

# How to Find the Right College for You

**NEXT  
STEPS**  
I D A H O

Take some time to think through what's most important to you and use college websites to research the schools you're interested in.

## What do you plan to study?

Evaluate the programs offered and which classes and credits are required to get a degree. Browse course catalogs and learn more about the majors you might consider.

## Where will you live?

Where you sleep, study, and hang out is important. Learn more about on-campus and off-campus housing options. If it's likely that you'll live off campus, research the options, availability, and cost of housing.

## How will you get around?

Think about how you'll get around campus and beyond. If your school of choice is far from home, also consider how often you might want to travel to see friends and family.

## How much will it really cost?

Estimated total costs can vary greatly. Many colleges and institutions offer scholarship opportunities or financial aid based on your family's income, your GPA, and your test scores. Don't forget to factor in the cost of books, housing, transportation, and activities.

## How to Plan a Campus Visit

- ➔ Schedule a visit during a preview weekend. Schools plan activities for prospective students, and you may be able to attend a class and stay on campus with current students.
- ➔ Arrange a campus tour through the admissions office.
- ➔ Make a list of things you want in an ideal college and look for these things during your visit.
- ➔ Plan to spend time off campus, experiencing the community, shops, and restaurants.



## How will you have fun?

Sure, the most important thing to consider is your education. But when you're not studying, you'll have the chance to make new friends and take advantage of all sorts of activities on and off campus. Think about what's important to you in a school culture. Talk to current students, alumni, family, friends, and teachers and plan a campus visit.

# Paying for College: You Can Do It

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Students may qualify for up to \$6,195 in federal grants and \$3,500 in state scholarships for college each year, which do not have to be paid back. Remember, the actual price you'll pay for college will most likely be lower than the price you see on a school's website.

**THINK 30 CREDITS PER  
YEAR TO SAVE MONEY,  
REDUCE DEBT AND  
GRADUATE EARLIER.**

**30** FIRST-YEAR CREDITS +

**30** SECOND-YEAR CREDITS +

**30** THIRD-YEAR CREDITS +

**30** FOURTH-YEAR CREDITS



You can earn college credits now. Idaho's Fast Forward program provides every student attending an Idaho public school an allocation of \$4,125 to use toward Advanced Opportunities, like Dual Credit and Advanced Placement classes. These courses are taken in high school and count for both high school and college credit. It's not too late to take a Dual Credit course. Talk to your counselor to get started!

## FINANCIAL AID CHECKLIST

### FALL

- Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), starting as early as October 1. A completed FAFSA is required to access federal, state, and college-sponsored aid.
- Submit financial aid applications to your college(s) of choice. Each school will have their own scholarship application and priority deadlines, some as early as December 1.
- Consider applying for scholarships available from private foundations, business associations, and fraternal organizations. (More info is available at [NextSteps.Idaho.gov](http://NextSteps.Idaho.gov).)

### SPRING

- Find out if you qualify for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship or other state scholarships. Submit your application before March 1.
- Expect to receive financial aid offers in April. Review and compare the financial aid packages offered by all schools where you applied.

### SUMMER

- If your grants and scholarships won't cover your expected costs, you can close the gap with low-interest federal loans, private loans from your bank, or loans from an organization or company that specializes in education lending.



[NextSteps.Idaho.gov](http://NextSteps.Idaho.gov)

**IDAHO** State Board of Education

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