College Application Process

ACT Scores - must be sent to all schools that require it.

Transcripts - must be sent through your school registrar.

Letters of Recommendation - should be requested far in advance from teachers who know you well.

College Essays - some schools and scholarships require essays. The common application essays are a good place to start.

Apply - apply to at least six colleges and universities that fit your criteria for size, location, program, etc. They will require a combination of materials from above and have various deadlines and admission processes. Be sure to check each online app thoroughly BEFORE filling them out.

Early Action - applying "early action" allows you to receive an answer from the school early but doesn't require a final decision until later.

Early Decision - applying early decision lets you receive an answer from admission faster but the decision is binding, you must attend that university.

Rolling Admission - Rolling admissions offer an edge for early birds. But wait too long to apply, and students may find themselves out of a spot in the freshman class.

Scholarships - School and federal scholarships will be awarded through the FAFSA but students should be applying for private scholarships while waiting to hear from schools about admissions decisions and aid awards.

Financial Aid - beginning in January each student and family will fill out the FAFSA or government aid form. This form requires tax information so families should get their taxes done as early as possible. Aid is awarded by need and a first come, first served basis.

The Decision - Financial aid packages will arrive from schools where you were accepted via U.S. mail, email OR your school account. BE SURE to check all possibilities! The packages should be looked over and compared. Set a meeting with one of our staff to help you decipher this information. Once the school that best meets your overall needs is decided you must notify that school of your choice based on their instructions. Be prepared to submit more financial documentation based on federal regulations. You will also need a housing deposit -- $100 to $300 is common.

Follow up - Once you have decided on a school and sent in the housing deposit, be sure to notify the schools you will not be attending so they can admit students on their waiting lists.

Getting Ready - And after you're done celebrating, it will be time to move on to Paperwork Round #2: final transcripts, housing applications, registration, placement testing, health forms, bridge program opportunities, and whatever else the school is expecting.