



## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Fall 2016

MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATIONAL FINANCING AUTHORITY

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### About MEFA

- Not-for-profit state authority created in 1982
- Helping families plan, save, and pay for college
- Keeping you on track with college planning:
  - [mefa.org](http://mefa.org): Tools & resources
  - Blog**: On [mefa.org](http://mefa.org)
  - Facebook, Twitter, & LinkedIn**
  - Emails**: Sign up tonight!
  - Webinars**: Register online at [mefa.org/events](http://mefa.org/events)
  - [YourPlanForTheFuture.org](http://YourPlanForTheFuture.org)



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### MEFA Emails for Parents

#### Providing information, deadlines, and helpful hints

##### Sample Topics:

- Early Action/Early Decision
- College Fairs
- College Application Tips
- Financial Aid Deadlines



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**FREE college and career planning tool**

Resources include:

- Skills and interests assessments
- Career exploration
- College search
- Financial aid and scholarship information
- Personalized portfolio

Available in English and Spanish



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**Seminar Topics**

- Current trends
- Your college list
- Campus visits
- The application process
- Financial aid
- Free resources



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**Trends in College Admissions**

- Earlier Process
- Students applying to a greater number of schools
- Demonstrated interest a factor
- Admission to public institutions now more competitive
- Has become more a parent-driven process (though students should be driving!)
- Rise of social media
- Globalization: more international students coming to U.S.

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### Informal & Formal Campus Visits

Look beyond the brochures and websites

#### **Informal visits**

- Size
- Setting
- Culture



#### **Formal visits**

- Academics
- Activities
- Housing
- Q&A

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### College Representative Visits & College Fairs

- Take advantage of college rep visits at high school
- College fair tips:
  - Check out the college list beforehand
  - Have a plan of attack before you arrive
  - Head to the info booth first
  - Take advantage of information sessions
  - Check [NACACnet.org](http://NACACnet.org) and [NEACAC.org](http://NEACAC.org) for fall fairs



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### College Application Options

- Regular Decision
- Early Action: Restricted and Unrestricted
- Early Decision
- Rolling Admission
- Open Admission

Deadlines are important! Make sure to stay on track.

Manage deadlines with MEFA's  
College Admissions Toolkit

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College Application Types & Components

Application requirements may vary at each college

College Application Types:

- Common App
- Universal College App
- Coalition App
- College website online app
- Paper

Your application may include:

- Application form
- High school transcript
- Standardized test scores
- Recommendations
- Activity list or resume
- Personal essay
- Interview
- Audition
- Portfolio

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Academic Readiness

- Rigor
- Good grades vs. challenging classes
- Improvement over time
- Exceeding minimum requirements
- Relevance to college plans
- Sliding scale for MA public colleges & universities
- New math/science standards for public MA schools



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Standardized Tests

- **PSAT** for practice and assessment
- **SAT** and **ACT** measure college readiness
  - Check with your school counselor for registration dates
  - The **new** SAT began in March 2016:
    - Max score of 1600
    - More relevant vocabulary
    - Separate, optional essay
    - Real-world context
    - No guessing penalties
    - Free test prep online
- **SAT Subject Tests & AP Tests** show subject knowledge
- **Accuplacer & Compass** determine placement in college courses
- There are over 850 test-optional schools in the U.S. ([FairTest.org](http://FairTest.org))

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Activity List/Resume

- Extracurricular talents and interests
- Showcase what you do and the depth of the activity
- Include family responsibilities and employment
- Highlight the impact on your community



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Essays

**Your application essay says a lot about you**

- Share something meaningful and personal
- Start writing early
- Try different topics and approaches
- Include life-shaping/challenging experiences
- Leave time for careful proof-reading



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Letters of Recommendation

**Adults who know you well can offer a helpful perspective on your abilities and strengths**

- What are your school guidelines?
- Whom to ask?
- When to ask?
- How to ask?



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Interviews

**A face-to-face conversation lets colleges see the person behind the numbers**

- Two types: 1. Informational and 2. Evaluative
- Be prepared to answer open-ended questions
- Know your reasons for applying to the college
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Cover the basics
- Relax and be yourself

Prep for interviews with MEFA's College Admissions Toolkit

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A Word About the Waitlist

- Increasing popularity
- Some schools have a very long list
- Must submit enrollment deposit at an accepted school
  - This is usually non-refundable
- Accepted off the waitlist = minimal financial aid
- Steps to take when on the waitlist:
  - Write a short note to the admissions counselor
  - Update the school with recent grades and awards

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Understanding College Affordability

**Research costs and financial aid now**

- What is the Cost of Attendance and Net Price?
  - Use Net Price Calculators on college websites
- What applications are required and when are they due?
- Need-based vs. Merit-based aid and different deadlines
- Start looking for private scholarships now



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**Applying for Financial Aid**

- **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):**
  - Required by every college and university
  - 2017-18 FAFSA: Available Oct 1, 2016
  - Asks for 2015 income
- **CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE:**
  - Required by 400+ colleges and scholarship agencies
  - 2017-18 PROFILE: Available Oct 1, 2016
  - Asks for 2015 income
- **College-specific financial aid applications**
  - Posted on each college's financial aid website

**Financial aid deadlines are so important!**

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**Staying on Track Through Senior Year**

<p><b>Spring/Summer Junior Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research colleges</li> <li>• Visit campuses &amp; college fairs</li> <li>• Identify teachers for letters of recommendation</li> <li>• Take the SAT/ACT</li> <li>• Start writing the college essay</li> </ul> <p><b>Fall Senior Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retake the SAT/ACT</li> <li>• Secure letters of recommendation</li> <li>• Write the college essay(s)</li> <li>• Attend MEFA's College Financing Seminar</li> <li>• Complete all admissions applications</li> <li>• Submit financial aid apps (maybe)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Winter Senior Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit admissions applications</li> <li>• Submit financial aid applications</li> <li>• Apply for private scholarships</li> <li>• Send in mid-year grade reports</li> </ul> <p><b>Spring Senior Year</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive admission and financial aid offers</li> <li>• Attend MEFA's Paying the College Bill Seminar</li> <li>• Choose your college by May 1</li> </ul>
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**Free College Planning Resources**

- **Net Price Calculators:** Located on school websites
  - Provide personal net price at each college
- **College Navigator:** [CollegeNavigator.gov](http://CollegeNavigator.gov)
  - College search with admissions, academic, & cost info
- **College Scorecard:** [CollegeScorecard.ed.gov](http://CollegeScorecard.ed.gov)
  - Avg net price, student debt, 6-year grad rate, & alumni salary
- **YourPlanForTheFuture.org (YPPF)**
- **College Board:** [CollegeBoard.org](http://CollegeBoard.org)
- **Common App:** [CommonApp.org](http://CommonApp.org)
- **Universal College App:** [UniversalCollegeApp.com](http://UniversalCollegeApp.com)
- **Coalition App:** [CoalitionForCollegeAccess.org](http://CoalitionForCollegeAccess.org)
- **MEFA:** [mefa.org](http://mefa.org)
- **Up Next:** Text "COLLEGE" to 44044 for college planning tips

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## MEFA Webinars

All webinars begin at 12pm. Register online at [mefa.org/events](http://mefa.org/events).

- **College Financing:** Thursday, 9/22/16  
Tuesday, 12/6/16
- **Understanding the FAFSA:** Tuesday, 9/27/16  
Thursday, 1/5/17
- **CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE:** Friday, 9/30/16  
Monday, 1/9/17
- **Paying the College Bill:** Friday, 3/3/17  
Tuesday, 4/11/17
- **Comparing College Loan Options:** Wednesday, 6/7/17  
Tuesday, 7/11/17

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## What You Can Do Now

- Complete the seminar evaluation & sign up for MEFA emails
- Research colleges and plan a campus visit
- Download the College Admissions Toolkit on [mefa.org](http://mefa.org)
- Set up a profile at [YourPlanForTheFuture.org](http://YourPlanForTheFuture.org)



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## Thank You

Questions or Comments?

Presenter name: \_\_\_\_\_

MEFA  
[mefa.org](http://mefa.org)  
[info@mefa.org](mailto:info@mefa.org)  
(800) 449-MEFA (6332)



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