



IT'S A PLAN: 12TH GRADE CHECKLISTS

The senior year is critical for students to meet deadlines and complete forms as part of the college application and financial aid process. Therefore, Oregon GEAR UP created a series of comprehensive checklists for educators, students and families that address key action items for each month. In addition, there are printable handouts, links to resources, and communication tools like weekly text messages and Facebook posts.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Get a team.** It's important to provide a network of support. Include administrators, teachers, parents and students to help share these messages.
2. **Make a communications plan.** Determine when and how you will share information to students and families; consider more than one method. Make sure you have students and families cell phone numbers, e-mails or mailing addresses if you plan to communicate in those ways.
3. **Download** each month's checklists and communication tools as one PDF file and any additional resources; print the resources that you want to use.

OCTOBER RESOURCES

CHECKLISTS

- Educators [page 2](#)
- Students [page 3](#)
- Families [page 4](#)
- Familias (Spanish) [page 5](#)

COMMUNICATION

- Text Messages [page 6](#)
- Announcements [page 7](#)
- Posters [page 8](#)
- Facebook facebook.com/oregongoestocollege

HANDOUTS

- Activities Chart
- Writing Letters of Recommendation
- Writing Essays
- College & Scholarship Organizer

Download handouts and other months:

oregongoestocollege.org/itsaplan/educators/downloads

OCTOBER

1 Document accomplishments.

- Encourage students to make a list of their school and work experience and create a sample résumé.

2 Tell your story.

- Assign students to write a personal essay, using college or scholarship application essay prompts. **HINT:** Ask the English teacher to assign in class.

3 Narrow the field.

- Help students narrow their college choices.
- Hold field trips to visit colleges or college fairs.

4 Complete the FAFSA or ORSAA.

- Hold one or more FAFSA/ORSAA Completion Workshops for students and parents where they can get hands-on help with the application.
- Track your school's FAFSA completion rates.

5 Request letters of recommendation.

- Develop clear, written policies for requesting letters of recommendation.
- Provide guidance for students and teachers on requesting and writing letters of recommendation.

6 Take or re-take the SAT or ACT.

- Have SAT/ACT Questions of the Day on the announcements.
- Hold test prep workshops.

NOTES:

OCTOBER

1 Document accomplishments.

- Make a list of all of the activities and awards you have received.
- Make a sample résumé.

2 Tell your story.

- Practice writing college and scholarship essays; write a personal statement about who you are and your unique qualities.

3 Narrow the field.

- Narrow your list of colleges – 3 to 5 is a good number. Always have a backup plan!
- Visit colleges and attend college fairs, if possible, or find student reviews online.

4 Complete the FAFSA or ORSAA.

- Fill out and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to be eligible for federal grants, loans and work-study funds or the Oregon Student Aid Application if you are an eligible undocumented student. You will probably need information from your family including tax returns. Be sure to enter the names of any college you might apply to.
- Attend a workshop for hands-on help completing the FAFSA or ORSAA.

5 Request letters of recommendation.

- Think carefully about whom to ask for letters of recommendation.
- Give them plenty of time to write them, as well as your résumé or activities chart, and any instructions from the application.

6 Take or re-take the SAT or ACT.

- Review practice tests; ask teachers for help.
- Get a good night's sleep before the test and eat breakfast that morning!

KEY TERMS:

RÉSUMÉ: A list of your accomplishments and achievements in paid work, volunteer service, or other extracurricular activities.

PERSONAL STATEMENT: Often another name for your college essay, it is your opportunity to share your story with the admissions staff at colleges.

FAFSA: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the form you and your parents will complete to apply for financial aid from the federal and state governments.

NEXT MONTH:

Finalize your list of college choices and apply!

OCTOBER

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Oregon Student Aid Application (ORSAA) (for eligible undocumented students) open this month—these are the most critical forms to complete in order to receive financial aid to help pay for college.

It's also not too late to start a college savings account! Visit a bank or credit union for information about tax-deferred savings accounts or Individual Development Accounts that match savings for college.

1 Document accomplishments.

- Have a conversation with your student to make sure they're on track for college applications, including writing down their work and school experiences.

2 Tell your story.

- Encourage your student to have their sample college or scholarship essay edited by a trusted adult.

3 Narrow the field.

- Attend a college visit or college fair with your student.

4 Complete the FAFSA or ORSAA.

- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the Oregon Student Aid Application open October 1! Your student will likely need your help in obtaining all of the documents they need to file the FAFSA or ORSAA. This may include social security numbers, tax returns and other financial information.

- Attend a workshop for hands-on help completing the FAFSA or ORSAA.

5 Request letters of recommendation.

- Brainstorm with your student several adults and educators who know them well and could write a good letter of recommendation.

6 Take or re-take the SAT or ACT.

- Make sure your student gets a good night's sleep and healthy breakfast on the day of the test.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What is something you've done in high school that you are particularly proud of?

Which adult has had the biggest impact on your life? What is something you've learned from them?

OCTUBRE

La solicitud gratuita de ayuda federal para estudiantes (FAFSA) y la solicitud de ayuda estatal de Oregon (ORSAA) (para los estudiantes elegibles indocumentados) estarán disponible este mes. Es muy importante llenar la solicitud para poder recibir ayuda financiera para pagar la universidad.

Aun hay tiempo para abrir una cuenta de ahorro para el colegio. Viste un banco para información sobre impuestos diferidos- ahorros diferidos o una cuenta de desarrollo individual que sea para el colegio.

1 Logros documentales.

- Tenga una conversación con su estudiante para asegurarse que estén al tanto con las aplicaciones del colegio incluyendo que escriban

2 Comparte tu historia.

- Anime a su estudiante que comparta su ensayo para el colegio o becas para que sean editadas por un adulto de confianza.

3 Refina tus opciones.

- Asista a una visita or una feria de colegio con su estudiante.

4 Llena la FAFSA o ORSAA.

- La solicitud gratuita para ayuda estudiantil federal (FAFSA) y la solicitud de ayuda estatal de Oregon (ORSAA) estarán disponible el primero de octubre. Su estudiante probablemente necesitara su ayuda en obtener todos los documentos que necesitan para llenar la FAFSA o ORSAA. Esto puede incluir números de seguro social, declaraciones de impuestos, y otra información financiera.
- Asiste un evento a la preparatoria por ayuda en completando la FAFSA o ORSAA.

5 Solicita cartas de recomendación.

- Comparte ideas con su estudiante sobre varios adultos y educadores que lo conocen bien y que puedan escribirle una buena carta de recomendación.

6 Toma o retoma el SAT o ACT.

- Asegúrese de que su hijo descanse y duerma bien la noche antes del examen y que desayune algo saludable el día del examen.

TEMAS DE CONVERSACIÓN

¿Qué has logrado en la preparatoria de lo que mas te argüéllese?

¿Cuál adulto ha tenido el impacto mas grande? ¿Qué es lo que has aprendió de ellos?

OCTOBER TEXT MESSAGES

Use a free text messaging service like [remind.com](https://www.remind.com) to connect with seniors and their families. Schedule messages ahead of time and customize them with information from your school. You can also tweet these if Twitter is popular at your school.

week	student text message	family text message (English)	family text message (Spanish)
1	You've been planning all along – make a list of your high school activities and awards. Then write a sample résumé.	It's time to help your kids brag about their plan! Their resume should include activities and awards, in and out of school.	Es tiempo de ayudar a sus hijos presumir sus planes. El resumen debe incluir actividades y premios dentro y fuera de la escuela.
2	It's time to tell your story! Plan to write a draft of your personal statement for college admission and scholarship applications.	College and scholarship applications often require students to share their story. Your child needs to draft a personal statement this week.	Las aplicaciones de la universidad y de becas requieren que los estudiante compartan su historia. Su hijo debe de escribir su ensayo esta semana.
3	Narrow your list of colleges to a manageable number. More than 1, less than 10! Always have a backup plan.	College applications are due soon. Your child needs to narrow the list to a reasonable number. Help them develop a backup plan.	Las fechas limites para las aplicaciones de la universidad se aproximan. Su hijo debe de reducir su lista de colegios a un numero manejable. Ayúdelos a tener un plan de contingencia.
4	It's time. The FAFSA and the ORSAA are waiting for you to file. Do it ASAP!	The FAFSA and the ORSAA are now open. Financial aid is often first-come, first-served so you can't afford to wait.	El FAFSA y el ORSAA ya estan disponible. La ayuda financiera es concedida a como vayan llegando las aplicaciones. No tiene el lujo de esperar.
5	Request letters of recommendation from teachers who know you well and can speak to your strengths and challenges.	Many applications require letters of recommendation. Plan to assist your child in selecting 1 or 2 teachers to write a letter of recommendation.	Muchas aplicaciones requieren cartas de recomendación. Ayude a su hijo a seleccionar 1-2 maestros para escribir una carta de recomendación.

OCTOBER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Help seniors stay on track with weekly school announcements outlining the key steps to preparing for life after high school.

week	school announcement
1	Colleges and scholarship providers want to know all the things you've done in high school. Start keeping track of activities and awards – or catch up now! Make it your priority to plan this week by writing your resume.
2	College admission and scholarship applications often require a personal statement in which you share a bit about you and what you plan for your future. Now's the time to write a draft of your personal statement and application essay(s).
3	You'll be submitting college applications next month, so now's the time to decide where you'll apply. Keep the list small – include at least one school where you think you'll be admitted, one you think you can afford with scholarships and financial aid, and at least one that's a reach. Have a dream – and a backup plan!
4	The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (aka FAFSA) and the Oregon Student Aid Application (aka ORSAA) are open. Since access to financial aid is often first-come, first-served, it's critical to file these as soon as possible. Now's the time!
5	Teachers have been helping you since you started school. They're not done yet! In fact, they're a big part of your plan. Ask those who know you best to write recommendation letters for your applications.

SENIOR TO DO

OCTOBER

1 Document accomplishments.

Make a list of all of the activities and awards you have received, and make a sample résumé.

Learn more: oregongoestocollege.org/itsaplan



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SENIOR TO DO

OCTOBER

Tell your story.

Write a personal statement about who you are and your unique qualities; practice writing college or scholarship essays.

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SENIOR TO DO

OCTOBER

Complete the FAFSA or ORSAA.

The sooner you fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the more money you may be eligible for! Over \$150 billion in federal grants, loans and work-study funds are available. Eligible undocumented students can get state grants by completing the Oregon Student Aid Application.

Learn more: oregongoescollege.org/itsaplan



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