

# College Selection Checklist

For High School Students

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ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

## Step 1 - Plan

- Utilize IllinoisMentor at collegezone.com to help plan for and find a college, and to research careers.
- Identify your academic interest early in your high school years and think about jobs, careers, and skills that interest you.
- Have your high school counselor assist you in selecting the proper curriculum that will allow you admission to your college(s) of choice.
- Take at least one of the following assessment tests your junior year: ACT, ACT as part of the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) and/or SAT. Check with your high school counselor for test schedules.
- Begin asking teachers, counselors or employers if they would be willing to write a letter of recommendation to include with your admission and scholarship applications, if needed.

## Step 2 - Find

Take the time to attend college fairs in your area. Make a list of questions to ask. Visit colleges you are interested in or check out their Web sites or IllinoisMentor at collegezone.com to obtain information about the college and the programs offered. Consider the following when choosing what type of college you want to attend:

- 2- or 4-year private/public
- Type and length of academic programs/majors
- Admission requirements
- Test(s) required, such as the ACT, PSAE, and/or SAT
- Cost/financial aid availability
- Housing
- Location/community
- Services/programs/campus life
- Size

### Tips on preparing to attend a College Night or College Fair

- Make a list of the colleges about which you want to get more information.
- Write out and take a list of questions to help compare different colleges.
- Know your GPA and class rank, if available.
- Know your ACT, PSAE, and/or SAT score(s).
- Check out different colleges. You will never know about them unless you ask!

### Where to find information

College Zone—the trusted source for college information

collegezone.com

collegezone@isac.org

800.899.ISAC (4722)

College Zone Outreach Center  
at your local community college

IllinoisMentor at  
collegezone.com

Additional Resources: High school counselors and teachers; college admission representatives; college fair or college night; professionals in field of study; library; and/or parents, siblings, friends, students, and alumni.

## Step 3 - Apply

Narrow down your list to 3-5 colleges at the beginning of your senior year. The admission/application process may require the following:

- Admission application and fees
- ACT, PSAE, and/or SAT score(s)
- High school transcript
- Essay or personal statement
- Letter(s) of recommendation
- Interview

## Step 4 - Choose

Visit the campus, take a tour, sit in on a class or two and stay overnight.

- Talk with students on campus.
- Talk with professors.
- Find out if the college has job placement services.
- Research the college's reputation and graduation rate.
- Talk with the financial aid office about your aid package.
- Let all colleges you applied to know about your final decision. Find out if you will be required to pay a deposit to reserve your place.

## Step 5 - Meet Deadlines

Track and complete these separate processes, here and/or through IllinoisMentor at collegezone.com.

- Admission/Acceptance letters      Date completed: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_
- Housing application and fees      Date completed: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other financial aid applications      Date completed: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_