

Choosing the Right College

Here are some options to help you find the school that fits your needs. :

Community or Junior Colleges

- Community and junior colleges offer two-year programs to earn an associate's degree or certificate in a specific area of interest.
- Course schedules are flexible, with day and evening classes offered for working students.
- Tuition at community colleges is typically less expensive compared to four-year colleges.
- Students have an opportunity to earn credits which can usually be transferred to a four-year college.
- Community college courses are also available to high school students to get a head start on college and to adult students to further professional development.
- For more information, visit www.aacc.nche.edu.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)

- Enrollment of full-time students at HSIs must be at least 25 percent Hispanic. Any school can be designated an HSI (including community colleges) as long as it meets this 25-percent requirement.
- There are more than 200 HSIs in the U.S.
- Fifty percent of all Hispanic students who earn an associate's or bachelor's degree attended an HSI.
- Tuition costs at HSIs are usually lower compared to non-HSI colleges and universities.
- A directory of HSIs is listed in the "Admissions" category in FastWeb's "Articles" section.

Vocational Schools

- Students enroll in courses for one or two years to learn the skills needed for a specific career.
- On average, tuition at vocational schools is less expensive than four-year schools, though many vocational schools are not eligible for federal aid.
- Vocational and technical colleges offer specific certificate or degree programs that may not be available at four-year colleges.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

- African-Americans account for a high percentage of the student body. HBCUs also tend to have a high percentage of African-American faculty members.
- There are more than 90 HBCUs in the U.S.
- While a majority of HBCUs are located in the South, there are also HBCUs in Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Delaware.
- HBCUs can be public and private as well as two- and four-year institutions.
- A directory of HBCUs is listed in the "Admissions" category in FastWeb's "Articles" section.

Service Academies

- Qualifications for admission include physical as well as rigorous academic requirements.
- Students receive a full scholarship upon admission.
- Service time is required upon graduation (most branches require at least five years of active service).

List of Academies:

Army: U.S. Military Academy (West Point, NY)
www.usma.edu
Navy: U.S. Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD)
www.usna.edu
Air Force: U.S. Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO)
www.usafa.edu

Women's Colleges

- While women's colleges are open only to female students, the faculty includes both men and women.
- There are nearly 70 women's colleges in the U.S.
- Women are the main focus of extracurricular activities and educational resources.
- For more information on women's colleges, visit the Web site for the Women's College Coalition: www.womenscolleges.org.

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FastWeb Student Tips

FastWeb users give their advice on how to prepare for college and beyond.

Admissions

"Apply to as many different colleges as possible to increase your options. Two-year colleges can be a good place to start, especially if you are unsure of what you want to do."

- Jolene R., University of New Haven

"It is OK to go to a community college. You can take a wide variety of classes that can help you find out what you are interested in and classes are less expensive."

- Rebecca R., West Valley College

"Write down your hobbies, interests and activities, then write down the colleges you are thinking about attending. Call the colleges or universities and see if they offer what you [want]."

- Monica B., Windham H.S.

"Prospective college students should try to talk to college students (freshmen or sophomores) about their experiences and how they got adjusted to college life."

- Anu A., University of Indianapolis

"Teenagers think extracurricular activities are no big thing, but colleges and [employers] look for those things to see how well you manage your time while keeping up your attendance and grades."

- Sean M., Marcos De Niza H.S.

"Don't plan your whole life around one college. It will make it a lot easier if you don't get accepted [to that college]."

- Hope L., Medomak Valley H.S.

"Visit colleges early and often. I wish I would have asked more questions and visited more schools my junior year, just so I would have had a better idea of what college is all about."

- Ryan W., Clear Creek-Amana H.S.

Financial Aid

"Scholarship scammers are very tricky. Just because the stuff that they tell you sounds legit does not mean it is. If you have to pay to get a scholarship, expect that something is wrong, because scholarships are supposed to be free."

- Amaka E., University of Georgia

"Apply for financial aid and scholarships early. Scholarships and financial aid take a long time to be processed, so make sure you get it done ahead of time."

- Donnisha R., Florida Atlantic University

"If you do not receive any scholarships the first time you apply, you still have every year in college to apply for many scholarships. Ask your advisor about where you can get scholarship information."

- Angel P., Florida State University

"Try to do all your financial aid paperwork and counseling sessions before the school year starts to avoid long lines and hectic waiting periods."

- Tamara R., Tennessee State University

"Make sure all paperwork is in on time and that you have [completed] everything to the best of your ability."

- Meron S., Delaware State University

"Start asking questions. Talk to financial aid staff members and look into scholarships and grants. There is a lot of paperwork, but do it little by little. Double-check everything."

- Allison J., Not currently attending

"Let your parents help you, at least with the financial aid. Always make more than one copy."

- Jennifer K., Wilbur D. Mills Univ. Studies H.S.

Career/Money

"Get a job! They help you learn how to deal with money, and wise and unwise ways to spend it. Use good money management now, and it will pay off later!"

- Ashley S., Dickson H.S.

"Take a personal finance class or call around to banking institutions and they will gladly help you, or lead you to someone who can."

- Loretta F., University of Wisconsin-Rock County

"Research the career you want to go into. Find someone in that career and ask about it. Find out what they actually have to do, what they like and don't like about their job."

- Nicole P., University of California-Davis

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