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GETTING READY FOR COLLEGE: A Sample Timeline

Planning for college involves a series of activities that begin well in advance of high school graduation. Students who plan ahead and start the process early will have the greatest variety of opportunities, for both college admission and financial aid. The sample timeline below offers a number of activities to help students and families prepare for college. For additional information, visit the Greater Washington College Info Center, located at the Martin Luther King Memorial Library. Call (202) 393-1100 for hours.

Summer - Rising Juniors

- C Gather information on possible career options
- C Identify types and characteristics of postsecondary education programs
- C Complete at least one college search activity to generate a list of 10-20 possible schools
- C Identify general criteria for admission and develop plan to meet those criteria
- C Begin to develop college time line (include dates for tests, application deadlines, financial aid application deadlines, etc.)
- C Talk with your parents about your college plans

Fall - Juniors

- C Register for SAT/ACT
- C Contact colleges to request view books, catalogs, and other materials
- C Plan to attend at least two college fairs and two open houses at local campuses
- C Refine college search and explore additional options based on personal research
- C Utilize Internet resources to find additional information about colleges and programs

Spring - Juniors

- C Take SAT/ACT
- C Review college publications and materials and begin to refine pool of selected schools
- C Review specific admissions criteria

Spring - Juniors (Continued)

- C Research summer, internship and enrichment activities
- C Begin researching private scholarship resources; identify specific criteria and make plans to meet them
- C Plan to visit colleges (to the extent possible); find out about college tours
- C Attend additional college fairs and on-campus activities
- C Attend financial aid information session with parents/mentor/guardian
- C Begin requesting college admission applications

Summer - Rising Seniors

- C Gather basic information for college admission applications (list of courses taken, honors, extracurricular activities, career goals, work experience, etc.)
- C Develop college essays based on information requested on admission applications
- C Visit college campuses
- C Record and track admissions materials received; prepare time line with all admission and financial aid application deadlines
- C Prepare for SAT/ACT (if needed)
- C Continue search for private scholarships

Fall - Seniors

- C Set aside time weekly to work on your college applications
- C Finalize list of potential schools
- C Request missing admission and financial aid applications
- C Complete application and finalize essays
- C Attend college fairs and other school/community events
- C Review and revise time line
- C Take SAT/ACT a second time (if needed)
- C Complete scholarship applications (if applicable)
- C Prepare requests to guidance counselor and teachers for transcripts, recommendations and other materials
- C Encourage parents to attend college information sessions

Spring - Seniors

- C Gather information for financial aid applications (January/February)
- C Complete financial aid applications (CIC staff can help families complete forms)
- C Follow up on applications and provide supporting documents
- C Attend parent information sessions on financial aid
- C Complete remaining tasks for admissions applications
- C Review admission and financial aid offers
- C Make final decisions and submit required deposits and documents