

Tips for College Bound High School Seniors

One of the best predictors of academic success among students, particularly those labeled “high risk” is having a special adult in their lives to encourage them. These tips will help your seniors get on track and college bound.

1. Check that students are taking the right classes.

- 4 years of English
- 3-4 years of math
- 2 years of a foreign language
- 2-3 years of science
- 1 year of performing/visual arts
- 2-3 college prep electives

If not, students can still make up credits in the spring semester or during the summer to remain college eligible.

2. Get students registered for the required standardized tests, the SAT and/or the ACT. Most four year schools require one or the other, so don't let one test be a barrier to college dreams. FEE WAIVERS are available! Students should speak with their guidance counselors or see www.collegeboard.com for waiver information.

3. Help students make a short list of colleges and apply. Students should research the schools that might be a good match for them and apply to at least five schools. Remind them that they have a better chance of getting into college and receiving a scholarship if they apply to private colleges and/or schools out of state. Although state schools appear to be cheaper, private colleges have more flexibility to award larger scholarships, often making them less expensive. Foster youth should also be aware that resources like the Chafee Grant provide up to \$5,000 in additional assistance to make the cost of private school even more affordable.

4. Help youth consider disclosing their foster care status on their college/financial aid/scholarship applications.

Colleges need to build their classes with unique people and this is a very unique situation. Disclosure may not only help their chances of getting into college, but it may help them get bigger scholarship and financial aid packages. Encourage them to share their story in one of the short answer or longer essays.

5. Ensure students meet important deadlines. This step is critical for keeping students on track. Note the important deadlines below.

- **SAT/ACT dates** – Visit www.collegeboard.com and www.act.org for dates and registration information. Most colleges will only consider tests taken by January 2007.
- **CSU and UC deadlines** – November 30, 2007 – See www.csumentor.com or www.ucop.edu/pathways/
- **EOP & Guardian Scholars deadline** – November 30, 2007 – Check out school websites for EOP information and www.orangewoodfoundation.org/programs_scholars.asp for Guardian Scholars application.
- **UFC College Sponsorship Program** – January 17, 2007 – Visit www.unitedfriends.org or call Monica at (213) 580-1845 for more information.
- **Cal Grant & FAFSA deadline** – March 2, 2007 – Visit www.fafsa.ed.gov for more information.
- **Candidate Reply Day for Accepting College Admissions** – Students need to choose by May 1, 2007.

6. Share information on resources specifically for foster youth. See above for more information.

- UFC's College Sponsorship Program
- Chafee Grant
- Renaissance Scholars
- Guardian Scholars
- Orphan Foundation of America
- Scholarships on www.fastweb.com

7. Guide students through financial aid documents. Note the important steps below.

- a. In January, students should fill out the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov **by March 2nd**!
- b. Seniors should confirm that their high school counselors have submitted their Cal Grant GPA Verification Form **by March 2nd**.
- c. Students should answer yes to the questions asking if they are/were a “ward of the state” (there is a specific question that asks about this) and skip the questions about their parents' income. This will increase their chances of getting a good financial aid package to pay for college.

8. Help students understand ILP resources. Students should submit their high school expense forms to their ILP Coordinators and, if their GPAs are a 2.8 or above, they should apply in early March to be part of Celebration 2007.

9. Encourage seniors to maintain their grades. Spring grades still matter so remind them to keep senioritis at bay!

10. Help students seal the deal. Assist students as they evaluate which school is right for them. Remind them to submit their acceptance forms and housing deposits to their schools on time.