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# FINDING THE RIGHT COLLEGE FIT FOR YOU

With more than 3,000 colleges in the United States to choose from, you're sure to find one that's right for you if you take the right steps.

## Know Yourself

How do you get started in your college planning and research? Begin by looking at yourself—your abilities, interests, attitudes, and personality. Ask yourself these questions:

- Am I a good student? Average? Below average?
- Does my school record reflect my abilities?
- Am I strong or weak in any academic area?
- What clubs, sports, and cultural activities do I like best?
- Should I go away to college or stay near my family and friends?

Explore your reasons for going to college and what you want to get out of going. Also, consider your interests and your abilities. Then, think about where to apply.

## Fast Facts:

1. Know Yourself
2. Make a Worksheet
3. Prioritize
4. Look Beyond Cost
5. Get Organized
6. Visit the Colleges
7. Apply

## Make a Worksheet

Write down some characteristics of a college that would suit your needs and desires. Consider:

- Location (city, rural, suburban)
- Geographic area (city, region, in state/out of state)
- Type of college (two-year, four-year; public, private)
- Size
- Campus setting
- Majors and course offerings
- On-campus housing
- Special academic programs
- Cost
- Financial aid
- Student activities
- Athletics
- Type of student body
- Social life
- Religious affiliation

## Prioritize

Decide which factors are most important. For example: Do you want to go to college near home? Are you interested in a specialized course of study offered at only a few colleges?

Next, ask your **A Call to College** advisor or guidance counselor for websites with descriptions of each institution.

Narrow the field and request admissions and application information.

## Look Beyond Cost

Yes, college costs are important. But try not to rule out a college of interest solely because of cost. Wait to see if you will qualify for financial aid to help pay your tuition, housing, and other expenses. Get as much information as possible on the kinds of financial aid available and how to apply. Make an appointment with your **A Call to College** advisor for more information.

## Get Organized

Start a file for each college of interest and gather information with details on admission, student life, academics, costs and financial aid.

Find out if any representatives or alumni from the college are coming to your area or high school, and meet with them.

It's also useful to make a calendar showing all important dates, including application and financial aid deadlines. Information regarding dates and deadlines may be obtained from **A Call to College**.

## Visit the Colleges

If at all possible, visit the colleges of greatest interest when classes are in session and do this before you apply. If the college recommends you have an interview, schedule it to coincide with your visit.

While on campus, have a look at the student center, cafeteria, library, athletic facilities and other places of interest. Talk to students and sit in on lectures or classes if you can. Evaluate the campus and its surroundings to see if you can picture yourself there.

## Apply

Most colleges require the following:

- Application form, providing information about your background, education, and college plans.
- High school transcript, listing your courses, grades, and test scores.
- Admission test scores, such as the SAT or ACT.
- Letters of recommendation from teachers, counselors, or other adults.