

# College Search Resource Guide

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# College: The Competitive Landscape

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- 61 of the top 100 ranked colleges admit less than 25% of their applicants.
- The average acceptance rate at the top 16 ranked colleges is 13% and falling.
- UCLA has received over 100,000 freshman applications for the last 3 years.
- Harvard rejects 80% of the valedictorians who apply each year.
- Stanford rejects 70% of applicants with **perfect** SAT or ACT scores.
- Students who aim for ONLY top-ranked colleges end up disappointed when decisions come out.

## *Is there good news?*

- There are 2,200 four-year colleges in the U.S.!
- Merit scholarships make SOME out of state and private colleges less expensive than in-state public universities!
- 70% of colleges accept 65% of their applicants (or more)!
- There's a four-year college for every student who wants to attend one!

***Finding the right FIT is more important than selectivity!***

# College Search Sites

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College Board <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

College Navigator <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>

Collegedata.com <http://collegedata.com/>

Cappex <http://www.cappex.com/>

Women's Colleges <http://www.womenscolleges.org/>

Art Colleges <http://www.artschools.com/>

Colleges That Change Lives <http://www.ctcl.org>

## ***A word about rankings:***

*College ranking lists don't tell you which colleges are the **BEST FIT** for you!  
[More on that here.](#)*

# College Prep Timelines

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**An overview from Khan Academy:** <http://bit.ly/2p71sS5>

Planning timeline for 9th grade: <https://goo.gl/Dw4iEP>

Planning timeline for 10th grade: <https://goo.gl/kCspZE>

Planning timeline for 11th grade: <https://goo.gl/apXPTc>

Planning timeline for 12th grade: <https://goo.gl/bT1hBz>

*NOTE: These timelines are generic; you may have a special situation, or a different curriculum path, that would accelerate some things in this process. An Independent Educational Consultant (IEC) can help you customize this timeline for your circumstances.*

## **Things you can do starting in 9th grade:**

- Create a resume, tracking the time you spend on ALL activities (*sports, music, clubs, community service, etc.*)
- Go to college fairs and visit colleges in your area
- Create a specific e-mail address just for college research

# Parts of the College Application

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## START HERE

*A balanced,  
well-researched  
college list  
More on that here*

## YOUR ACADEMIC RECORD

*Grades, GPA,  
Transcript. Take  
rigorous classes!*

## TEACHER LETTERS

*More advice here*

## INTERESTS AND LEADERSHIP

*What difference  
are you making in  
your community?*

## ESSAYS

*See next slide for  
resources!*

# College Essays: Resources

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[Essay advice from the College Board](#)

[Essay advice from UCLA on the Personal Insight Questions](#)

[Tips for writing supplemental essays from University of Richmond](#)

[Five reasons to start your essays early](#)

## **Articles and blog posts with essay guidance**

[Magellan's 10 Commandments of College Essays](#)

[Resources for College Essays](#)

[Five Questions You Should Ask About Your College Essay](#)

[Five Ways Your College Essay is Different From English Class Essays](#)



# Testing: What You Need To Know

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- The ACT has math, science, English and reading sections
- The SAT has math, English and reading comprehension
- Both have an “optional” writing section. Very few colleges require the writing section now, but the UC system does. Unless you are 100% sure you **won't be applying** to any college that requires it, you should take it.

## When Should I Take the SAT or ACT?

**Take practice tests of both** to see where you do better, and which exam feels more comfortable to you. *Do this after you have completed Algebra 2.*

- **Super scoring** – *many colleges will take the highest score from each SECTION of the test, even if you earned them on different test dates. More colleges super score the SAT than the ACT. The UCs do not super score.*
- **Score Choice** – *most colleges will allow you to send whichever tests you want, without requiring you to send all of them. VERY FEW colleges REQUIRE you to send all of your standardized tests.*
- **AP Exams** – *NO colleges require AP scores! They are more concerned with the grade you earned in the class than in the exam score.*

# Testing: Resources

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## Testing – the SAT and ACT

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>

<http://act.org/>

## Free SAT and ACT prep

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice/sat-practice-questions>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/signup>

<http://www.satexamprep.com/>

<https://www.kaptest.com/ACT/kaplan-ACT-prep/free-ACT-practice-test>

## ACT and SAT Registration Info

<http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html>

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-dates>



***Ask us for one-on-one tutoring/test prep recommendations.***

# Improving Your Competitiveness

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**THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN STRONG GRADES.**

*Nothing beats an unweighted 4.0.*



**What's the Difference Between a Weighted and Unweighted GPA?**

- Weighted = AP and honors courses are (sometimes) worth 5.0
- Unweighted = all courses are on a 4.0 scale
- Most highly selective colleges unweight/recalculate your GPA
- You will still get “credit” for taking AP and honors courses when they consider COURSE RIGOR – the second most-important factor!
- Which GPA do colleges consider? [Read this post](#) to find out!

**How Many AP Classes Should I Take?**

- You should take the AP courses in which you are most interested. You should not take so many that you hurt your ability to do well in all of your classes.
- Your [school profile](#) will be transmitted with your transcript, so colleges will know how many AP courses are offered at your school.

# Financial Aid



Magellan's [Financial Aid webinar](#) is the best place to start to understand how college financial aid works.

**There are 2 types of financial aid:**

- NEED-based aid
  - MERIT-based aid
- Need-based aid is determined by a federal government formula. ALL colleges require this information to decide how much need-based aid they will offer.
- Merit-based aid is usually based on grades and test scores.  
***Not all colleges offer merit-based aid.***

## **More Financial Aid Links/Resources**

[FAFSA](#) – the starting point for need-based aid

Start by [creating an FSA ID](#)

Department of Education, [Student Financial Aid](#)

College Board – [Applying for Financial Aid](#)

[Financial Aid 101](#) – College Board

## **Sources of College Money**

- Only 6% of the money that helps students pay for college is from private scholarships.
- 24% of the money is from the colleges themselves – your college list is a source of money!

# Financial Aid

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Before you can fill out the FAFSA, you must obtain a Federal Student Aid ID number (FSAID). [You can do that here.](#)

- ✓ Step-by-step [instructions for creating an FSAID are here.](#)
- ✓ Once the FAFSA becomes available on October 1, [you can fill it out here.](#) *(Please note, the FAFSA website is always live for the class a year ahead of you! But you won't be able to fill it out until October 1 of your student's senior year).*

You can get an **estimate** of what your Expected Family Contribution may be by filling out [this EFC Calculator on the College Board's website](#). THIS IS JUST AN ESTIMATE. *[When it asks you if you want the federal or institutional methodology, select "both."]*

Some colleges (*mostly private*) also require the CSS Profile, which asks more in-depth questions about your financial situation. The CSS Profile also opens on October 1. There is a small fee to submit the Profile to each college. [Here's the list of colleges that require the Profile.](#)

# What About Student Loans?

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Most colleges will offer loans to fill the first segment of your financial need - the gap between what you are expected to pay, and their total cost of attendance. There are several types of loans.

*A very small number of colleges will fill the gap without loans.*

[Click here for some basic information](#) about the types of loans available.

[Click here for a downloadable flyer](#) that gives you details on types of loans, amount limits, and additional information about interest accrual.

[Some loans can be forgiven!](#)

**Cal Grants:** *Cal Grants are for California students who attend California colleges. Your FAFSA application IS your Cal Grant application! Your school counselor must submit a GPA Verification form.*

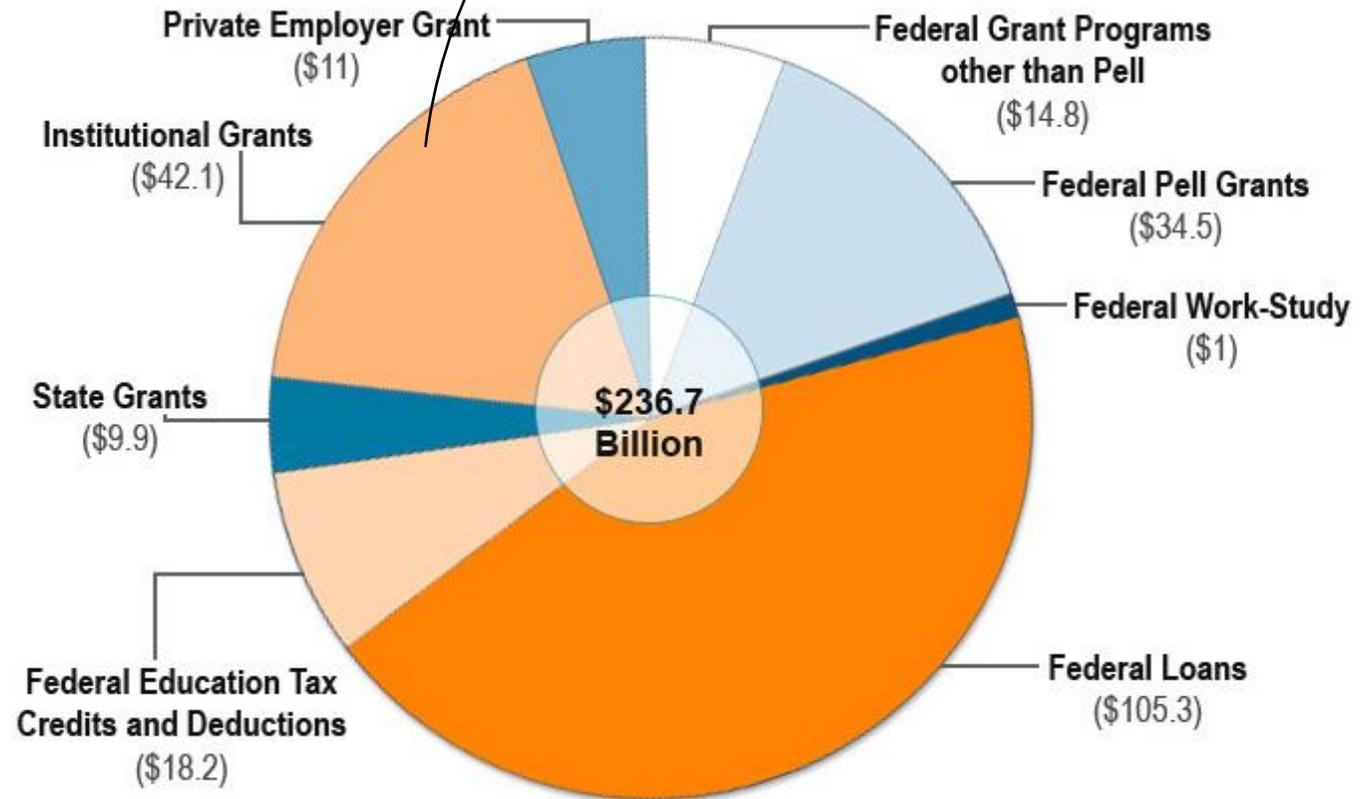
# What About Scholarships?

## REMEMBER:

Four times more money comes from the colleges themselves ("Institutional Grants") than from private scholarships.

## SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH:

- [College Board Scholarship search](#)
- [MeritAid.com](#)
- [Fastweb.com](#)
- [Here's an e-book from Edvisors](#) on searching for scholarships



# Special Situations/Issues

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## ➤ Student Athletes

[Great info on this blog](#)

Division 1&2 athletes must register on the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#)

Division 3 athletes may register to receive information from the NCAA.

➤ *Only Division 1 and 2 schools give athletic scholarships.*

➤ *Division 3 schools MAY give merit-based academic scholarships.*

## ➤ LGBTQ+ Friendly College Resources

[Campus Pride Index](#)

## ➤ Resources for Jewish Students

[Top Schools Jews Choose](#)

[Hillels on campus](#)

[AMCHA tracks anti-Semitism on campus](#)

## ➤ Students with Learning Disabilities

[Questions to ask on your college tours](#)

# The University of California



The [UC system](#) has nine undergraduate campuses.  
[UC San Francisco has graduate programs only.]

*Berkeley*

*Los Angeles*

*San Diego*

*Davis*

*Merced*

*Santa Barbara*

*Irvine*

*Riverside*

*Santa Cruz*

[How applications are reviewed system-wide](#), with links to the individual schools' application review processes.

[How to calculate](#) whether you are in the top 9% of California high school graduates, making you eligible for UC admission (*this guarantees you a spot at UC Merced; you do not choose the campus to which you are admitted*).

The [UC Personal Insight Questions](#) – UC gives students 8 questions; you must select four and give a 350-word (max) response.

- **[UC application](#) opens on August 1 and must be submitted by November 30.**
- **No teacher recs, no transcripts! Send test scores to one campus; they will share with the other UC campuses.**

# The California State University

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23 campuses throughout the state

One application: [Cal State Apply](#)

- Application opens October 1 for fall admission
- Must submit by November 30

**NO ESSAYS!**

**NO TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS!**

Just fill out the application – self-report your courses from 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades and test scores!

You must send official test scores but only send to one CSU campus – they will share system-wide!



# Who Benefits From Working With an Independent Counselor?

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**TOP STUDENTS:** *An independent counselor can help top students create a balanced list of colleges and see themselves realistically in the larger applicant pool.*

**“AVERAGE” STUDENTS:** *Most people don’t realize that the “average” high school GPA has migrated higher; instead of 3.0 it’s about 3.6. This means that many parents have college expectations that may not be aligned with their student’s real options. An IEC can help average students research the wide variety of college options, get comfortable with “safe” and “target” schools, and present themselves in the best possible way.*

**NOT TOP STUDENTS:** *An IEC can show a lower-performing student that they have more four-year college options than they think, or help them transfer successfully if they start at a community college.*



# What Do College Counselors Do?

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- **Guide students** as they explore college options
- Help them select a **balanced college list of schools** that fit them academically, socially and emotionally
- Help students **optimize their applications and essays** – showcasing their academics and extra-curricular leadership
- **Organize** the application process with customized tasks and timelines
- Detailed **application instruction and review**
- **Essay assistance** at all stages

# Magellan College Counseling

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- Founded 2011
- Nine CA-based counselors, one in Chicago, one in Colorado
- Work with students across the United States
- Visited 350+ colleges in past seven years
- [Check out our writeups and photos on our website!](#)
- Magellan team members attend and present at regional & national professional conferences
  - **Focus on COLLEGE FIT**
  - Clients have attended Stanford, Princeton, Columbia, Georgetown, Cornell, UC Berkeley, UCLA, MIT, Johns Hopkins and many more highly selective colleges & universities
  - All of our counselors are members of multiple professional organizations and follow ethical guidelines





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## Magellan College Counseling

877-5-MAGGIE

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

 [MagellanCounseling](#)

 [EvelynMagellan](#)