



# College Admissions Overview

A MEFA Institute Webinar

# How to Participate in This Webinar

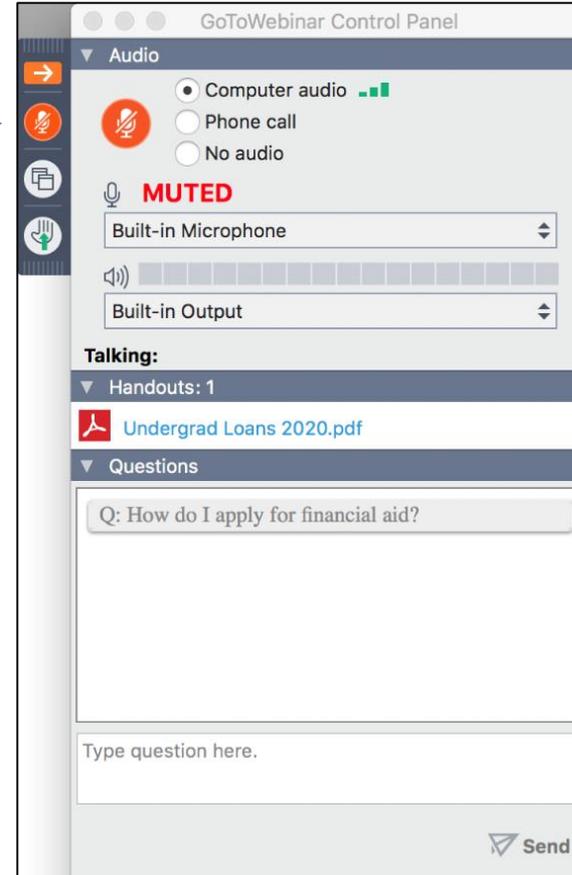
The microphone icon lets you know if you can be heard.  
The presenter may mute everyone during the webinar.

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If the presenter provides handouts for the webinar, you  
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Have a question during the webinar? Type it in the  
*Questions* section



## About MEFA



Not-for-profit state authority created in 1982  
helping families plan, save, and pay for college

# Seminar Topics

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



# Trends in College Admissions

- Earlier Process
- Students applying to a greater number of schools
- Demonstrated interest a factor
- Has become more a parent-driven process (though students should be driving!)
- Rise of social media
- Cost has become a bigger factor



# Staying Organized

Students should use a system to keep track of applications and deadlines, such as MEFA's College Application Manager:

College Application Manager					
As you explore schools and build your college list, keep track of your details here. Remember that deadlines are critical when applying to college and requesting financial aid, so set yourself reminders to ensure you submit all applications on time. If you're applying to more than ten schools, make a copy of this chart.					
School Name	Admissions Deadline*	Send SAT, ACT, or Neither	Required Financial Aid	Financial Aid Deadline*	Notes
1. Example University	November 1st	SAT	FAFSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	February 1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High school visit: Oct 1st</li> <li>Strong nursing program</li> <li>4-hour drive away</li> </ul>
2.			FAFSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
3.			FAFSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
4.			FAFSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		

[mefa.org/college-application-manager](https://mefa.org/college-application-manager)

# Researching Colleges

## Research thoroughly

**College Navigator:** [CollegeNavigator.gov](https://collegenavigator.gov)

College search with admissions, academic, & cost info

**College Scorecard:** [CollegeScorecard.ed.gov](https://collegescorecard.ed.gov)

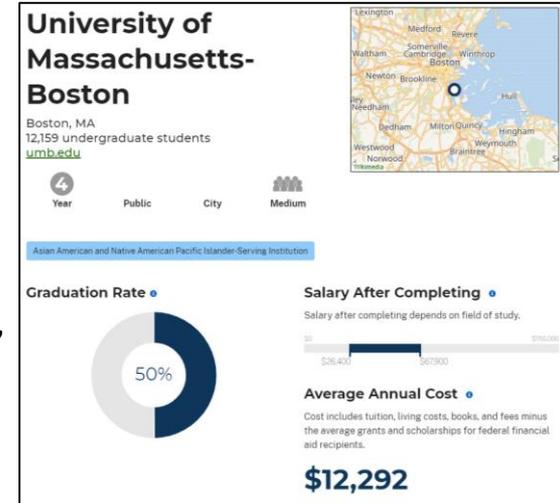
College info including average net price, student debt, grad rate, & alumni salary

**Big Future:** [bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search)

College search with info on academics, applying, & paying

**MEFA Pathway:** [mefapathway.org](https://mefapathway.org)

College search and matching tool based on preferences



# College Factors to Consider



- Institution size & location
- Academic fit
- Campus culture
- Activities
- Learning style
- Study abroad programs
- Intended major
- Career & internship services
- Affordability
- Social climate

# Virtual Campus Visits

While many campuses have suspended on-campus tours, students can take advantage of virtual tours, and plan to visit campus in person at a later date. Virtual tours differ from school to school, but a virtual tour may include:

- Live chat with current students
- Phone or email correspondence with current students
- Student panels
- Campus tours
- Info sessions
- One-on-ones with an admissions counselor
- Online Q&A events



# College Fair Tips

\*NACAC is holding virtual college fairs in Oct & Nov: [nacacfairs.org/virtual](https://nacacfairs.org/virtual)



- Sign up
- Check out the college list beforehand
- Have a plan of attack before you start
- Take advantage of information sessions
- Schedule 1-on-1 meetings with colleges if available

# Assess Prospects for Admission

Develop a final list with colleges of each type:

## Probable

Your chances for admission are strong (Make sure at least one is affordable)

## Target

Your chances for admission are 50/50

## Reach

Your chances for admission are less than 50%

# College Application Timeline



- **Regular Decision:** Usually an early winter deadline
- **Early Action:** Earlier deadlines, non-binding agreement
- **Early Decision:** Earlier deadlines, binding agreement
- **Rolling Admission:** Decisions shared on a rolling basis
- **Open Admission:** Admits most students for most programs

# College Application Types & Components

Application requirements may vary at each college

## College Application Types:

- Common App  
[CommonApp.org](http://CommonApp.org)
- Universal College App  
[UniversalCollegeApp.com](http://UniversalCollegeApp.com)
- Coalition App  
[CoalitionForCollegeAccess.org](http://CoalitionForCollegeAccess.org)
- College website application
- Paper app

## Your application may include:

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

# 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

# Standardized Tests

\*Some colleges are not requiring standardized tests for those applying for Fall 2021 admission

<b>PSAT</b>	Offers practice and assessment
<b>SAT</b>	Measures college readiness Offers free test prep online
<b>ACT</b>	Measures college readiness Offers free test prep online
<b>SAT Subject Test</b>	Shows subject knowledge
<b>AP Exam</b>	Shows subject knowledge

- Register at:
- [act.org](https://act.org) (for the ACT)
  - [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org) (for the PSAT & SAT)
  - [apstudents.collegeboard.org](https://apstudents.collegeboard.org) (for AP exams)

[Fairtest.org](https://fairtest.org) provides a list of over 1,000 test-optional schools

# Activity List & Resume

- Extracurricular activities
- Showcase role and the depth of the activity
- Include family responsibilities and employment
- Highlight the impact on community



# Essays



- Share something meaningful and personal
- Start writing early
- Try different topics and approaches
- Plagiarism is taken very seriously
- Leave time for careful proof-reading

# Common App Essay Prompts for Fall 2021 Admission

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

# Letters of Recommendation



Adults can offer a helpful perspective on a student's strengths

- What are the high school guidelines?
- Whom to ask?
- When to ask?
- Say thank you!

# Interviews

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

- Only offered at a small number of schools
- Two types: Informational and Evaluative
- Open-ended questions
- Students should:
  - Discuss reasons for applying to that college
  - Ask thoughtful questions
  - Cover the basics
  - Relax and be themselves



# The Admissions Decision

<b>Admitted</b>	Student is accepted Student may also be accepted to begin at a later semester
<b>Deferred</b>	Student is not accepted Early Action/Decision but will be considered in the regular applicant pool
<b>Denied</b>	Student is not accepted
<b>Waitlisted</b>	Student is not yet accepted and may not get accepted off the waitlist

- Most colleges send decisions over email or post to their online portal
- Deposit by deadline (usually May 1<sup>st</sup>) to secure your spot at a school

# Understanding College Affordability



- What is the Cost of Attendance and Net Price?
- What financial aid applications are required and when?
- Need-based aid vs. merit-based aid: potentially different deadlines
- Start looking for private scholarships now

# Net Price Calculators

- Online tool found on each college's website
- Asks questions about family finances & student academics
- Provides personal, estimated net college price
- Displays federal & institutional financial aid
- Merit-based aid may also be calculated



# Applying for Financial Aid

## Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®):

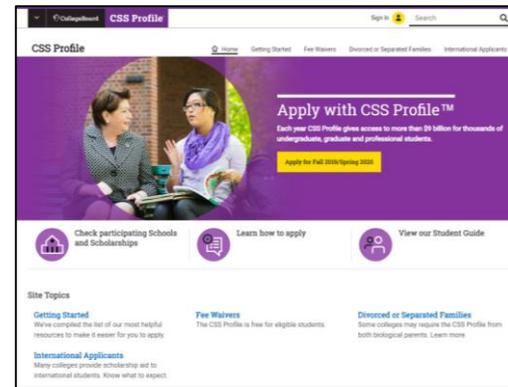
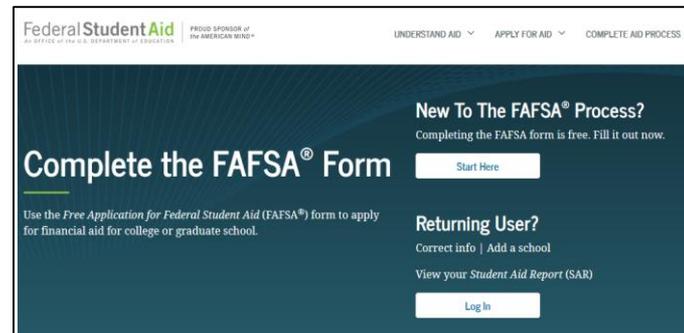
- Required by every college and university
- 2021-22 FAFSA available Oct 1, 2020
- Will ask about 2019 income

## CSS Profile™:

- Required by 250+ colleges and scholarship agencies
- 2021-22 Profile available Oct 1, 2020
- Will ask about 2019 income

## College-specific financial aid applications

- Posted on each college's financial aid website



# Paying for College in MA: You Have Options

## MassTransfer

- Makes transfer from community college to a 4-year public MA college more affordable
- Benefits include guaranteed credit transfer, tuition credit, & freeze on tuition
- [mass.edu/masstransfer](https://mass.edu/masstransfer)



## Tuition Break

- Reduction on out-of-state tuition costs at New England schools for certain programs
- [Nebhe.org/programs-overview/rsp-tuitionbreak/overview](https://Nebhe.org/programs-overview/rsp-tuitionbreak/overview)



# Staying on Track Through Senior Year

## Spring/Summer Junior Year

- Research colleges
- Visit campuses & college fairs
- Ask teachers for letters of recommendation
- Take the SAT/ACT
- Start writing the college essay

## Fall Senior Year

- Retake the SAT/ACT
- Secure letters of recommendation
- Finalize the college essay(s)
- Attend MEFA's *College Financing* seminar
- Complete all admissions applications
- Submit financial aid applications

## Winter Senior Year

- Submit admissions applications
- Submit financial aid applications
- Apply for private scholarships
- Send in mid-year grade reports

## Spring Senior Year

- Receive admissions and financial aid offers
- Attend MEFA's *After the College Acceptance* seminar
- Attend college open house programs
- Choose your college by May 1<sup>st</sup>

View an extended timeline at: [mefa.org/college-admissions-and-financial-aid-timeline](https://mefa.org/college-admissions-and-financial-aid-timeline)

# MEFA Pathway *Your Plan for the Future*

FREE college and career planning tool

Resources include:

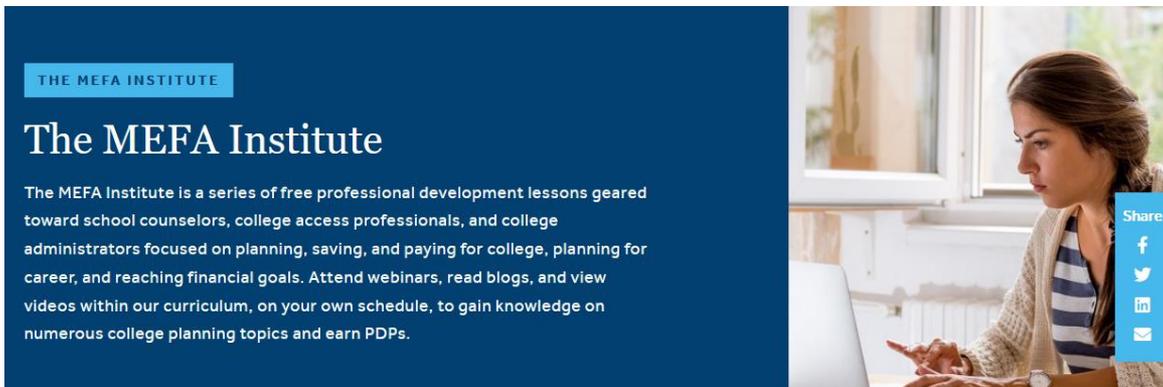
- Skills and interests assessments
- Career exploration
- College search
- Financial aid and scholarship information
- Personalized digital portfolio
- Visit [mefapathway.org](https://mefapathway.org) to get started



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# Things To Do

- Register for upcoming MEFA Institute webinars and complete lessons to earn PDPs: [mefa.org/mefa-institute](https://mefa.org/mefa-institute)
- Share MEFA resources with families
- Visit [mefa.org/counselors](https://mefa.org/counselors)



THE MEFA INSTITUTE

## The MEFA Institute

The MEFA Institute is a series of free professional development lessons geared toward school counselors, college access professionals, and college administrators focused on planning, saving, and paying for college, planning for career, and reaching financial goals. Attend webinars, read blogs, and view videos within our curriculum, on your own schedule, to gain knowledge on numerous college planning topics and earn PDPs.

Share

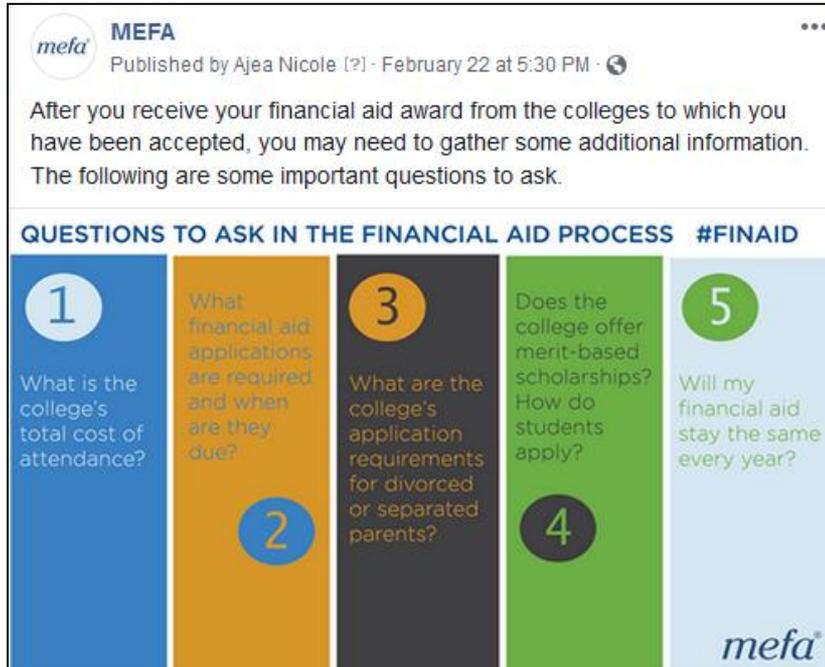
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# Connect with MEFA on Social Media



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[linkedin.com/company/mefa](https://linkedin.com/company/mefa)



[youtube.com/MEFAcounselor](https://youtube.com/MEFAcounselor)

Thank You

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# Questions?

(800) 449-MEFA (6332)

[collegeplanning@mefa.org](mailto:collegeplanning@mefa.org)

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