

Planning for Postsecondary Education: High School Timeline

Freshman and Sophomore Years:

Take the Right Classes

- I have discussed my class schedule with my counselor, teachers, and family, and am taking the “college prep” curriculum in my high school to prepare me for college.
- I am unable to take or finish the “college prep” coursework by the time I graduate from high school. I am meeting with my IEP team to discuss ways to continue to improve my basic academic skills after high school.
- I am planning to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) during my Sophomore or Junior year. Another test to consider during Sophomore year is the PLAN test, an ACT preparation test. Check with your high school guidance office for their recommendations.
- **If you need accommodations, request these as early as possible.*
- I have printed a copy of my “Plan of Study” for my career interest in Lesson 3. I have reviewed the suggested high school coursework with my IEP team.

Explore Your Career Interest

- I am exploring possible career interests and jobs I would like to do. I have taken a career interest or ability survey.
- I am researching rehabilitation services and how they might help me develop my employment plan.

Get Involved!

- I am involved in school activities. _____
- I am involved in community activities. _____
- I am volunteering. _____

Start Saving Money

- I have a (summer) job, so I can start saving money for college expenses.
- I am learning about financial aid options (scholarships, loans, grants) with my family.
- I am researching the cost of community colleges, private career schools, and 4-year colleges and universities.

Build Your Self-Advocacy Skills

- I understand my vision loss and any other disabilities I may have. I have learned how to explain them to other people.
- I know the accommodations I am receiving and why I need them. (For example: Braille, notetakers, large print, audio description, preferred seating, test accommodations, etc.)
- I attend, ask questions, and participate in all of my individualized education plan (IEP) meetings.

Junior Year:

Get Information

- Identify possible career goals. Begin searching for possible postsecondary schools that can help you meet these goals. Get information from a variety of sources.
- Create a checklist of the steps each school requires for admission. Ask for help from your parents or a career counselor to organize your lists. Keep all of your school information in one place!

Visit Programs

- I have set up visits to the campuses of the schools on my list. While I am setting up my visit, I have asked for the accommodations that I will need for my tour.
- I have scheduled meetings with the admissions, financial aid, and disability service offices.

Junior and Senior Years:

Get Applications

- The summer before or early in the fall of your high school senior year, contact schools that interest you. Request an application. Most will be online!
- Find people to write your letters of recommendation. Begin writing your application essays early. Ask teachers and guidance counselors for help proofreading them.
- Before sending in college applications, make sure you have followed all the requirements carefully. Ask someone else to review them.
- Most schools have application deadlines. Be sure to pay attention! Check your response mail and email from schools immediately. A letter might contain directions for admittance or steps you need to follow to receive housing or financial aid. School letters usually include important details.

Take Tests

- *For Community and Technical Colleges:* Find out the placement test that is required, when you need to take the test, and how you can study for it.
- *For 4-year Colleges and Universities:* The two standardized entrance exams are the ACT and SAT. Some schools accept both; others accept only one. Know which test is required for admission to the colleges where you are applying. Register at least six months before the test.

Senior Year:

Apply for Financial Aid

- I have filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. (*As soon as possible after January 1st in your senior year. Late applications can mean less money in aid!*)
- I have discussed types of financial aid with my family: grants, scholarships, loans, and work study options to help pay for my education.
- I know the types of financial aid I **qualify** for and which I need to **apply** for.

Make Your Decision!

- Pick the program that is a good “fit” for you. Then let the college know that you are coming!
- As soon as you are accepted, contact the disability services offices. Find out how to request accommodations for the fall semester and housing.
- Ask your IEP and transition teams to help you with any concerns about college. Make a list of the accommodations and technology you will need in college. Be sure you have updated documentation of your vision loss and other disabilities.