



Senior year is a whirlwind of activity. It's a big year for students—balancing schoolwork, extracurricular obligations, and the college application process. Use the suggestions below so you can meet these challenges together.

SUMMER

- ❑ **Visit colleges together.** If you haven't already, make plans to check out the campuses of colleges you're interested in. Use the [Campus Visit Checklist](#) to learn how to get the most out of these experiences.
- ❑ **Finalize a college list.** Work together family and advisors to choose which colleges to apply to by weighing how well each college meets your specific needs, for example. Find out more about [how to finalize a college list](#).
- ❑ **Find out a college's actual cost.** Once you have a list of a few colleges you're interested in, use this [College Calculator](#) together as a family to find out the potential for financial aid and the true out-of-pocket cost— or net price—of each college.
- ❑ **Get started on college applications.** Students can get the easy stuff out of the way now by filling in as much required information on college applications as possible. Students should plan to apply to *at least* 3 colleges or universities. Read about [how to get started on applications](#).
- ❑ **Decide about applying early.** If you are set on going to a certain college, you should think about applying soon because early applications are usually due in November. Read about the pros and cons of [applying early](#).
- ❑ **Gather financial documents:** To apply for most financial aid, students will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You'll need prior tax returns and an [FSA ID](#) to complete the [FAFSA](#), which opens Oct. 1.
- ❑ **Begin requesting letters of recommendation.** Students may need the letter for a college application, a job, or for a scholarship. Examples of people they can ask include teachers, club advisors, and any adult leader. The more involved they are, the more options they have of people who could write that letter for them.
- ❑ **Get in the habit of checking emails regularly.** This is crucial for students and parents during the college and scholarship application process. Email is one of the main ways that colleges communicate with students and parents.

FALL

- ❑ **Create a calendar and get organized.** This should include deadlines for college admissions, financial aid, housing, and other important dates. You can find specific colleges' deadlines in the [Utah College Directory](#).
- ❑ **Set up an appointment for you and your parents/child to meet with a school counselor and GEAR UP advisor.** This year, you will work together to complete and submit college and scholarship application. Talk about college and career options, academic requirements for college admissions, discuss internships and how to earn college credit in high school, and learn about the most-appropriate classes a senior should take. Find out who the [GEAR UP advisor at your school](#) is.
- ❑ **Meet regularly with their high school counselor and GEAR UP advisor.** This year, you will work with them to complete and submit college applications. Find out who the [GEAR UP advisor at your school](#) is.
- ❑ **Prepare to retake the ACT.** Seniors should make retaking the ACT in October a priority. Prepare for retaking the ACT your free student [Shmoop](#) account. Ask a GEAR UP advisor for more details and help registering.
- ❑ **Find and apply for scholarships throughout the year.** Seniors can find out about scholarship opportunities from a GEAR UP advisor and your schools. Seniors will need to request and complete scholarship applications and submit them on time. Learn more about [scholarships](#).
- ❑ **Parents can offer to look over your senior's college and scholarship applications.** But remember that this is your child's work so remain in the role of adviser and proofreader and respect his or her voice.
- ❑ **Fill out the FAFSA to apply for aid beginning Oct. 1.** The government and many colleges use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to award aid. Now it's easier than ever to fill out this form because you can automatically transfer your tax information online from the IRS to the FAFSA. Read [Applying for Financial Aid](#) to learn more. Learn about financial aid options for undocumented students (see below).

WINTER

- ❑ **Work together to apply for financial aid.** Students should contact the financial aid offices at the colleges in which they are interested to find out what forms they must submit to apply for aid. Make sure you apply for aid by or before any stated deadlines. Funds are limited, so the earlier you apply, the better.
- ❑ **Take AP Exams if applicable.** If you take AP or other advanced classes, talk with teachers now about taking these tests in May. Read more about the **AP Program**.
- ❑ **Look into housing options for college including housing scholarships.** Be aware of deadlines and apply early.

SPRING

- ❑ **Process college responses.** Once you start hearing back from colleges about admission and financial aid, you will need a parent and/or advisors support to decide what to do. Meet with your GEAR UP advisor for additional guidance. Read about **how to choose a college**.
- ❑ **Review financial aid offers together.** Seniors will need their parent or guardians help to read through financial aid award letters and figure out which package works best. Be sure you pay attention to and meets any deadlines for acceptance. Meet with your GEAR UP advisor for additional guidance. Become knowledgeable about **financial aid awards**.
- ❑ **Complete the paperwork to accept a college's offer of admittance.** Once you have decided which college to attend, you will need to review the offer, accept a college's offer, mail a tuition deposit and submit other required paperwork. Meet with family and your GEAR UP advisor for additional guidance. Discuss **next steps**.
- ❑ **Attend New Student Orientation** at the college or university you are planning to attend. Some schools make this a requirement before students can register for classes. Many schools also offer parents and family orientations so you can supporting your child's transition into college.
- ❑ **Attend a summer bridge program** at the college you are planning to attend to make the transition to college much smoother, such as GEAR UP Summer Connections for those planning to attend Weber State University.
- ❑ **Learn about services at the college that are available to help students succeed.** Programs such as Student Support Services (SSS), disability services, multicultural services, and First Year GEAR UP services, are designed to help students succeed and may provide scholarships, tutoring, mentoring, and more.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

GEAR UP is here to assist Undocumented Students with or without Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in every way possible, and are committed to their success. You and your student should meet with your **GEAR UP advisor** regularly to find out how to apply for colleges and what scholarships are available to them, and refer to the guidelines and resources below.

- ❑ **Applying for College.** Utah House Bill 144 allows qualifying undocumented students to pay the same tuition as Utah residents do at any Utah college or university. Those who meet the requirements of HB 144 must print and fill out the **Non-Resident Tuition Exemption Affidavit** and submit it to the admission office of the Utah college they wish to attend. Affidavits and instructions can be found on each college's website by searching for the term "HB-144 affidavit."
- ❑ **Strongly consider taking college classes in high school.** Students who take and succeed in college classes such as **Concurrent Enrollment (CE)** or **Advanced Placement (AP)** can save time and money by earning college credit before graduating from high school.
- ❑ **Paying for College.** Dreamers can apply for scholarships to help pay for college. To learn more about what scholarships are available for undocumented, DACA, and non-FAFSA eligible students, talk to your GEAR UP advisor and visit the Undocumented Student Resources web pages for **Weber State University** and **EDUCATE UTAH**
- ❑ **Additional Resources:** **Dreamers Road Map**, **Educate Utah**, **My Undocumented Life**

****Note:** The *online version* of this Family Action Plan allows you to click on the **yellow text** above to access important resources/websites**

Visit **weber.edu/stategearup/students.html** for more info.