecture may require an identified major or “undecided engineering” to be directly admitted into that program within a university. Also know, and colleges are aware of this, that research shows college students changing their majors an average of three times! So embrace “undecided” if that’s who you are.

*Be aware* that there are some colleges that have impacted majors and will require you to apply to a specific major! If you are truly undecided about your major, you may want to avoid applying to colleges that have this requirement.

### Categorizing schools on your list

- **Stretch** Schools – schools where even the best and brightest must truly shine to be offered admission. These are dedication schools for everyone in the country, no matter test scores and GPA. Your entire application will be running on all cylinders.
- **Dedication** Schools (published statistics above student’s academic profile) - This tier includes the schools for which a typical admitted student profile is above your own. You will expect to write stellar essays targeted for that specific school and go over the application with a fine toothed comb. You may also have to get straight A’s this semester if you don’t already. You have some chance of being admitted and if you are, you will be beyond excited. A Dedication school is **not** a ‘Pie in the Sky’ dream school.
- **Profile Range** Schools (published statistics within student academic profile) - This tier represents colleges that have an admitted student profile similar to your student profile. You will write essays that express who you are and may be used for more than one school. You will maintain your academic performance and current activities. You must still put work into this application, but it may not be given as much time as a dedication school.
- **Application** Schools (published statistics below academic profile) - This tier represents colleges where you are above the middle 50% of the school’s published admitted student profile. Based on history and data, you feel your current profile would be accepted without much additional work beyond filling out the application. Your essays are likely gleaned from essays written for other schools’ prompts.

Students and their parents often ask how many college applications should be submitted. The answer to this question depends on the colleges that interest you and the mix of schools to which you are applying. We recommend that all students have at least 1 school from each category above, and several in each if time and resources allow. At Washington Academy, students are suggested to have no more than 6 private or out of state institutions. This is to limit the amount of unique essays that students have to complete. The ultimate choice, though, is up to the student.

A good litmus test for whether or not to include a school is this: Would you attend the school if it were free to you, with no strings attached? If the answer is no, please do not include that school on your list! A phrase that hurts our counselors ears is, “I have this school on my list, but I would never go even if I do get admitted.” EVERY school on your list should be a school which, should you be admitted, you would be happy to attend.

### Some Important Considerations in Building Your College List

All colleges and institutions take some level of **Work** to achieve admission. Some will take **Hard Work** on your part in high school and the applications process, and some will take **true Dedication**.

We have restructured the list to reflect this reality of college admissions. *Even if a school has published statistics and scores that are below where you fall, no school is a shoe-in!*

1. **Balance** - Spend as much time thinking about your Application schools as you spend thinking about your Dedication schools. If your Dedication choices are small, liberal arts colleges, then you should spend time finding Profile Range and Application schools that fit the same criteria – it must mean that a small liberal arts school is a better fit for you.
2. **Selectivity** - A greater chance of admission at a college does not mean that the school's programs are of a lesser quality. The selectivity of an institution is dependent on the size of its applicant pool, which may be affected by geographic location, popularity, and reputation. Many colleges today are far more difficult to get into than they were even five years ago, but it does not follow that those institutions are “better” than they were five years ago.
3. **Location** – Be open to all regions of the country! There are excellent, affordable colleges throughout the country. In many instances, applying from “out of the region” can make you a more unique and attractive candidate. A private college in another region of the country might be very interested in an applicant from Maine. We come from a state that many colleges are trying to attract so that they can say they have someone from all 50 states. Use that to your advantage!
4. **Graduate School** - What counts MORE THAN ANYTHING in admission to graduate school is your performance at the undergraduate college you attend. The name on your college diploma will not get you into, or keep you out of, graduate school. You may not get into medical school with a “C” average from an Ivy League school, but you can get in with an “A” average (and good MCAT scores) from any number of smaller, lesser known colleges. If Graduate school is your plan, consider this.
5. **Ranking** - Beware of publications that attempt to rank or compare schools. All students must make their own decisions, and a magazine or guide will never be able to include YOUR personal needs in its rankings.
6. **Test Scores** - SAT and ACT scores are *not* the determining factor in making your list. Scores are the least important of the three major statistical criteria used by good admissions officers. Most important is your high school curriculum, then your grades, and finally the SAT or ACT scores.
7. **Affordability** – Does your dream school align with your family finances? Now might be a good time to have a frank conversation with your parents to determine the financial viability of schools. What is their financial commitment to you? Will you be responsible for loans? Have they saved for your college education? Will they pay a percentage? Knowing this information will help you in choosing schools. You may want to apply to some work schools who would actually love to have a student like you attend their school because you increase the GPA average of the class. Applying ‘beneath your aptitude’ means schools may be much more inclined to give scholarships or grants that will not have to be paid back.

**NOTES:**

## UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMIES

For a four-year college degree you may consider one of the five military academies:

- U.S. Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD)
- U.S. Military Academy (West Point, NY)
- U.S. Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO)
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point, NY)
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy (New London, CT)

In addition to the academies, there are civilian colleges, smaller military colleges, and colleges with Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC): <http://www.todaysmilitary.com/>

**Students who are interested in pursuing the academies should begin preparation as early as sophomore year.** This is not a decision to be made lightly as entrance to one of the academies requires a five-year military obligation (post-graduation) as an officer in the respective service. Some of the benefits include: a first-rate education, full-tuition scholarship, and a unique college experience.

Admission to a service academy is extremely competitive. Students must be in good academic standing with high grades and test scores, and advanced courses, as well as in good physical condition.

All of the federal service academies, except the Coast Guard, require nomination primarily by a congressman. Most members of Congress do not accept requests for nomination after Oct of the senior year. Therefore, we encourage students to contact their congressman in the spring of their junior year.

### Timeline for Military Academy Applications

#### Sophomore Year

Contact a representative of the Academy to learn about the application requirements.

#### Junior Year

- Research websites.
- Contact your congressional representatives and request a nomination to the academy or academies of your choice.
- In the spring and summer:
  - work on your Physical Aptitude Exam (PAE),
  - take your medical exams, and
  - visit the academies and/or attend their summer programs.
- Begin requesting recommendation letters.
- In the summer, work on applications.

#### Senior Year

- In the early fall, coordinate recommendation letters and transcripts with your College Counselor.
- Submit applications.
- Complete medical and physical aptitude tests if necessary.
- In November, interview for your congressional nomination.

## **THE PITCH FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

### **COMMUNITY COLLEGES: PLACES SO CLOSE CAN TAKE YOU SO FAR...***by The College Board*

Community colleges are an important sector of American higher education. Today over 10 million students attend the more than 1100 community colleges throughout the United States. Since their beginning 100 years ago, community colleges have offered a unique educational opportunity for transfer, vocational training and community service. The underlying principles of access and equity are at the core of their mission. Here are some reasons why students select a community college.

#### **QUALIFIED AND ACCESSIBLE FACULTY**

Faculty members' primary responsibility is teaching, not research and publishing. Many professors also have extensive practical experience in the subjects they teach. Faculty are accessible to students through office hours and advising and often act as sponsors to clubs and organizations.

#### **CLASS SIZE**

The average class size in most community colleges is significantly smaller than public four-year universities. This makes community colleges great places for students who like small classes and individualized attention. They won't be a number or get lost in the crowd.

#### **MAJORS**

Community colleges offer a wide variety of majors and degrees. Students can prepare for an immediate career or pursue the first two years of general academic course work required for a bachelor's degree. They can also work toward a degree that they started elsewhere. Community colleges have taken a leadership role in occupational programs. They prepare students for careers in both existing and emerging technologies. Honors programs allow students to take rigorous courses supplemented by special opportunities.

#### **CONVENIENCE**

Most community colleges offer flexible course schedules that allow students to fit their studies around work or home commitments. They are usually within easy commuting distance by car or public transportation. They also are on the forefront of distance learning and extension programs including courses that enable students to complete coursework off campus.

#### **DIVERSITY**

College is about learning new ideas, meeting new people and having varied experiences. At community colleges, students are introduced to a diverse group of students in terms of age, experience, ethnicity and goals. Community colleges offer a wide spectrum of clubs and activities that celebrate and support the diversity that exists on their campuses. Athletics, student government, campus publications and cultural events all thrive on student involvement.

#### **COMMUNITY**

Community colleges are committed to serving the needs of their communities. As important resources in their communities, colleges offer both credit and non-credit courses, technical training and recreational, social and cultural programs. Community colleges have developed partnership programs with businesses and often serve as learning centers for various local businesses. They work collaboratively with primary and secondary schools and civic and government groups. Community colleges continually strive to meet the wants and needs of their communities and its people, giving each a unique local focus.

## **CONNECTED TO FOUR YEAR COLLEGES**

Many students begin their undergraduate studies at a community college and finish at a four-year college. Community college and Maine four-year colleges have formed exciting partnerships to ease this transfer. Articulation agreements detailing courses and programs for transfer are growing in number. Counselors are available to assist students in the transfer process. Studies show that students who spend their first two years at a community college and then go on to graduate from four-year colleges are as well prepared academically as those who go directly to four-year colleges.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Community colleges and technology play a critical role in each other's growth and development. Colleges incorporate technology in assessment and instruction. Computer labs are plentiful and accessible. Many labs offer state of the art equipment and programs. Training for high tech workers often happens at community colleges with majors such as telecommunications, digital systems, robotics, and laser optics.

## **SUPPORT**

Community colleges are committed to student success. They offer a comprehensive array of support services that include tutoring, advising, career planning and counseling. Through developmental courses students can improve skills in math, English, and languages.

## **COST**

Solid cost savings is one of the major benefits of attending a community college. The low tuition cost makes a quality education available to many who may not have had access in the past. Tuition at community college is often less than the price of a computer. In addition, for students in need of assistance, financial aid programs are available at community colleges too.

## **RESPONSIVENESS**

Community colleges respond quickly to community needs. They deliver courses in many formats and locations and often create specific training programs at the request of a local business or industry. They also serve as sites for many community programs and activities.

## **SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT COLLEGE ADMISSIONS**

### **Myth #1: Colleges receive so many personal essays they probably only glance at them.**

Private college admission officers read personal essays with great care. Writing about yourself in a way that makes you unique is the one significant thing you can do to overcome lackluster test scores or a mediocre school record. Don't wait until just before the deadline and rush writing your essay to get the application submitted on time. Even at a school with many other factors to consider, a well-written essay can tip the scales in your favor and make a difference.

### **Myth #2: Colleges don't look at the senior year grades.**

All college admissions committees analyze not only senior year grades in the first semester, but also the degree of difficulty of the senior year courses. As for the second semester grades, if there is a significant change (decline) in academic performance from January to June (spring semester), the college that originally accepted you might require summer school work, put you on probation for the first semester of college, or rescind your acceptance on the grounds that you are not the same strong student they originally admitted.

### **Myth #3: It is important to have as many extra-curricular activities as possible to impress college admission people because it "looks good."**

Colleges are "looking" for *quality* of involvement, not simply *quantity*. They want a well-rounded student body made up of students who are passionately interested in particular activities, those who

haven't spread themselves so thin that their extracurricular commitments are superficial. They are, after all, looking to continue the activities and clubs that exist on their own campus and want to see your ability to do that. Colleges prefer, for example, the student solely dedicated to being the yearbook editor over the student who has some superficial participation in 10 different activities. Being involved and invested is what is called "productive follow-through" and colleges value that.

**Myth #4: It is better to go to a big university that is well known than to a small college that few people have heard of.**

This generalization about large versus small schools is quite misleading. While a large university with wide name recognition (such as UMaine Orono) may be ideal for many students, others may perform better in a smaller, more personalized environment (such as Husson or Bates). Just because your next door neighbor hasn't heard of a particular college doesn't mean the school is not prestigious. Graduate schools and employers make it their business to know which colleges turn out the brightest and most capable graduates, and the size of the school has very little to do with it. It is important to define the things *you* want in a college – to understand yourself, not to be unduly influenced by the opinions of others.

**Myth #5: The only private colleges worth applying to are the Ivy League colleges.**

This is another cliché. The eight Ivy League colleges are among the most selective schools in the nation, but they may not offer what *you* want; besides, did you know that the "Ivy League" is simply an athletic league like the Big 10 or the Pac 12? Certainly the Ivy League is known for its academic quality, but it does *not* have a monopoly on academic quality. Suggested reading: *Looking Beyond the Ivy League* by Loren Pope.

**Myth #6: Colleges just don't have enough money to give families financial aid.**

Financial aid continues to be more readily available than you might think in the forms of grants, loans, work-study, and merit scholarships. Read the financial aid section in this handbook, attend any information sessions offered in the area or through WA, and investigate websites such as [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) or [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org). You may be surprised at how in reach your college choices are. In addition, consider the "value for money" proposition for a college. It might take some loans, but the college may offer experiences that give a far greater return on investment.

**Myth #7: If I make the wrong decision about college, my life will be ruined.**

While it is important to realize the significance of your college choice, take it seriously, and spend time on all the steps of the college process, you should remember to keep things in perspective. Making a choice has impact, but no choice is permanent! Be conscientious about the selection process. If you find, in spite of an informed choice, that you are not well suited to your college, you can always transfer to another college. If you are still unable to make the decision right now, it is possible to defer your admissions decisions or attend local community college and apply as a transfer student for the first time to other colleges when you have a better idea of what you want.

## COMPONENTS OF THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

Most colleges are interested in the information listed below when deciding whether or not to admit an applicant, although individual colleges differ in how they evaluate this information; that is, each component below is utilized by admissions but may be valued differently depending upon the uniqueness of each college/school. Some may even require only a few of the components, but not all. Research each individual college to determine what will be required.

- Difficulty level of courses and final grades in those courses (Also known as “Rigor of Courses” or “Strength of schedule”)
- Overall Grade Point Average (GPA)
- SAT and/or ACT scores
- Recommendations – school counselor, teacher, community member
- Sports, School community, and outside community activity involvement
- Awards and leadership positions
- Personal essays
- Interviews (sometimes required, other times optional or not required at all)
- Class rank if given (WA ranks for purposes of college applications and honor essaysists)

### **Grade Point Average**

The GPA is the average of a student’s grades starting with the freshman year. A student’s grade point average (GPA) is important for college admission. The higher the GPA, the greater the college and scholarship opportunities for students.

### **Transcript**

A transcript is a document that outlines a student’s academic record in high school. The WA transcript contains the following information.

- Courses, grades, and credits for each grade level completed beginning with grade 9. It also includes courses taken at other institutions that earned you WA credit
- Current yearly and cumulative GPA.

All applications request that an official transcript be submitted with the application. An official transcript must have a signature and seal verifying its authenticity. An unofficial transcript is the same as an official transcript except there is no official signature and seal. You may request an unofficial transcript for personal use (e.g. to take with you on a college visit) by contacting the Counseling Office.

### **School Profile**

A Washington Academy Profile is included with each transcript. Our profile includes pertinent information about our school such as size, the percentage of students who go on to postsecondary education, the average SAT scores of the previous graduating class, and course information about the school. The school profile is meant to share with colleges background information about our school so that they can put you in context in the pool of other applicants from many locations.

## TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Another standard part of the college application are letters of recommendation, usually corresponding to the number of recommendation letters required by each school the student is applying to (preferably 11<sup>th</sup> and/or 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers).

Requirements for such letters vary; so, note each college's instructions carefully. Many public schools including those in Maine do not require letters; so, check carefully.

When choosing teachers to write letters, consider the following:

- Does the teacher know the academic you well? How long have they taught you?
- Have you done significant work in their class? Have you demonstrated passion in their class? Have they seen you be a student in a variety of ways in their class - i.e. on tests, quizzes, presentations, writing, classwork, homework, etc.
- It doesn't have to be the class you received straight A's in, but possibly a class where you demonstrated interest and worked very hard or even improved a lot.

Colleges generally want letters from junior or senior year teachers in core subject areas. However, if you are planning to study a visual or performing art, you will want a letter from one of the fine arts teachers that has taught you. Likewise, if you are applying to a Christian school and need a character letter of reference and are involved in your church, you might request a letter from a spiritual director at your parish, a pastor, or a club advisor who can speak to your Christian character.

Most letters are sent electronically through Common Application or directly to the school through an electronic portal the teacher sets up. The first step is to ask your teacher in person. If they are willing, then go through the electronic portal of your application and list their email address so that an invitation goes to them. It is helpful to follow up with the teacher to confirm that they have received your request. If you need advice on which teachers to ask, please see your counselor.

Once the teacher completes your letters, they upload them and send them electronically.

Follow these guidelines:

- Ask your teachers in person. You should not simply leave written requests on teachers' desks or in their mailboxes.
- The same two teachers will write all your academic letters of recommendations. If you are applying to a technical institution or indicating science or engineering as a proposed field of study, one of your teacher reports should be written by a math or science teacher.
- **Always thank your teachers in writing for their help, either with a handwritten note or gesture.** Writing recommendations is a time-consuming and (unless you do it) thankless task; often the only reward is your warm, genuine appreciation. Also, let your teachers know how things work out later in the year.

## **WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT**

### ***Advice from the CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO***

#### **DO**

- Include brief descriptions of your specific achievements.
- Give credit to people or books or whatever has inspired you. Mention the early influences that led you to your goal. Remember to keep the focus on you.
- Give readers a taste of your daily life to make a point about yourself (multiple responsibilities, busy schedule, financial hardship, etc.)
- Rely on your Letters of Recommendation to supply praise and superlatives.
- Identify your long range goals.
- Find out as much as possible about your chosen field and explore the merits of particular careers before you write your personal statement.
- Acknowledge the support you have received from CCSF, including counselors, faculty, departments, classes, clubs, etc.
- Make your opening paragraph as individual as you are! Spend time crafting your first sentence, and each sentence, until you are satisfied with the message and the style.
- Make your personal statement easy to read.
- Consider format, fonts, margins and line spacing carefully. Ask your friends, tutors and teachers about their preferences.
- Show that you have taken time in writing your personal statement.
- USE Spellcheck and proofread your statement for missing words, typos and repeated words.

#### **DON'T**

- Don't simply list the honors, awards or achievements that you included on your application.
- Don't include long narrative passages or take up too much space describing other people.
- Don't include details of your daily life that are common to many students at CCSF.
- Don't compliment yourself with praise that makes you seem immodest. Let your readers decide whether you "have an excellent GPA" or "are extremely diligent."
- Don't make too many detailed promises about what you intend to do (volunteering, initiating special projects).
- Don't promise to figure out your career options at some point in the future.
- Don't spend too much time discussing what other people have done for you. Keep the bulk of your personal statement focused on what you have done.
- Don't begin with: "Hello, my name is ..."
- Don't use fonts that are too small or elaborate. Don't use bold, capitals or underlining to emphasize key points.

### ***Advice from BOSTON COLLEGE***

#### **Writing the "Perfect" Essay**

First of all, let us debunk the myth. There is no such thing as a perfect essay. There, we've said it. Now you can clear your mind of the anxiety that typically accompanies students as you sit down to write. Instead, you can focus on using the essay as a tool to let the Committee on Admission learn more about you as an individual.

Many of us feel that in the fall of your senior year, the college essay is the only portion of your application remaining on which you can still have a significant influence. Granted, you will need to continue working hard in your classes, but you have already met people who will speak highly of you in a recommendation, you have already been involved in various extracurricular activities, and you have

likely completed your standardized examinations. The one remaining portion is the college essay. We realize how hectic your senior year is, but take advantage of this opportunity.

The best essays that we read are ones that tell us not only about a specific event, mentor, excursion, or accomplishment, but also tell us how the writer has been affected by their experiences. For example, a typical essay might inform the reader of a trip to France that the student took the previous summer. It might focus on the challenges faced in getting to their destination, the French culture, or even the people that the student met. The better essay, however, takes it to the next level. It makes the experience personal. The student might choose to explain what surprised, frustrated, or inspired them about the trip. The student might choose to focus on how they now view the world a little bit differently after this newfound international perspective.

Another common example is students' essays on a person who influenced their lives. Frequently, we read essays about applicants' grandparents, for example. Many essays simply focus on the attributes that a grandmother has that make her special to the applicant. They may focus on the challenges that a grandmother has overcome or the successes she has enjoyed. They leave the reader knowing that the student loves his grandmother, but not knowing anything more about the student. The better essay, however, might also focus on the way the writer has attempted to emulate these admired qualities. The student might choose to share how learning of his grandmother's life experiences has helped him better understand the world. This allows us to learn more about the student and what makes the student special.

As you can see, in both of these examples, the first essay simply tells us of an experience, but the second essay shows us more about the individual. We walk away from it knowing a bit more about the qualities the applicant possesses and how he or she might fit into our campus community.

We hope that you will not view the college essay as a roadblock between you and your college choice, but as a unique opportunity to be in the driver's seat in the college process. Let your qualities, characteristics, and personality shine through. Best wishes as you begin your journey.

### ***Advice from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA***

#### **Writing the Essay: Sound Advice from an Expert**

Fast Food. That's what I think of when I try to draw an analogy with the process of reading application essays.

**The bad.** Ninety percent of the applications I read contain what I call McEssays - usually five-paragraph essays that consist primarily of abstractions and unsupported generalization. They are technically correct in that they are organized and have the correct sentence structure and spelling, but they are boring. Sort of like a Big Mac. I have nothing against Big Macs, but the one I eat in Charlottesville is not going to be fundamentally different from the one I eat in Paris, Peoria or Palm Springs. I am not going to rave about the quality of a particular Big Mac. The same can be said about the generic essay. If an essay starts out: "I have been a member of the band and it has taught me leadership, perseverance and hard work," I can almost recite the rest of the essay without reading it. Each of the three middle paragraphs gives a bit of support to an abstraction, and the final paragraph restates what has already been said. A McEssay is not wrong, but it is not going to be a positive factor in the admission decision. It will not allow a student to stand out.

A student who uses vague abstractions poured into a preset form will end up being interpreted as a vague series of abstractions. A student who uses cliché becomes, in effect, a cliché. If we are what we eat, we are also what we write.

Not only does a preset form lead to a generic essay, so does a generic approach to what is perceived as the right topic. Far too many students begin the search of what to write about by asking: What does my college want to hear? The thinking goes something like this: If I can figure out what they are looking for, and if I can make myself look like that, then I'll improve my chances.

Several years ago we asked students to describe an invention or creation from the past that was important to them. Our No.1 response - at least a thousand people - was the Declaration of Independence. This might make some people think that our college bound students are wonderfully patriotic, but given that my institution was found by Thomas Jefferson, I have a better answer. My guess is that a significant portion of the people who chose the Declaration did so because they thought we would want to hear about how much they admired Thomas Jefferson. While this may be a noble sentiment or, in some cases, a cynical maneuver, it ultimately meant that we had a thousand essays that sounded pretty much alike and therefore did not affect the admission decision. We are not looking for students who all think the same way, believe the same thing, or write the same essay.

Too often, however students who want to avoid sounding generic with respect to form or content choose exactly the wrong remedy; they think that bigger topics - or bigger words - are better. But it is almost impossible, in 500 words, to write well about vast topics such as the death of a loved one (see excerpt: "the bad"). I am not advocating longer essays (just remember how many applications admissions officers need to read); I am advocating essays with a sharp focus that allows for detail. Detail is what differentiates one essay from another, one applicant from another.

Instead of detail, however, students try to impress us with big words. In trying to make a topic sound intellectual, students resort to the thesaurus and, as a result, end up sounding pretentious or at least insecure about using the voice they would use to describe an event to a friend. The student assumes that these "impressive" words intensify the experience for a reader rather than diminish it. Before students send off their essay, they should always read it aloud to someone who knows them well; let that person decide if an individual's voice comes through.

**The good.** A good essay is not good because of the topic but because of the voice. A good writer can make any topic interesting, and a weak writer can make even the most dramatic topic a bore.

Students need only to recall the difference between two simple concepts - showing and telling. A good essay always shows; a weak essay always tells.

By showing, a writer appeals to all of the senses, not just the visual. To show means to provide a feast for the eyes, ears and, depending on the essay, the mouth, nose or skin. But rather than telling a reader what show is, it is much easier to show what showing is.

A writer who shows respects the intelligence of the reader; a writer who tells focuses on the ideas, or the perceived ideas, behind the details. He or she is more concerned about demonstrating the ability to be abstract than the ability to be precise. In a short, personal essay, precision is power.

**The risky.** Any student who has already learned the basics of showing should think about taking a risk on the college essay. What kind of risk? Think about starting an essay with: "I sat in the back of the police car." These first sentences use what journalists call a hook. The sentence reaches out from the page and grabs our attention. It creates a bit of controversy and an expectation that the writer might be willing to take academic risks in the classroom. A good hook does not mean that a good essay will follow, but it does mean that a reader will look forward to seeing what will unfold.

A risky essay can border on the offensive. In some cases, as in the excerpt, it is possible that a few readers might write off an applicant based upon questionable taste. That is the danger of taking a risk. People wonder if they will be penalized if they do take a risk in an application. They want to know, in other words, if there is any risk in taking a risk. Yes, there is. I can say, however, that my experience in the admissions field has led me to conclude the great majority of admissions officers are an open-minded lot and that to err on the side of the baroque might not be as bad as to stay in the comfort of the boring.

The best essays are crafted not from a formula for success but by a voice that is practiced. Those who are willing to take a risk, to focus on that part of the world that matters to them and to show the

passion and the practice it takes to write about it well, will help their chances of admission through their essay.

## Other Tips for Crafting an Interesting College Admissions Personal Statement

*Adapted From:* The New York Times. “Tip Sheet: An Admissions Dean Offers Advice on Writing a College Essay”  
MARTHA C. MERRILL JUNE 23, 2009

**Write about yourself.** A great essay of how your grandfather survived the Vietnam War might be very well written, but it doesn’t say anything about the writer. Regardless of the topic, make sure *you* shine through your essay.

**Use your own voice.** Admissions officers can tell the difference between the voice of a 40-year-old and a high school senior. If anyone who helps you with essays tries to change your writing voice, politely decline their assistance.

**Focus on one aspect of yourself.** Readers want to get to know you on a deeper level. A surface level list or mentioning of activities or projects you do is not as valuable in the admissions process as an in-depth look at one project or passion.

**Be genuine.** Don’t try to impress your reader. If they’ve been doing it long enough, they’ve read about everything. Just highlight what’s important and what drives you.

**Consider a mundane topic.** Sometimes it’s the simple things in life that make the best essays. Students can write moving essays about the process of cooking dinner or what a family dog observes while his master gets ready for school in the morning. It doesn’t have to be a life-changing event to be interesting and informative.

**Don’t rely on “how to” books.** Use them to get your creative juices flowing, but don’t adhere too rigidly to their formulas, and *definitely don’t use their example topics*. While there are always exceptions, the “what my room says about me” essay is way overdone.

**Share your opinions, but avoid anything too risky or controversial.** Your essay will be read by a diverse group of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, so try to appeal to the broadest audience possible.

**Tell a good story.** “*Show, don’t tell*” Illustrate your compassion, demonstrate your overcoming of great difficulty, paint a picture of lessons you have learned in your life. Simply stating that you have qualities or experience is not helpful to a reader.

**Don’t repeat what is already in your application.** If you go to a performing arts school and all of your extracurricular activities and awards relate to dance, don’t write about how much you love dancing. Tell the admissions officer something they could not know about you just from reading the other parts of your application.

## COLLEGE APPLICATION INTERVIEWS

A college interview is a chance to show that you're more than just test scores and grades. And it's an exchange of information — you learn about the college and the college learns about you. Not every college requires an interview: it may be mandatory, optional or not offered at all. The interview is just one of many factors in the admission decision and it is rarely the deciding one. Still, if a borderline student turns out to be impressive, the interviewer has the authority to write a letter supporting admission.

### Types of Interviews

Interviews vary depending on the college, student and particular situation. You could find yourself interviewing with an admission officer, a student, or an alumnus. Most of these interviews last between 30 and 60 minutes.

There are also other, less formal, interview situations. You may have the opportunity to participate in a group information session with admission staff members and current students. Many high schools hold college fairs, where you can meet with representatives on an individual basis.

If you intend to attend a music, drama or dance institute, you should plan on performing an audition or submitting a portfolio, in addition to taking part in any necessary interview.

### Why Interview?

Most colleges don't require an interview; however, there are many benefits to meeting face-to-face with an admission officer. Interviews give you the chance to:

- Show that you are seriously interested in attending.
- Convey what you can bring to a campus community.
- Learn more about a college's programs.
- Explain variations in your record — for example, changes in your grades.

### Be Your Own Best Advocate

The admission officers learn about you from a group of documents: your transcript, test scores and application. While your essay and recommendations can offer an impression of who you are, words on paper can reveal only so much. The interview is your chance to be your own advocate by talking positively about your interests and activities, to show your personality, and to boost your chance of admission.

### Discuss Special Circumstances

The interview is a good time to explain anything unusual in your transcript or discuss any personal circumstances that affected your studies. Any problems that you may find difficult to write about in the application are often easier to discuss with a sympathetic admission counselor. For example:

- You may not be the best math student, but it never stopped you from taking AP<sup>®</sup> Calculus — tell the interviewer why you persisted despite such difficulties.
- During sophomore year, your parents divorced and your academic work took a downturn.
- You have a learning disability and need to make an extra effort with every assignment.

### Making Your Interview a Positive Experience

You can't pass or fail, so don't be nervous. As long as you've prepared and practiced, you can probably make a good impression. Here are some other tips:

- Accept a college's offer of an interview.
- Be on time.
- Go into the interview alone, without your parents.
- Be polite to everyone you meet.
- Act naturally.
- Respond conversationally — don't memorize a speech.

- Use appropriate language and avoid slang.
- Be confident but not arrogant.
- Tell the truth.
- Express interest in the college and its programs.
- Ask questions not covered by the college catalog or website.
- Avoid eating or drinking during the interview.
- Dress neatly and cleanly; don't wear T-shirts or other casual clothing

### **Be Sure to Ask Questions**

Asking questions shows that you're interested in the college and what the admission officer has to say. You should try to ask questions that indicate you've done some research about the college and know why you consider it a good fit for you. Also, asking questions can help you discover characteristics that colleges can't convey in a catalog. Interviews are not automatically part of the visit. Some schools require or recommend interviews while others do not, although you can request an interview if you want one. Parents are welcome to attend but do not participate in the interview. Schedule your interview well in advance of your visit. Competitive colleges strongly recommend interviews. Since competitive schools conduct a lot of interviews, call early. Interviews last from 35 to 40 minutes.

### **Preparing for an Interview**

Before you do the real thing, try a practice interview. Invite a family member or friend to practice with you, each of you taking turns as the interviewer and the interviewee. That way, you'll have experience both asking and answering questions.

### **Don't Memorize Responses**

Do have some starting points for your answers and questions, but don't memorize a speech to sound rote or practiced. Preserve your spontaneity and ability to respond to the interviewer as a real, live person.

### **Know What to Expect**

Very often, the questions most asked by college interviewers remain the same at different schools. Admission staff just wants to make sure that you can speak intelligently about your grades, scores and goals. They'll ask questions like:

Why do you want to attend our university?

What will you contribute?

What courses have you enjoyed most?

Are your grades an accurate reflection of your potential?

Which one of your activities is most rewarding and why?

What has been your biggest achievement?

What's your opinion on (fill in current event)?

How did you spend last summer?

What do you plan to do after you graduate from college?

What's the most difficult situation you've faced?

If you could change one thing about your high school, what would it be?

### **When the Questions are Tough, or You Don't Know the Answer**

"Can you conduct this entire interview without using the word 'I'?" There isn't any way to prepare for a curve-ball question except to recognize that the possibility exists. If you get frazzled, you can respond, "I'll have to think that over. "Is it okay if I write you about this?" Remember, it's much better to say "I don't know" than to pretend to be an expert

## EARLY DECISION AND EARLY ACTION

Early Decision/Early Action policies vary considerably from school to school; please check their policies prior to applying. If your college research is complete, you have a strong academic background, and you are passionate about one school, you can apply early decision. When applying **Early Decision**, you are entering into a binding agreement with that one particular school. If accepted, you must enroll. **Early Action**, on the other hand, is a non-binding policy that allows you to apply early to a college. You need not accept the college's offer of admission and you may apply to other schools as well. Listed below are the pros and cons of early decision/early action:

**Early Action and Early Decision:** Many colleges offer a student the opportunity to apply early and most often you will receive your decision in advance of regular notifications. Colleges can use the early programs to admit, defer, or deny admission to a student. If a student is deferred from an early program, their application will be reviewed again during the regular admission cycle. If a student is denied, their application will not receive any further review. A student denied cannot reapply for consideration during the regular admission cycle.

Students should be extremely thoughtful and careful in applying early and should have thoroughly researched colleges before applying through these early programs. In general, if a student chooses to apply early, they have a strong academic record through six semesters (11th grade) and have completed all college entrance testing.

**Early Action (EA)** offers students the option to apply early to a college and find out their decision in mid-January. Students who are admitted through Early Admission programs still have until May 1 of their senior year to accept the offer of admission from the college.

**Restricted Early Action** (Single Choice Early Action) programs limit an applicant to applying to ONLY ONE college through an early program. This is not binding, and the student has until May 1 of their senior year to accept the offer of admission from the college. The student, parent, and college counselor must sign an agreement that outlines the limited application process in Restricted Early Action.

**Early Decision (ED)** is similar to Early Action except that if a student is admitted through an ED program, the student is required to attend that college. Students apply to a first-choice college early in the senior year (often by November 1, but sometimes as late as January 15). Notification is usually within four to six weeks. A handful of schools also offer Early Decision II, with applications due usually in January and a decision rendered in February. Admission under an Early Decision program is a contract to attend that college. Once admitted, a student must withdraw all other applications. Students who are ready to make deliberate and well-reasoned first-choice decisions may be good candidates for binding Early Decision plans. Only after thorough research by visiting and touring the campus, attending classes, and perhaps staying overnight in campus housing is a student in a position to apply ED. Students who have never visited a particular college should not apply Early Decision to that institution.

Early Decision applicants may also be “deferred,” which means the application will be read with the regular decision applicant group. Any deferred applications become non-binding. At some colleges, applying Early Decision may enhance the chances of admission, if a candidate has a strong application. However, applying early will not turn a marginal candidate into a strong one, and such applicants may find themselves denied in the early round. Unless a student has a strong record through the end of the junior year and most standardized testing completed, applying early is usually not advised. Many students need the fall of their senior year to fortify their academic profile for admission committees. Also, students who need financial aid are advised to apply under regular decision programs so that they may compare financial aid packages from different institutions.

## **HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING A COLLEGE FAIR**

### **Plan Ahead**

Identify the colleges that you definitely want to visit.

Prepare a list of questions to ask (some examples are below)

Be ready to fill out your email address, phone number, and address to be added to college mailing lists

Be sure to bring a pen and notepad to take notes

Only pick up college brochures that you need or want - swag is helpful, too!

### **While There**

Actually talk to representatives! Especially one where no one is at their table. Even if you are not interested in them, it can give you practice

Be your best self! Believe it or not, admissions representatives have a sole job of recruiting students. They remember you when you are engaged, interested, and ask good questions.

### **Questions for College Admissions Counselors**

1. What are your standards for acceptance?
2. When are tours offered? Who gives the tour? Do you have an open house?
3. What programs/degrees do you offer? What are the most popular majors?
4. What percentage of your students graduate in four years?
5. Are there advisors for each student? How much time are they required to spend with each student? Do they assist in career preparation?
6. Do students have to take an admissions exam? Are there placement exams for courses once a student is accepted?
7. How many undergraduate students are enrolled?
8. What percentage of students live on campus all four years? Is housing off campus difficult or easy to obtain?
9. What is the average class size? What is the largest class size?
10. What extracurricular opportunities are available on campus? Are student organizations encouraged and supported by the school? How? What student organizations are there?
11. How would you describe the student body's personality?
12. How is this school distinctive?
13. How many students transfer to another school during or after their first year?
14. How would you describe students' relationships with professors?
15. How do you award scholarships and financial aid?
16. Is the office of residential life accessible to students?
17. Can students switch roommates?
18. Does the school provide student escorts to accompany students walking home late at night? Does the campus have a blue light system?
19. What are the hours at the student health clinic? What about 24 hour emergency care?
20. Is there mental health assistance available on campus? Are there therapists?
21. Can you pick your academic advisor and how do they assist students?
22. Is there a freshman or first year orientation for students? How long is it?
23. What kind of food does the cafeteria offer and what other food options are there?
24. What is the academic philosophy of the college and what kinds of educational programs does this college offer?
25. What is the mission statement of the college or university?
26. What do students do when they graduate from this school? Do they get jobs in the areas for which they were trained? Do they pursue further education?
27. Are students generally satisfied with their campus and educational experience here?
28. Are you an alumni of the campus? Why did you choose to go here?
29. Describe the school spirit on campus. Are students proud to be enrolled here?
30. What is your study abroad program like? What percentage of students study abroad during their time at this school?
31. How is the weather where you live? Will I have to get an entirely new wardrobe?

32. What is the grading scale? Is there a curve in most classes?
33. What percentage of classes are taught by professors? By Graduate Students?
34. What are the academic requirements for graduation? Are there certain courses I must take in order to graduate?
35. How can I practice my religion or faith while on campus? Are there places of worship?
36. How difficult is it to change my major? Can I come in undeclared?
37. What is your favorite part about the campus? About campus life? About academics?
38. How can students express their opinions and viewpoints while on campus? Is the administration supportive of student demonstration and protest activities?
39. What social activities related to the performing and visual arts are offered on campus? Will I be able to expand my fine arts and cultural appreciation if I attend?
40. Do you have any other advice for me as an applicant to your university?

## PLANNING A COLLEGE VISIT

There is no substitute for seeing a college in person. You can learn about a college from brochures and the internet, but nothing beats the test of going and seeing it yourself. The best time to visit a college is when school is in session. In this way, you get a chance to see the college "in action." Buildings, facilities, and location may be important, but the students with whom you will sit in class and with whom you will live are very personal issues. If it is not possible to visit when school is in session, visits at other times are still highly recommended (i.e. spring or summer vacation). Many schools hold visit days for admitted students in the spring. Special programs are offered and can help students make their final decision.

Campus visits usually include two components:

1. **The Group Information Session** - This presentation informs prospective students and families about the college and admission process, highlighting application procedures, deadlines, and what they are looking for in an applicant.
2. **Campus Tour** – Scheduled at various times throughout the week and led by a student.

### Before the Visit

1. Check the college's website well in advance of the date you want to visit.
  - Find out about times for tours and information sessions, and make your reservation.
  - Find out if they require or recommend interviews. (Most don't, but if they do, set up your interview for the time you will be visiting the campus.)
1. Be prepared
  - o Research the college before visiting.
  - o Have a list of questions that you want answered.
  - o If you will be interviewed, be prepared to share pertinent information about yourself, such as your GPA, classes, co-curricular involvement, and unique or special interest if you will

### Before the Tour

- The timing of a visit can make a significant difference in your impressions and opinion of the school. Try to plan your visit when school is in session, if at all possible.
  - Advance planning with the college's admission office is important to help you make the most of your visit. Most colleges encourage campus visits, and many publish special brochures to help you plan one. The admission office can assist you with travel information, driving directions, and scheduling your itinerary (distances/driving times to nearby schools, the feasibility of visiting their school and another on the same day, etc.).
  - Call the admissions office, and set up a day and time for a tour. If this is a serious visit, you might want to ask about staying overnight in a residence hall. Ask if they can make arrangements. If this is not possible, ask for assistance in finding lodging for the night, if you need a place to stay. Some offices have arrangements with hotels or motels in the area.

- During your visit, try to meet with someone from the admission office, attend an information session, and take a tour of the campus.
- Learn all you can and take notes. You will never be indifferent after a college visit. You will have strong impressions. Write them down, good or bad, and start learning about what you want in terms of size, type of school, people, dorms, activities, etc. You might want to make a comparison chart to take with you if you plan to see several schools at one time. If you do not make notes of some kind, you will find that your memory of specifics becomes vague after visiting several schools.
- Follow up with a thank you note to the admissions person who helped you arrange your tour, and/or who spent time with you on campus.

### **What to Look for on a Tour**

- General appearance of the campus (poor maintenance, vandalism, campus pride)
- Student attire (J. Crew, Gap, professional attire, workout clothes, very casual, sloppy)
- Friendliness (eye contact, offer to help, hello's)
- Student conversations (topic, tone, classes, papers, books, parties)
- Transportation (bikes, cars, foot, shuttles)
- Faculty presence (office hours posted, open doors, student interaction)
- Library (hours, easy access)
- Laboratory and computer facilities (hours, easy access)
- Fine arts facilities (studios, practice rooms, performances)
- Residence Halls (singles, doubles, suites, coed, substance free or wellness, guaranteed housing)

### **Questions to Ask Students or Admissions Counselors on a College Visit**

Stop several students on campus and ask them about the school and their programs. Watch for their facial expressions and any hesitation in their voice. Some sample questions you could ask:

- If they were choosing a college today would this college be their first choice?
- Is there anything about the school they would like to change? If so, what would it be?
- What are the school's strongest or most popular majors?
- Is housing guaranteed for freshmen?
- Will you need a car?
- Can you have a car on campus?
- How much is parking?
- Is there public transportation to nearby destinations (shopping, museums, etc.)?
- What percent of applicants are accepted?
- What percent of first year students return as sophomores?
- What percent of entering students actually graduate? In how many years?
- How much flexibility will I have in my curriculum?
- Can I double major?
- Is a core curriculum required?
- What is the average class size?
- What is the faculty/student ratio?
- Will I be taught by graduate assistants?
- What percentage of the faculty teach first and second year students?
- What percent of graduates who apply to law school are admitted? Medical school? MBA programs?
- Do you offer Honors Programs? Is there a separate application?
- What percentage of students received financial aid? What does the average financial aid package look like (e.g. scholarships, grants, loans, work study, etc.)?

Also, ask questions about your own particular interests, such as internships in your field, fraternities/sororities, student organizations, intramural leagues and/or club sports, student government, and what campus life is like on the weekends.

## **PLAYING ATHLETICS IN COLLEGE**

If you are contemplating playing a competitive sport in college, there are certain guidelines you should follow which will assist you in the admission process. By adhering to these guidelines, you are not committed to play at any particular school, but without them, you may lose out on the opportunity to play. The NCAA Guidelines for College Bound Student Athletes is available for students to refer to during regular school hours. Copies of this publication are available in the Athletic Director's Office and the College Counseling Office.

### **NCAA Clearinghouse**

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a voluntary organization through which the nation's colleges and universities govern their athletics programs. It is comprised of more than 1,250 institutions, conferences, organizations and individuals committed to the best interest, education and athletic participation of student-athletes. Any student interested in playing sports at Division I or II levels must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. This organization reviews student transcripts to determine eligibility for athletics in college. Students can register on-line and then notify the College Counseling Office in writing to request an official copy of their transcript be sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse. The registration should be completed at the end of the junior year.

From the NCAA Clearinghouse website, prospective student-athletes are able to access information needed to understand the Division I and Division II eligibility requirements, register with the Clearinghouse and access individual Clearinghouse records. You may access the Clearinghouse Home Page directly at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net) or through links from the NCAA's Website at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org).

Prospective Student-Athletes (Domestic) who are eligible for a waiver of the Initial-Eligibility Certification Fee may complete their Student Release Form (SRF) online. NOTE: to be eligible for a fee waiver, you must have already received a fee waiver (not state voucher) for the ACT or SAT. Your high school counselor will also be required to submit an electronic fee waiver verification on your behalf (high school counselors with PIN access may submit waivers for eligible students from the High School Administrator section of the Clearinghouse website).

Clearinghouse mailing address:

NCAA Clearinghouse  
301 ACT Drive  
Box 4043  
Iowa City, IA 52243-4043

Toll Free phone numbers (domestic callers only):

Customer Service Line - 877/262-1492

### **Communication with Coaches**

It is advised that students interested in playing sports engage the coaches at the universities directly or through the university athletic department. The initial contact is usually made by the student's coach or athletic director. The individual colleges and coaches will notify you what they need in order to assess your abilities, or they

Keep track of correspondence with each of the schools you are interested in. If you don't hear from a coach, see if there has been turnover in the coaching staff and contact the new coach. When you are visiting colleges, contact the coach well in advance of your trip. Inquire about the possibility of meeting during your visit. Jot down notes after your visit to distinguish one school from another. If you have questions regarding any parts of the process, please see Coach Olivares, the Associate Head of School, Mrs. Carroll, the Assistant Head of School, or Justin Crosman, the Athletic Director

## COLLEGE AND YOUR FINANCES

Just about everyone is interested in information on financial aid. Don't assume that you cannot afford a particular college or university until you have investigated all aspects of financial aid. There are two basic categories of financial aid: merit-based and need-based.

Merit based is generally given in recognition of special skills, talents, and/or academic ability. These include merit scholarships to top ten percent of the class, outstanding athlete, accomplished musician, etc. The second category - need based - represents the major portion of help available for post-secondary education.

Need-based (commonly called financial need) is the difference between what it will cost to attend the post- secondary institution and what the family will be able to pay (expected family contribution). There are four categories of financial aid:

- . Grants - money given to the student, usually because of financial need
- . Scholarships - money awarded because of academic achievement, outstanding talent or skill, and/or financial need
- . Work Study - money the student earns through an on-campus job
- . Loans - money that must be paid back

Grants and scholarships are free money that does not have to be paid back. Loans and work-study jobs are considered self-help. It makes sense to apply for grants and scholarships before taking out loans. A college will put together a financial aid "package". This package is a combination of grants, scholarships, loans, and/or work-study. A package varies from college to college, so it is important to compare financial aid packages.

### APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

There are two financial aid forms that you need to be aware of: the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the CSS Profile.

**All students interested in obtaining financial aid must complete the FAFSA.** This form will be available October 1<sup>st</sup> of the senior year. If you complete the FAFSA online, you will receive a SAR (student aid report) upon completion that will inform you of your EFC (estimated family contribution). This is the amount determined that you can afford to pay for education that year. If you mail your FAFSA you will receive a SAR in approximately three weeks. If the cost of the college is more than your EFC, you have a financial need and should be eligible for financial aid. This aid may come in the form of grants and/or loans.

In addition to the FAFSA, some private colleges require submission of the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. The Profile is a supplemental need analysis document used to determine eligibility for private, nonfederal funds. The Profile requires a registration fee and an additional fee for information sent to each college. We recommend that this form be completed only when required by a school. This form can be completed during the fall of the senior year.

Complete the FAFSA as early as possible, even if you feel you will not qualify for any need-based aid because of your income. Colleges verify that students are not eligible for federal or state aid before they award institutional and/or private funds. Some loan programs require the FAFSA. Make a copy of your FAFSA before you mail it. Also keep a copy of your income tax return forms. The FAFSA must also be completed in order to be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant.

Parents and students often find that they must take out a loan to finance educational expenses.

Lending institutions provide Stafford Loans to students and PLUS loans to parents. Repayment of a Stafford Loan begins after the student has graduated. The Subsidized Stafford Loan is for students with financial need and the unsubsidized Stafford Loan is for students without financial need (the government pays the interest on Subsidized Stafford Loan). PLUS loans are not based on financial need and repayment begins within 60 days.

Other ways to finance a college education include co-op programs and military programs. Money can be saved by attending a local community college and then transferring to a Maine four-year college after one or two years. A student can also commute to college, saving room and board expenses.

\*\*It is important to note that if a student plans to attend a community college in Maine, and then transfer out-of-state, you MUST check “transfer equivalencies” at the receiving college, as some courses/credits may not transfer.\*\* You would then end up taking more courses, and paying more money, when your hope was to spend less.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Scholarship money sometimes goes unclaimed because many scholarships have very specific eligibility criteria. Academic scholarships generally require a high GPA and high SAT scores, excellent recommendations, and high involvement in extracurricular and community activities. Athletic scholarships or special talent scholarships go to the student who has demonstrated outstanding abilities. Others may offer opportunities based on a unique interest or community/work/vocational interest.

When looking for scholarships, please consider the following:

- Start looking for scholarships during your child’s junior year.
- Attend the scholarship meeting put on by the WA Counseling office in second semester. Make sure to be checking your email and listening for announcements!
- Contact the financial aid office when applying to colleges to learn about scholarship opportunities.
- Scholarship deadlines are not flexible. Some scholarship applications are due soon after being publicized.
- Scholarship opportunities are often overlooked. Be sure to check with your place of employment, your church, and other organizations that you are associated with to see what scholarship opportunities they offer.
- Check to see if financial aid and scholarships are renewable.

# PART II

## MILITARY PLACEMENT & WORK/CAREER RESOURCES



If college right away or ever isn't your goal, here are a variety of resources to help you!

## RESUMES AND JOB INTERVIEWS

All careers and jobs require a resume to apply as well as skills in interviewing or being able to discuss your experience and skills.

### Resume Help

Counselors at WA are able to provide feedback and guidance on resumes crafted by students. Before setting up a meeting with counselors, make sure to create a resume that follows some of these guidelines:

1. Your contact information including a phone, email, and mailing address. It is best to use an email address that you check regularly.
2. All of the jobs that you have held so far and the timing of them as well as the skills that each of the jobs required you to have
3. If you haven't had much work experience, the service or clubs where you have done work and the types of skills that each of the jobs require
4. Any other skills that you have that you have learned elsewhere or in school

Some sample resume templates can be found [HERE](#) or [HERE](#) and an explanatory PDF with instructions for all of the sections [HERE](#)

### Job Interviews

Many employers will require an interview to meet you, get to know you, and determine if you are a good fit for the business in the job they are trying to fill. Counselors at WA are able to provide you with a mock interview and then provide feedback and guidance on your answers. You can set up a meeting at any time to work with them. If you would rather not, here are some tips:

#### Tip #1 – Look at the job description.

Once you've been offered an interview, the first thing you should do is go back and look at the job description. Not only will this refresh your memory on the tasks and skills the business is looking for, it is also a great way to ask the interviewer any questions that weren't answered in the job description so you can find out more about the role.

#### Tip #2 – Research and practice popular interview questions.

It's also a good idea to research some popular job interview questions so you can prepare your answers before the interview. Preparing your answers will help with the nerves. It's basically your chance to prepare the best answers possible so you can put your best foot forward. Here are some popular ones:

What are your hobbies/interests?

Why are you interested in working here?

What is your biggest strength/weakness?

Give an example of how you have demonstrated leadership

What are you most excited about working here?

#### Tip #3 - Be ready to ask questions of your own.

Interviewers almost always ask if you have any questions at the end of the interview – and to be honest, they're expecting you to say 'yes!'. It shows you have thought seriously about this job, done your research and are curious to know more.

#### Tip #4 - A 'Thank you' goes a long way!

You might think the interview is over once you leave the building, but it's not! Send an email afterwards – preferably on the same day – thanking the interviewer for their time. Not only is it a nice thing to do, it also makes you stand out from the crowd and shows you are genuinely interested.

Adapted from <https://www.grandshake.co/post/6-tips-for-high-school-students-to-top-job-interview>

## CAREER SKILLS BUILDING AND WORK/TRAINING PROGRAMS



### JMG

Washington Academy partners with JMG (<https://jmg.org/>) to ensure that all students wishing to enter the workforce directly after high school are equipped with necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in their goals.

If it is not already in your schedule, be sure to sign up for the JMG course in your junior or senior year to be connected to the WA JMG specialist who has connections with local businesses for job placements and skills building.

### Maine Career Exploration Program (MCEP)

By providing Young People (ages 16-24) with 75 hours of career exploration and paid work experiences, businesses can educate and attract Maine's future workforce to their industries, creating potential recruitment prospects, a pipeline of possibility for the state's economic future, and demonstrate to our youth that there is opportunity for them in Maine! [Learn more here.](#)

### Maine Apprenticeship Program

Apprenticeship is a type of career path guided by industries. It's a great way for companies to train their future workers and for people to get paid while they learn on the job, go to classes, and earn a nationally-recognized certificate. In fact, companies enjoy a 90% retention rate, while apprentice graduates earn \$300,000+ more over their lifetimes than their peers who don't complete a program. [Learn more here.](#)



### Maine Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

Consider a pre-apprenticeship if you're:

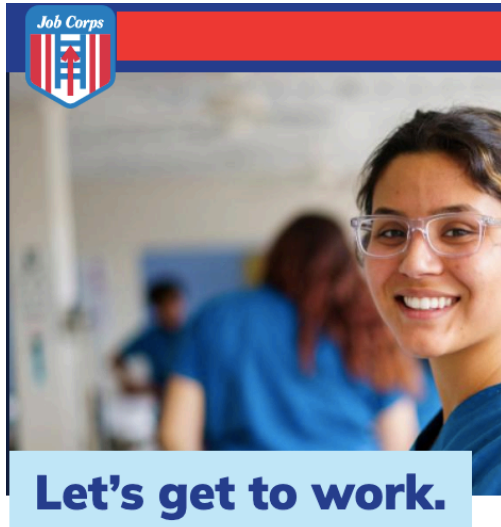
- ✓ **A full-time high school student**
- ✓ **In good academic standing**
- ✓ **Able to work part-time for a registered employer/sponsor**
- ✓ **Intending on becoming a full-time registered apprentice after graduation**

The Pre-Apprenticeship is a pathway for high school juniors and seniors, aged 16 or older, to enter into apprenticeship training. As a Pre-Apprentice, you get first-hand experience in occupation and can carry up to 1,000 hours of on-the-job experience into your registered apprenticeship program upon graduation. Try a few different fields and see what you like before you commit to a specific apprenticeship. [Learn more about pre-apprenticeship here at Maine Department of Labor.](#)

### Workforce and Professional Development through WCCC

<https://www.wccc.me.edu/professional-development/>

WCCC's Division of Workforce and Professional Development Mission is to work directly with businesses to meet their workforce training needs and to assist individuals to enter employment and advance in career pathways. It builds upon strong partnerships with businesses and industry leaders, as well as workforce, economic, and community development organizations to determine occupational demand, identify core competencies, stimulate innovation, and promote technology immersion. This work helps to build and evolve relevant and proactive institutional programming which leads to sustainable employment, upward mobility, family self-sufficiency, and a highly-skilled and ever-evolving workforce. To learn more contact [workforce@wccc.me.edu](mailto:workforce@wccc.me.edu)



### **Job Corps**

Job Corps is a no-cost education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 get a better job, make more money, and take control of their lives.

At Job Corps, students enroll to learn a trade, earn a high school diploma or GED and get help finding a good job. When you join the program, you will be paid a monthly allowance; the longer you stay with the program, the more your allowance will be. Job Corps provides career counseling and transition support to its students for up to 12 months after they graduate from the program.

If you're interested in joining the Job Corps program or finding out more about it, call (800) 733-JOBS or (800) 733-5627. An operator will provide you with general

information about the program, refer you to the admissions counselor closest to where you live and mail you an information packet. [Website for Job Corps in Maine](#)

### **Eastern Maine Development Corporation Youth Workforce Services**

EMDC offers paid mentorships and training to people ages 16-24, providing individualized support while they build the skills necessary to thrive in the workforce environment. Participants receive hands-on experience in a work setting and one-on-one career counseling — all while earning a paycheck.



**EMDC** EASTERN MAINE  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

- Explore careers with employers who are hiring in your area (including healthcare, information technology, and skilled labor)
- Work at a local business while mentored by EMDC and the employer
- Job coaching, resume building, leadership development, supportive services, and more

<https://www.emdc.org/youth-workforce-services/>

### **Maine Competitive Skills Scholarship**

The Competitive Skills Scholarship Program helps students and jobseekers pursue two and four-year degree programs or employer recognized credentials leading to good paying jobs that are in high demand by Maine's employers. The scholarship pays for tuition and fees that are not covered by other financial aid, as well as other supports such as child care, transportation, books, supplies, equipment, and remedial and prerequisite training.

[More Information from Department of Labor here.](#)

### **Maine Adult Education Association - Washington County**

<https://washingtoncounty.maineadulted.org/classes/>

Washington County Adult & Community Education believes that through education and technology, we will change the economic status of a region. Washington County Adult & Community Education is dedicated to furthering the life-long educational and professional development of residents and businesses in Washington County and the state of Maine.

### **Maine College Transition Program (MCT)**

The Maine College Transition Program provides high-quality, cost-effective and accessible

pathways to postsecondary education for adults. Specifically, it will: (a) help adults who are studying to earn high school degrees to transition to college, (b) provide preparatory support to adults who have a high school degree but are not academically prepared to take college courses, and (c) provide counseling, mentoring and support services to enable these adults to successfully transition to college and earn degrees.

Telephone: (207) 756-8560

E-Mail: [mainecollegetransitions@gmail.com](mailto:mainecollegetransitions@gmail.com)

### **ME go to College**

Maine College Transitions

(800) 322-5455

### **The Machias Career Center**

Whether you're looking for your first job, trying to find another job or striving for a better job. Maine CareerCenters provide a variety of employment and training services at no charge to help you in your search. You do not need to be claiming unemployment benefits or be out of work to use our services. Give us a call, send us an email or stop on by. We'll take a look at each step of your career-decision process and make recommendations as to which CareerCenter resources might be most helpful in your situation.

<https://www.mainecareercenter.gov/locations/machias.shtml>

### **Retail Careers for Maine**

<https://www.retailcareersforme.com/>

### **Worksource Maine**

Maine's Center for Workforce Research and Information created a discovery dashboard for students and jobseekers to explore the many career options available to them, what the future looks like for occupations in Maine and the education or training requirements that are typical of those career paths. The tool allows users to select specific areas of Maine, then explore employment opportunities in career clusters like Architecture and Construction, Health Sciences, Information Technology, STEM, Law and Public Safety and more. The tool will match your occupational interest with Career and Technical programs across Maine.

[See the dashboard and explore careers here.](#)



### **Maine Virtual Career Center - [Visit Here](#)**

Visit Maine's virtual career center for information on upcoming training events, job postings, job seeker services, and so much more!

## VOCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & ASSOCIATIONS

### **Plumbers and Pipefitters – UA Local 716**

### **United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry**

PO BOX 496

AUGUSTA, ME 4330

207-621-0555

John Napolitano

207-621-0555 office

### **New England Regional Council of Carpenters - <https://www.nasrcc.org/>**

Local #352 and Local #349

65 Rainmaker Drive

Portland, ME 04103

207-358-6658

acarbonneau@nasrcc.org

### **Painters and Allied Trades International Union**

Finishing Trades Institute

<https://ifti.edu/join-us/>

[Brochure with more information](#)

## US MILITARY RECRUITMENT AND ENLISTING

### **United States Army**

[Contact a Recruiter](#)

Bangor Recruiting Office (207) 561-6007

### **Army National Guard**

[Contact an Army National Guard Recruiter](#)

[Maine National Guard Information](#)

Calais Recruiting Office (207) 430-5440

### **United States Marine Corps**

[Contact a Recruiter](#)

US Marine Corps RSS North Office (207) 942-5138

### **United States Coast Guard**

[Connect with a Recruiter](#)

Portland Recruiting Office

[ROPortland@uscg.mil](mailto:ROPortland@uscg.mil)

(206) 815-6090

### **U.S. Navy:**

[Speak to a Recruiter](#)

Navy Recruiting Station Brunswick Office: (207) 729-3197

Bangor Navy Recruiting Office: (617) 752-2828

### **U.S. Air Force:**

[More information and connect with a recruiter](#)

Bangor Recruiting Office: 207-942-9574

## **JOB SEARCH WEBSITES AND RESOURCES**

### **Job Search Websites:**

Maine Job Bank	<a href="http://www.Americasjobexchange.com">www.Americasjobexchange.com</a>
Indeed-One Search	<a href="http://www.indeed.com">www.indeed.com</a>
Bangor Daily News	<a href="http://www.bangornews.com">www.bangornews.com</a>
Jobs in ME	<a href="http://www.jobsinme.com">www.jobsinme.com</a>
Jobs in Maine	<a href="http://www.jobsinmaine.com">www.jobsinmaine.com</a>
Career Builder	<a href="http://www.careerbuilder.com">www.careerbuilder.com</a>
Go Jobs	<a href="http://www.gojobs.com">www.gojobs.com</a>
Computer Jobs	<a href="http://www.mesda.com/jobboard">www.mesda.com/jobboard</a>
Maine Department of Labor	<a href="http://www.maine.gov/labor">www.maine.gov/labor</a>
Maine Jobs Today	<a href="http://www.mainejobs.mainetoday.com">www.mainejobs.mainetoday.com</a>

### **Further Career Research Resources**

**O-Net Online** - <http://online.onetcenter.org/> **Click on:** Find Occupations

**CareerZone** - <http://www.nycareerzone.org/index.jsp> **Click on:** Cluster Area or Search

**America's Career InfoNet** - <http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp>

**U.S. Dept. of Labor**

**Dictionary of Occupational Titles** - <http://www.oalj.dol.gov/libdot.htm>

**U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor & Statistics** - <http://www.bls.gov/>

**What You Need to Know About Career Planning** - <http://careerplanning.about.com/>

**Career Consulting Corner** - <http://www.careercc.com/careerexp.shtml>

**Quintessential Careers** - [http://www.quintcareers.com/career\\_exploration.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/career_exploration.html)

## CAREER EXPLORATION SURVEY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **Nature of Work:** What does a worker in this occupation do? What specific tasks would I perform on this job?
2. **Working Conditions:** Working conditions involve such things as what you like to work with and how you like to do your job. Does this occupation require work that may be dangerous or be a physical or health problem for me? Does this occupation require doing physically strenuous work or working outdoors? Does this occupation often require working or locations that might be a problem for me (frequent overtime, evening or weekend work, travel away from home)?
3. **Physical Setting & Place of Employment:** By the setting of a job, we mean its geographic location as well as its specific working environment. Are there jobs in this occupation in my town or state? (If yes/no where?)
4. **What financial and psychological rewards and satisfaction are likely to be found in this occupation?** Financial rewards include not just *how much* money you make, but how you are paid, your benefits, job security, and so on. Psychological rewards relate to your passions and your values. What things are missing?
5. **I would find this job particularly satisfying because:** (Consider your passions, values, interests, and life goals for guidance.)
6. **What interests, abilities, knowledge and skills are helpful in this occupation?**
7. **Employment Outlook:** What is the employment outlook for/trends of this occupation? Will there be many job openings when I am ready to go to work? How might societal, economic, and technological changes impact this career? Does the outlook make any difference to you? Why or why not?
8. **Earnings:** What is the typical starting salary in this occupation? What is an average mid-career salary (10-15 years)? Is job security an issue with this kind of work?
9. **Advanced Opportunities:** What opportunities for growth and advancement might be available to someone employed in this occupation in the future? How might I prepare for advancement?
10. **Self-Employment:** Could you be self-employed or run a small business with this career (business owner, freelance work, consulting, and the like)? If yes, would this interest you? Why or why not?
11. **Education and Training:** What can I do today to begin preparing for this job? What classes must I take in high school to prepare for this job? What training/education is needed for this job? What academic subjects should I take to prepare for this job? Are there specific tests, licenses, or certifications needed for this job?
12. **Related Occupations:** What are some similar/related occupations?
13. **Family plans & lifestyle:** How does this career mesh with my family plans? Is it consistent with my desired lifestyle.