

COUNTDOWN TO COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

A Step-by-Step Guide to Applying to College

Step 1: Plan

Create/Update Your CFNC Profile.

Information on your "My Profile" tab will automatically populate the corresponding fields on your applications. Go to [CFNC.org](https://cfnc.org) to create or update your profile.

Explore Colleges and Universities and Save Your Favorite Schools.

Go to the College Search section, filter schools based on your goals, and search criteria that matters to you. Keep your favorite schools in one place for easy access when researching and applying.

Update Your Test Scores.

Think about if you would like to retake the ACT or SAT during this time. Consider that test scores will be required if you are applying to a UNC System school with less than a 2.8 weighted GPA.

Identify Application Fees.

Check with your school counselor or college advisor to see if you qualify for a fee waiver (in addition to fees waived during College Application Week). For instance, students who take the ACT or SAT outside of school receive application fee waivers.

Keep Track of Application Deadlines.

Make sure you have a list of deadlines so you don't miss any important dates – including College Application Week, Oct. 21-27, 2024.

Step 2: Apply

Confirm Your NC Residency Through RDS.

Residency Determination Service (RDS) establishes your eligibility for state grants and in-state tuition. Parent information is needed, so complete the paperwork together. You can use your CFNC.org login to complete your North Carolina Residency application by visiting ncresidency.org.

TIP: Complete the RDS prior to completing college applications.

Prepare Essays and Personal Statements.

Have your essays and personal statements ready to be easily uploaded or copied to check for word counts or other requirements.

Gather Recommendation Letters.

Colleges may ask for up to three letters of recommendation during the application process. Try to give your references at least a month to complete and submit your letters.

Submit Your College Applications.

Start your applications on CFNC.org to take advantage of waived fees at participating North Carolina colleges and universities during College Application Week, Oct. 21-27, 2024!

Step 3: Pay

Explore and Apply for Scholarships.

Many scholarships have early deadlines, so note and plan toward these accordingly. Research scholarships offered at colleges and universities where you want to apply and note whether any require you to apply early.

Create Your Studentaid.gov Account.

From your Studentaid.gov account, you can create your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID, which allows you to see what financial aid you qualify and can apply for.

Submit Your FAFSA.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a tool that helps you learn your options for paying for college, including scholarships, grants and loans. Visit www.studentaid.gov/FAFSA to fill out the form.

Send Your Transcript.

Send your transcript as part of your college applications. North Carolina students can use CFNC.org to send these directly to North Carolina colleges and universities for free!