



# College Admissions: Where to Start



JCHS College & Career Center  
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# Types of Colleges: 4 Year Colleges

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- UA
- AU
- Private
- Out-of-State
- HBCU's

# Types of Colleges: 2 Year Colleges

- AL Community Colleges
- Out-of-state community colleges
- Vocational schools

# Alabama Higher Education Map

Air U. Maxwell AFB	F3
Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical U. Normal	F1
Alabama Southern CC, Monroeville	E4
Alabama State U. Montgomery	F3
Alabama State U. Athens	F1
Auburn U. Auburn	G3
Auburn U. at Montgomery, Montgomery	F3
Bevil State CC, Sinton	F2
Birmingham-Southern C. Birmingham	F2
Bishop State CC, Mobile	F2
Calhoun CC, Dothan	F1
Central Alabama CC - Alexander City Cmp. Alexander City	F3
Chattahoochee Valley CC, Phenix City	G3
CC of the Air Force, Maxwell AFB	F3
Concordia C. Selma	F3
College Town	
Enterprise Ozark CC, Enterprise	F4
Faulkner U. Montgomery	F3
Faulkner U. - Birmingham, Birmingham	F2
Faulkner U. - Huntsville, Huntsville	F1
Faulkner U. - Mobile, Mobile	E5
Golden State CC, Golden	F2
Golden State CC - Ayers Cmp. Anniston	G2
Hening C. - Birmingham, Birmingham	F2
Huntingdon C. Montgomery	F3
Jacksonville State U. Jacksonville	F3
James H. Faulkner State CC, Bay Minette	E5
Jefferson Davis CC, Bayport	E4
Jefferson State CC - Jefferson Cmp. Center Point	F2
Jefferson State CC - Shelby Cmp. Inverness	E3
Judson C. Marion	E3
Lawson State CC - Bessemer Cmp. Bessemer	F2
Lawson State CC - Birmingham Cmp. Birmingham	F2
Lurleen B. Wallace CC - Andalusia Cmp. Andalusia	E3
Marion Military Inst. Marion	E3
Miles C. Fairfield	F2
Northeast Alabama CC, Rainville	G1
Northeast Shoals CC, Muscle Shoals	E1
Oakwood C. Huntsville	F1
Sanford U. Birmingham	F2
Sch. of Advanced Art and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB	E2
Shelton State CC, Tuscaloosa	E2
Snead State CC, Boaz	F2
South U. Montgomery	F3
Southern Christian U. Montgomery	F3
Southern Union State CC, Wadley	G3
Spring Hill C. Mableton	E5
Sullivan C. Tuscaloosa	E2
Talladega C. Talladega	F2
Troy U. Phenix City, Phenix City	G4
Troy U. Dothan, Dothan	G4
Troy U. Montgomery, Montgomery	G4
Tuskegee U. Tuskegee	G3
United States Sports Academy, Daphne	E3
U. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa	E3
U. of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham	F2
U. of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville	F1
U. of Alabama, Mobile	E5
U. of Montevallo, Montevallo	F3
U. of North Alabama, Florence	E1
U. of South Alabama, Mobile	E5
U. of South Alabama - Baldwin, Fairhope	E5
U. of West Alabama, Livingston	E3
Wallace CC, Dothan	G4
Wallace CC, Selma, Selma	F3
Wallace State CC - Hanceville, Hanceville	F2

Key	
	Limited-access expressways
	Toll expressways
	Other major highways
	Interstate highways
	US highways
	Major airport
	Urban areas
	City or town names
	Public U. Public colleges and universities
	Private U. Private colleges and universities
	Tribal C. Tribal colleges and universities
	Associates (arts or sciences) degree offered
	Bachelors degree offered
	Graduate (masters or doctorate) degree offered

Abbreviations:	
C.	College
CC.	Community College
Cmp.	Campus
Co.	County
Cr.	Center
C&T.C.	Community and Technical College
Inst.	Institute
Sch.	School
Sem.	Seminary
Tech.	Technical or Technology
Theol.	Theological
U.	University



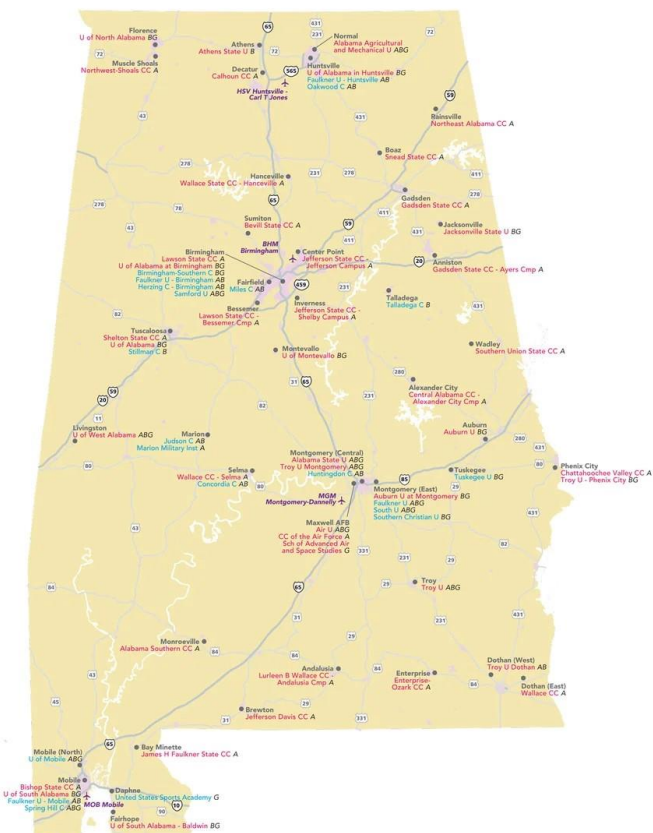
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To the best of our knowledge, this map includes  
all colleges in Alabama which are accredited by the  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, as of  
the beginning of 2006. In addition, we have included  
all campuses of state college systems that offer  
complete degree programs (Associate of Arts or  
Associate of Sciences or higher) at their location.

This map is derived from the American Higher  
Education Map, which is available, along with our  
other college-related titles, at:

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

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# Choose the College That Fits You

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What are your goals?

What are your interests?

What is most important to you?

What do you want to get out of college?



# Choose the College That Fits You: Factors to Consider

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- Admission requirements
- Size of campus
- Campus life and activities
- Geographic location
- Strength & variety of majors
- Financial costs
- Faculty / student ratio
- Housing availability
- 'Feel' of campus



Think about WHY you want to apply to a specific school!

# Creating Your College List

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You will want to select schools that fit within these 3 categories:

- **Reach:** The application profile of the average admitted student exceeds yours.
- **Target:** Your application profile falls within the average range for that particular school. You have a very reasonable chance of gaining admission to a target school, but there are no guarantees.
- **Likely:** Your application profile exceeds that of the typical applicant; or you meet the minimum requirements.

Application profile refers to your GPA, standardized test scores, and rank. It may also include level of involvement in extracurriculars.

# Creating Your College List

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- Visit school websites, check out virtual tours, and look for student videos to learn more about the schools to be able to decide which to apply to.
- Check out social media, clubs at the schools, blogs, etc.
- How to get to know a college online
- It is recommended to narrow your list down to 6-12 colleges to apply to.
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/college-101/5-steps-to-creating-a-college-list>



# Choose the College That Fits You

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Use this worksheet to help you determine what you should be looking for in a college; what values do you want, what type of academic rigor and support do you need, what qualities do you want, etc.

College Planning Values Assessment Activity



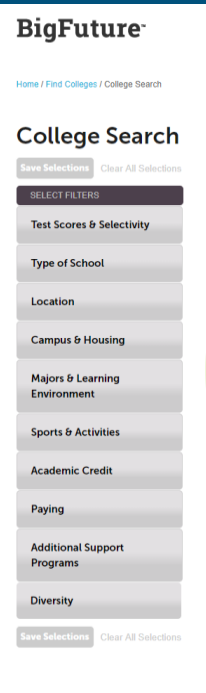
# College and Career Search

## College Search Websites:

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>
- <https://www.appily.com/colleges>

## Career Information:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm>
- O\*NET: <https://www.onetonline.org/>





# What do you need to apply?

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- **Transcripts:** Refer to them as you fill out the application to ensure the information you enter is accurate.
- **Test scores:** ACT or SAT (with writing). SAT Subject Tests or Advanced Placement exams if applicable.
- **List of Extracurricular activities:** Community service, clubs, sports, outside activities, responsibilities at home, leadership experience, etc.
- **List of Honors / Awards:** Honors or awards you have received during high school (from school or outside of school)
- **Personal Statement**
- **Essay**
- **Annual income for last year and the current year** (your parents' if you're a dependent; your income if you're independent): This is optional unless you're applying for an application fee waiver.
- **Social Security number, if you have one.** We use this to match your application to things like your test score report, final transcript(s) and, if you're applying for financial aid, your Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- **Payment:** Credit card information to pay the application fees. If you prefer to pay by check, you can mail your payment. If you are need assistance and want to mail in a fee waiver application, select pay be check.

# How to Apply?



- Complete applications online!
- Send your transcript to the college using the JCHS online portal:  
<https://madisoncityal.scriborder.com/>
- Have your ACT or SAT score sent to the college directly from your ACT or SAT account. JCHS does not send test scores.
- If applicable, fill out merit-based college scholarships.

## DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST *SUITS YOU?*

#### Regular Decision

##### DEFINITION:

Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

##### COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

#### Rolling Admission

##### DEFINITION:

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

##### COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

#### Early Action (EA)

##### DEFINITION:

Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

##### COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

#### Early Decision (ED)

##### DEFINITION:

Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll and withdraw all other applications. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

##### COMMITMENT:

BINDING

#### Restrictive Early Action (REA)

##### DEFINITION:

Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

##### COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.

# Fee Waivers

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- Must meet specific requirements related to your family income and size
- SAT fee waiver info:
  - [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/fees/fee-waivers](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/fees/fee-waivers)
  - SAT fee waiver allows for 2 SAT tests, 2 SAT Subject Test sittings (up to 3 tests per sitting), unlimited free score sends, and 4 college application fee waivers
- ACT fee waiver info:
  - [www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/fees.html](https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/fees.html)
  - ACT fee waiver allows for 1 ACT test and 20 free score sends; students may receive 2 fee waivers
- Check private colleges individually for possible application fee waivers.  
Request an application fee waiver through common app.

# Tips & Recommendations

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- Use a separate email from your personal and school accounts, just for college, scholarships, etc (maybe for job applications too!)
  - Professional account such as just your name, maybe has a number in it
  - Use google so that you will have a google drive associated with it
- Use the google drive to store all college related docs (Drafts of essays, tracking sheets, etc)
- Create accounts and keep your usernames in a tracking sheet.

# Tips & Recommendations

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- Keep a list of extracurricular activities
- Start your brag sheet for Mrs. Meskunas (College Counselor) if you think you will need a counselor's letter of recommendation.  
<https://www.madisoncity.k12.al.us/Page/3138>
  - Will be used by counselor for school report for letter of recommendation but can also help you prepare for personal statement and activities section of application
- Work on personal statement/personal insight questions  
<https://appsupport.commonapp.org/applicantsupport/s/article/What-are-the-2024-25-Common-App-essay-prompts> in Google Docs and then copy and paste into applications.
- Request letters of recommendation for schools that require them - end of Junior year, beginning of Senior year.

# What seniors should be doing

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- Add to, review, and finalize your resume.
- Finalize your college essay if needed.
- Make note of all deadlines for admissions and financial aid.
- Set up a meeting with Mrs. Meskunas if you have questions.
- Review recommendations and ask for additional ones if necessary.
- Take SAT or ACT one more time, if needed.
- **Complete college applications (Sept. – Dec.).**
- **Send official transcripts (JCHS Homepage)**
- **Send SAT/ACT scores to colleges ([actstudent.org](https://actstudent.org) or [sat.collegeboard.org](https://sat.collegeboard.org))**
- Gather information needed for FAFSA and CSS profile (selective colleges)
- Fill out FAFSA (available Dec.).
- Apply for local scholarships (all year).
- Take necessary AP exams.
- Notify colleges of your decision to accept or decline their offer (May).
- Accept or decline financial aid/scholarships from the college you plan to attend.



# What juniors should be doing?

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- Check your GPA, transcript and rank for accuracy
- **Take the PSAT/NMSQT**
- Begin the process of applying to any of the Military Academies, if applicable
- Write a first draft of your resume (fall)
- Take the SAT and/or the ACT (winter or spring)
- Register with the NCAA clearing house as a recruitable athlete, if applicable
- Request admissions information from colleges and universities
- Visit colleges, either in person or online
- Clean up your social media presence.
- Make sure you graduate on time by fulfilling all district requirements
- Gather any college admissions specific information such as your art or music portfolio, athletic game tapes, or tests.
- Ask teachers, coaches, employers, or other adults for recommendations.

# What freshman and sophomores should be doing?

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## Freshman

- Finalize your 4 year plan.
- Get to know your counselor.
- Know your course descriptions.
- Monitor your grades.
- Explore the extracurricular and community organizations open to you.
- If interested, join JROTC.
- Investigate community service opportunities. Keep track of your hours.
- Start thinking about college and what you would like to gain from college.
- Visit colleges during weekends or breaks.

## Sophomore

- Check your GPA.
- Finalize your 4 year plan.
- Enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses where possible.
- Take the PSAT.
- Prepare for SAT/ACT.
- Military academy? Start planning now.
- Investigate careers.
- Think about what type of college you would like to attend.
- Visit colleges during weekends or breaks.
- Consider community colleges.
- Prepare for college application fees and exam fees.

# Scholarships

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Where to look:

- College or University's website
- James Clemens High School's Website (Academics – Guidance – College Scholarships)
- Follow JLV College Counseling
- Use scholarship search engines such as Fastweb.com or GoingMerry.com
- Ask people in your community. Certain banks, doctors, law firms, businesses, and organizations offer scholarship opportunities.

# Resources

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- <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-choose-a-college>
- <https://www.educationcorner.com/factors-choosing-a-college.html>
- [https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/slideshows/10-steps-to-picking-the-right-school?itm\\_source=parsely-api&slide=2](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/slideshows/10-steps-to-picking-the-right-school?itm_source=parsely-api&slide=2)
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kristenmoon/2019/10/03/the-strategy-behind-building-your-college-lists/#3dd3fbf5c779>
- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/target-school-how-to-find-yours>
- <https://blog.prepscholar.com/what-college-should-i-go-to-how-to-choose-a-college>
- <https://admissions.tufts.edu/blogs/inside-admissions/post/when-you-can-t-visit-campus-how-to-get-to-know-a-college-online/>

