

# GETTING INTO COLLEGE:

## A Readiness Checklist #UNCFk12



### WHAT IT TAKES TO GET INTO COLLEGE: 10 STEPS

- 1 Take challenging courses (including AP, IB and honors if offered).
  - In the absence of AP or honors courses, take the most challenging, rigorous courses available.
- 2 Stay in contact with your school guidance counselor about resources for college. Be persistent in this effort!
- 3 Colleges often want to see that a student is well-rounded. Volunteer and become involved with extracurricular activities during high school.
- 4 Develop relationships with teachers, coaches, mentors or other adults, as they will provide recommendation letters when applicable.
- 5 Do your homework.
  - Thoroughly research colleges and majors to find the right fit for you and your future career goals.
- 6 Talk to your guidance counselor about any college fairs or universities visiting your high school.
- 7 Thoroughly review all admissions applications and complete all parts, including essays.
- 8 Seek college application fee waivers where available.
  - National Association of College Admissions Counselors Fee Waivers: [www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/feewaiver/pages/default.aspx](http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/feewaiver/pages/default.aspx).
  - College Board: If you registered for and took the SAT or one of the SAT Subject Tests using a fee waiver, you are automatically eligible to receive four college application fee waivers from 2,000 participating colleges. [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/about/benefits/college-application-fee-waivers](http://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/about/benefits/college-application-fee-waivers).
  - Some colleges discuss college fee waivers on their websites.
- 9 Create folders (virtual or hard copy) for each college application and/or create a college application spreadsheet.
- 10 Research scholarships and other funding opportunities. There is plenty of aid available to attend college!
  - Consider scholarships from non-traditional outlets as well, such as local non-profit organizations and large corporations.
  - Some colleges offer institutional scholarships. Be sure to check their websites for deadline and eligibility information.

### WHY GO TO COLLEGE?

- Young adults who obtained a bachelor's degree earned 62 percent more than young adults with only a high school diploma. On average, a worker with a bachelor's degree will earn \$1 million more over their lifetime than someone who earned a high school diploma.
- Obtaining a post-secondary degree provides students with a competitive edge in securing a job. By 2020, 65 percent of all jobs will require a post-secondary education and training beyond high school.

### HELPFUL LINKS

Know How to Go: [www.knowhowtogo.com](http://www.knowhowtogo.com)  
 ACT: [www.actstudent.org/college](http://www.actstudent.org/college)  
 College Board: [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)  
 Federal Student Aid: [studentaid.ed.gov/sa](http://studentaid.ed.gov/sa)

Fastweb: [www.fastweb.com/registration/step\\_1](http://www.fastweb.com/registration/step_1)  
 The Posse Foundation: [www.possefoundation.org](http://www.possefoundation.org)  
 Form Your Future: <http://formyourfuture.org>  
 College Navigator: [nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator](http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator)

### COLLEGE READINESS CHECKLIST ✓

- Ensure you have taken all necessary courses to graduate on time.
- Sign up to take college placement exams, if necessary.
- Take ACT/SAT; seek waiver if eligible via your high school and/or through ACT or SAT websites
- Set up appointment(s) with your guidance counselor to discuss college choices and potential majors.
- Research colleges and majors. Set up tours and visits if able to do so.
- Complete the FAFSA (<https://fafsa.ed.gov>) as soon as possible. It is posted annually starting Oct. 1. Many states and colleges have specific deadlines for applying for state and institutional aid. You can find your state's deadline at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/deadlines.htm> and check with your college about other deadlines.
- Search for scholarships and financial aid.
- Request high school transcripts to be sent to colleges.
- Request letters of recommendation for scholarships and college applications that require them. Try to do this at least one month in advance.
- Draft college essays. Have at least one person review the draft.
- Complete and send off applications. Start early in the process and submit before the deadline. Apply by the fall of your senior year at the latest.
- Avoid the summer melt. Stay on top of important information colleges may request, such as forms related to on-campus housing, immunizations, financial aid and new student orientations.

For a complete list of UNCF-member HBCU schools, please visit **UNCF.org** or call **800.331.2244**.

# UNCF'S MANIFESTO—WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

We believe that if students are academically prepared for college, **we can radically change the story of what's possible**—not just for African American students but for the African American community as a whole. UNCF is passionately invested in **transforming dreams of college into reality and we will continue to push until all students who want to go to college are afforded that opportunity.**

For our students to be college ready, **we need to ensure that their K-12 educational experience is preparing them to excel in college and beyond.** As a result, we believe **students must:**

- **Attend a quality school** that offers a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and enables them to graduate at a college-ready level. We believe that free, safe, high-quality school options should be available and accessible to all students in every neighborhood.
- **Have effective teachers** in each of their classes who guide them through challenging course work, building the academic and social skills needed to ensure they are successful in college, career and life.
- **Understand how to navigate critical decisions along their K-16 journey**, such as selecting quality schools, understanding their full breadth of choices, learning how to secure financial support for college, and positioning themselves for college and career success.
- **Receive guidance and mentoring** from an adult who can help them navigate the complex college-going process and provide them with the support along the way.
- Understand how, along with their parents and communities, to **hold their school and teachers accountable** for providing a high-quality education.
- **Be immersed in a college-going culture**, where college is not an exception, but an expectation coupled with the belief that all students have the aptitude to reach this goal.

