Journey to College

Preparing for College: Senior Year Checklist

August
☐ Start the school year out strong to prepare for college and a career.

☐ Request admission information from your top college choices. Check the schools out online or in person during campus visits.

☐ Be sure to take the ACT and/or SAT. Retake to improve your score.

☐ Sign up for the Journey to College Monthly Reminder at journeytocollege.mo.gov.

☐ Follow Journey to College on social media for scholarship and other important information.

September
☐ Create your FSA ID at fsaid.ed.gov.

☐ Take advantage of Apply Missouri resources to find your best fit for college.

☐ Attend college fairs and financial aid events in your area.

☐ Ask your counselor about local scholarship opportunities, resume writing, and recommendation letters.

☐ Set up a Student Workspace and State Financial Aid Portal account at journeytocollege.mo.gov.

October
☐ Be aware of college application due dates and financial aid deadlines.

☐ Complete your FAFSA as soon as possible after Oct. 1. Participate in FAFSA Frenzy for free help.

☐ Finalize your college admissions essays, auditions, portfolios, and writing samples.

November
☐ Go on campus visits and meet with admissions and financial aid advisors to help you narrow or finalize your college choice.

☐ Once you file your FAFSA, watch for your Student Aid Report. Check it for accuracy and make any necessary corrections.
December
☐ Compare college programs and costs.
☐ Research and apply for college, local, and private scholarships.
☐ Consider job shadowing for a closer look at career options.

February
☐ Check into taking Advanced Placement (AP) or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams.
☐ Ask your counselor to send your transcripts to your top college choices.
☐ Review college financing offers. Call the financial aid office with questions.

April
☐ Review, compare, sign, and return admissions and financial aid forms.
☐ Make any deposits required to enroll for the fall semester.
☐ Finish AP exams and final projects. Study for tests and end the school year strong.

June
☐ Plan for college orientation, housing and transportation.
☐ Prepare a realistic budget you can follow throughout college.
☐ Follow up with the financial aid office at your college to ensure all paperwork is complete.

January
☐ Complete your FAFSA by Feb. 1 to meet the priority deadline for the Access Missouri Grant.
☐ Submit IRS tax transcripts and other verification forms to the financial aid office, if requested.

March
☐ If you haven't already done so, submit your FAFSA by April 1 to meet the final Access Missouri Grant deadline.
☐ Develop a plan to pay for college.
☐ Be aware of college registration, housing, and other deadlines.

May
☐ Try to make your final college choice by May 1, National Decision Day.
☐ Finalize summer job plans and save a portion of your earnings.
☐ Be sure to notify the colleges where you were accepted but will not be attending.

July
☐ Finalize housing and move-in dates, and transportation.
☐ Be sure you are enrolled in the required number of credit hours to qualify for scholarships and other financial aid.
☐ Consider taking 15 or more credit hours a semester to graduate on time.
Next Step Goals

During the course of your high school career, you have been learning more about who you are, what you want to do in your life and where your dreams connect with options in work and education. You have been setting goals and making plans for high school and beyond. As you approach the completion of high school, it is important to look over the goals you have set, adjust them where needed and prepare for transition to your next steps.

Your goals reflect your vision for your life and career. By using My Career Plan, you have gained a lot of insight about who you are, and you have discovered new opportunities for yourself. This activity will help you refine your goals for your next steps.

Instructions:
1. Begin by taking some time to review the personal, academic and career goals you set over the past few years. Review the reflections you saved in the Set Goals section of My Career Plan. Click Print to view these with ease.
2. Answer the questions below to reflect upon those earlier goals.
3. Update your goals on pages 2 and 3 and in the Next Steps: Set Goals section of My Career Plan.

Reflective Questions

1. As I approach high school graduation, what do I think I want out of life and my career?

2. What do I presently think are my greatest strengths and talents? Has this changed? How?

3. What do I value? Which career option(s) best fit my values? Has this changed? Why?

4. Which career option(s) match me best? Why?

5. What do I want to achieve academically? Personally?

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Now rewrite your personal, academic, and career goals, verifying that they reflect what you know about yourself and what you wrote on page 1. (Be sure to include the target date for meeting your goals.) Also, assure that these goals are:

- **Specific** (well defined)
- **Measurable** (will you know when you have reached your goal?)
- **Achievable** (Got the resources? If not, how will you get them?)
- **Relevant** (Why is it important and how does it relate to the rest of your life?)
- **Time-based** (Set target dates?)

My personal goals:

My academic goals:

My career goals:
Improvement and Enrichment Plans

Do you need to improve or change something about yourself in order to achieve these goals or graduate? You have a little time left to implement a well-paced improvement plan. Review the goals and improvement plans you set earlier and note your progress. If you have made good progress on the improvement and enrichment plans you drafted earlier, you can simply update your earlier plans. For any areas that you still need to work on or improve, enter the following information in the text box:

- Subject area needing improvement (Example: Reading)
- Improvement Plan (Example: I will spend 2 periods a week in the reading lab.)
- Evaluation Date (Example: 12/18/18)

- Area that I need to improve:
- Improvement Plan:

- Target Date:

Below, summarize the information you wrote in the four boxes above to complete the reflection boxes in the Next Steps: Set Goals section of My Career Plan.
Compare Schools

Soon you are going to make an important decision about where you will begin the training you need to succeed in your future. To make this decision requires quality information. In this activity you will compare schools you are considering. Some schools may interest you because friends or relatives have attended them or you have visited them. You may have found new schools when using the Undergraduate School Sort. In this activity, you also will gather more extensive information about these schools’ programs using CIS and additional research.

Instructions:

1. Click on the US Colleges and Universities link under the Education tab on the CIS Homepage. This file includes all schools that offer Associate degrees or higher.

2. At the top of the US Colleges and Universities index, click the Compare tab. A new index screen will display.

3. To select a school to compare, simply click on its name. It will display in the colored box. After you have selected up to three schools, click the Compare button.

4. You can compare the schools on all of the topics and educational programs by clicking the topic header or program cluster on the left side of the screen.

5. You can print out the comparisons by topic by clicking Print at the top of the screen. These printouts, though valuable for decision-making, can require a lot of paper, so print only topics that are important to you.

6. You can add and change the schools you are comparing by using the Clear List button.

7. After you finish comparing, answer the questions at the bottom of this page.


9. Return to the Next Steps: Research Options section of Career Plan and transfer your learning to the associated reflection box.

1. What postsecondary school characteristics are most important to you?

2. What three schools stood out to you in your comparisons?

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Now complete the research assignment below using the information you wrote above with printouts of your school comparisons.

Instructions, School Research worksheet:
1. Enter the names of your three top schools on the top of the grid, columns 2-4, where indicated.
2. In the left column, add additional topics of importance to you in selecting a school. (Feel free to change the listed topics and to add additional topics.)
3. Contact people at your three top schools—either by phone, email, or face-to-face and learn directly about the important topics on the left of the grid. You can secure contact names, numbers, and email addresses from CIS and the schools' websites. Ask these individuals to answer your questions about the topics on the left of the grid.
4. Use the results of your learning to complete the reflection box at the bottom of this page and in the Next Steps: Research Options section of Career Plan.

### School Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Topics</th>
<th>School Names</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships and Financial Aid?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program of Study specifics in my interest area?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is student housing like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the atmosphere.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What training programs and schools interest me most now?

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Reviewed by: _________________________ Date: _________________________

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Financing My Education

You may think that you cannot afford to continue your education after graduation. However, you may be more able than you know!

You have probably heard that education pays - this means that, generally speaking, people with more education earn more money and are employed more steadily than those with only a high school education or less. If your dreams involve continuing your education after high school, you can make it happen. You need to do your best in school, look for alternate ways to reach your dreams, and seek financial aid for your education. This activity helps you learn about the types of financial aid available and identify awards for which you might apply.

Instructions:
1. First, learn all you can about financing your education. Read all of the information in Paying for Schools, found under the Education tab on the CIS Homepage. Print any of this information that you need to apply for financial aid this winter or spring.

2. The vast majority of financial aid comes through the school you attend in the form of a Financial Aid Package.

3. You may also be able to find scholarships from private organizations and other sponsors. Locate these types of scholarships by criteria you specify using CIS Financial Aid Sort. Click the link to Financial Aid Sort, also under the Education tab or in this section.

4. Read and select an option for each question in Financial Aid Sort. Use the Continue button to move through all twelve criteria. As you review a question and find you do not match any of the criteria listed, use the Do Not Include option. Skipping a question is not the same as not including the criteria, and you will end up with a better list by omitting awards with criteria that do not match you.

5. Once you get your list of awards, look at each award to determine if you qualify. The sorting criteria are broad and many scholarships are targeted to very specific types of people. Don't be surprised if out of a list of 250 awards, only 5 or ten seem to apply to you.

6. When you identify an award for which you might qualify, save it in Favorites by clicking Save. In your reflection, note the deadline.

7. If researching financial aid altered your education plans, enter this information in the reflection box for Next Steps: Make Plans, Make Education Plans.

What are your educational plans now for after high school?

Your Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Reviewed by: __________________________ Date: ___________________________

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Consider the Military

You might be considering enrolling in the armed services. Before you decide to become a member of the armed services, you have lots of things to consider. It’s important to know the facts about the military and military work life before you make this important life decision. This worksheet and the CIS About the Military information can help you make the decision that is best for you.

Instructions:

1. Click the Occupations tab and select About the Military.

2. Read the information in each of the tabs along the left side of the page, paying particular attention to the Military Life information, as working in the military provides a very different lifestyle than civilian work life.

3. As you read each section, note your learning in the worksheet boxes on page 2, titled Considerations.

4. Find military occupations that interest you by using the Cluster Index on the Occupation mega menu.

5. Click clusters of interest then click any occupations that interest you to learn more about these occupations.

6. While reading about an occupation, click the Military Occupation link under Related Information to see occupational specialties by branch of the military.

7. Read and print any military occupation information that interests you.

8. Compare military occupations to their civilian counterparts by clicking the Related Occupations link.

9. Complete the Comparing Military and Civilian Occupations worksheet on page three to compare military occupations to their civilian counterparts.

10. After you finish pages two and three of this activity, answer the questions in the Next Steps: Research Options section of Career Plan.

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Considerations

What facts stood out to you in the About the Military section?

What facts stood out to you in the Education section?

What facts stood out to you in the Diversity section?

What facts stood out to you in the Joining the Military section?

What facts stood out to you in the Military Life section?

What facts stood out to you in the Leaving the Military section?

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Comparing Military and Civilian Occupations

Instructions:

Use the table below to compare any military occupation to its civilian counterpart using CIS Military Occupations and CIS Occupations. Some topics in Military Occupations differ slightly from CIS Occupations. The left column of the table ("Attributes") combines these similar topic titles into one cell to ease finding the corresponding information in Military Occupations and CIS Occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Attributes</th>
<th>Military Occupation Title:</th>
<th>Civilian Occupation Title:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Demands</td>
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<td>Special Requirements, Helpful Attributes, Skills and Abilities, Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hiring Practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advancing Opportunities, Outlook</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Remember! Note key learning in the Next Steps: Research Options section of Career Plan.

Your Signature: ____________________________ Date: _______________________
Reviewed by: ______________________________ Date: _______________________

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