

KIDS2CAREERS:  
**5-STEP** PREP



**COLLEGE &  
CAREER TRAINING  
OVERVIEW**

1 **Prepare**

- TAKE THE TESTS:**  
Register and take [SAT](#), [ACT](#), [WorkKeys](#), and [AP Tests](#) — whichever are right for you.
- WRITE YOUR STORY:**  
Create a resume in [akcis.org](#), and a list of [accomplishments and values](#) - these will help with essays and help your recommenders know more about you.
- LIST TOP OPTIONS:**  
Decide which college/career training choices are best for you AND [make a list of your favorite choices](#). Use ACPE's templates to compare options and track deadlines for [Colleges](#) OR [Career Training](#) programs.
- UNDERSTAND COSTS:**  
Use [Net Cost Calculators](#) (for colleges) or contact program admissions to estimate costs and identify your best options.
- APPLY FOR FUNDING:**  
Apply for grants and scholarships (local, institutional, specialty).

2 **Apply**

- CONSIDER ALL OPTIONS:**  
Look up programs that meet your educational and personal needs. There are many programs — big and small; You might be surprised at where you can find the best aid package and education.
- FINALIZE YOUR LIST:**  
Select one to four (or more) schools. Consider [1 safety, 1 reach, and 2 matches/targets](#).
- START YOUR ESSAYS:**  
Use your resume, [values, and accomplishments](#) to write your personal statement and essays. Research professors and programs and think about minors and specializations when writing the "[Why This School](#)" essays.
- RETAKE TESTS IF NECESSARY:**  
[Send score reports](#) to colleges/career training programs when required, or where you opt to do so.
- REQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS & TRANSCRIPTS:**  
[Tell recommenders deadlines](#) and share with them your resume, list of accomplishments, values and anything else you want them to know. Letters should be generic for use at any and all institutions; Transcripts should be ordered one month before due.
- FINALIZE & COMPLETE APPLICATIONS:**  
[Track requirements and deadlines](#); Ask your school counselor if you qualify for an application [fee waiver](#).



**Continued:**  
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**3 Find Funding**

- COMPLETE THE FAFSA:**  
 Complete [student and parent sections](#) as early as December 1 to receive the most financial aid
- APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS:**  
 Track deadlines and seek out scholarships throughout the year.
- UNDERSTAND LOAN OPTIONS:**  
 Review [ACPE's financial literacy information](#) to learn more about responsible options for funding your education. Accept Federal loans first, then [ACPE loans](#) to cover unmet financial need.

**4 Choose**

- EXPLORE PROGRAMS:**  
 Review websites, visit in person, and talk with campus or program staff.
- WEIGH YOUR OPTIONS:**  
 Use [ACPE's planning templates to track](#) all the factors that are important to you and decide which colleges/career training programs you are qualified for that include your interests (academics, activities, lifestyle, finances).
- MAKE IT AFFORDABLE:**  
 Review [financial aid award letters](#), use [Net Cost Calculators](#) and [Income-Based Repayment Calculators](#) to determine which options are financially best.

**5 Finalize**

- RESERVE YOUR SPACE:**  
 Pay the deposit on time to reserve your space and follow all instructions. Many schools will ask you to create and monitor your student portal and email from now until graduation.
- REGISTER FOR ORIENTATION:**  
 Watch your email, review the college or career training program's website, and share orientation details with your family. Orientation is a great time for you and your family to learn what to expect as you begin your college or career training experience.
- MAKE YOUR PAYMENTS:**  
 Monitor your student portal and email, review the college or career training program's website, and ensure your family understands all upcoming due dates and payment options. Ensure you have a plan in place one month before fees are due.  
  
 Some colleges/career training programs DO NOT send invoices. Monitor the portal and [calendar deadlines](#). You are responsible for making payments and your family won't have access without your written permission.
- PREPARE TO MOVE IN:**  
 Review communications from your program for a list of what to bring. Talk with your roommates to decide who is bringing items that will be shared. Make travel arrangements.