

Steps to College Planning
HHS Counseling Center



1. _____ **Take an admissions exam.** (Admissions are test optional; merit scholarships require scores).
Create a user account that is password protected.
Refer to the following web sites for more information, testing schedules, etc.
 - a. ACT www.actstudent.org (Make sure you have your ACT ID from last spring before you create an online account!)
 - b. SAT www.collegeboard.com
 - c. Accuplacer (for 2-year schools) Can be taken at Helena College.

2. _____ **Request a FSA ID to fill out the FAFSA online.** (Application available December 1st)
The Free Application for Federal Student Assistance can't be completed until students have an ID. This is step one of this process. After students have a FSA ID, they'll be ready to start the application. This will be done online. Students must create a user account that is password protected.
FAFSA can be submitted using federal tax returns from the prior, prior year. College Goal Montana will take place October 5th. It is designed to help students and parents complete the FAFSA online documents and submit them before the priority filing dates (MT schools- Feb 1).

Helpful web sites:

<https://studentaid.gov/>

<http://www.reachhighermontana.org/>



FAFSA Completion Night ~ TBD

3. _____ **Work on your college admission applications.**

Use Apply Montana to create an account and send ONE application to multiple Montana colleges. Private schools (Rocky, Carroll, and University of Providence) will require an application through their institution.

The Common Application is a useful tool if the student plans to apply to several out-of-state schools. Montana's public universities do not subscribe to this service.

<https://www.commonapp.org/>

Sometimes the college admissions application *IS* the general scholarship application too. However, in some cases, students will have to fill out a separate scholarship form based on the school and the program they plan to pursue. For example, MSU has a general scholarship program for all students, but each individual college within MSU (Engineering, Nursing, etc) has a scholarship program as well. There is a separate scholarship application students must complete in order to maximize their scholarship potential. **Pay attention to deadlines!**

Even if a student is planning to go out-of-state, he/she should have a Montana school as a back-up plan. Make sure to apply in-state, too!



***HHS Counselors and Community Partners will be in the Library the week of
October 2 - October 6, periods 6-7 helping students fill out applications to Montana
Colleges and Universities***

4. _____ **Complete scholarship applications.**

This is a tedious process, but it is a necessity! There is free money available, but students have to complete the process in order to get it. So many scholarships go unawarded because students don't apply for them, especially in the spring. Here are some things to consider:

- a. Know what is available. Check the scholarship list in the counseling center. It's also available online on the HHS counseling web page.
- b. Use a calendar to help you remember deadlines.
- c. If you need a letter of recommendation from a teacher, counselor or coach, give that person 2-3 weeks advanced notice. Provide that individual with a copy of your resume and a copy of the scholarship requirements.
- d. Fill out the scholarship forms in blue or black ink. Better yet, type it!

- e. If the scholarship requires an essay, put forth a solid effort. Have an adult proofread your work.
- f. Stay motivated!

Helpful Websites:

- <http://hhs.helenaschools.org/counseling-and-career-guidance/scholarships/>
- <https://portal.mt.cis360.org/> or login with Clever
- www.scholarships.com
- <https://www.reachhighermontana.org/>
- www.fastweb.com

5. _____ **Plan a college visit or speak with a college rep on the HHS campus.**

It's always helpful to actually step foot on campus. Seeing the campus firsthand provides an entirely different experience than simply viewing photos online. If it's possible to visit the campus, do it. Remember you can get a school related absence if you follow the proper steps!

Additionally, throughout the year, college admission representatives come to Helena High to talk about the institution, its programs, student life, etc. This may provide a more cost-effective way to learn about a university. Refer the student bulletin or stop by the counseling center for the weekly schedule.

6. _____ **Parchment Account.**

This is an option for requesting transcripts, though there is a small fee for each transaction. Students who need a transcript sent at the end of the year will need to use Parchment. If you would like to set-up your account now, go to www.parchment.com

We can also provide assistance with this in the counseling center. Transcript request cards can be accessed by asking Corena or any of the counselors.

7. _____ **Advocate for yourself!**

This is your future and your education, so take charge of it. If you have questions or need guidance, it is your job to ask for help.

***Best wishes on a great year! We are here to help you, so let us know what you need.
Helena High Counseling Staff***

