

## Preparing for college

### Questions to consider as you prepare for higher education opportunities:

In which colleges and/or universities are you most interested?

Does the college or university have the program that you want to study?

What are the general scholarship application deadlines?

\*Get very familiar with the specific websites.

When do you plan to apply?

\*In many cases, you should start the application process at least a few weeks in advance of the deadline to make sure everything arrives on time!

\*For those seniors not planning to attend college during the next Fall, it is recommended that you apply anyway and then fill out an enrollment deferral form.

Have you requested that a copy of your PHS transcript be sent to the colleges or universities for which you plan to apply?

\*Don't wait until the last day to have it sent!

Have you made campus visits and personally experienced the look and feel of the colleges and universities before you make your final selection on which one to attend?

Where do you plan to live while you attend college?

\*Housing scholarships exist for some housing options!

What other grants/scholarships/financial aid options are available to you through the colleges or universities of your choice?

Have you checked with specific departments or specific majors to see what additional scholarships or financial aid may be available to you?

If you plan to attend college during the Fall after graduation, have you applied for Federal Financial Aid beginning as early as Jan 1<sup>st</sup> of the year that you plan to attend?

\*See [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov)

If you are offered a Student Loan, have you checked on specific loan forgiveness options for that type of loan?

Do you have any scholarship options via your parents? (employers, insurance providers, or other affiliations)

Are you corresponding with the Financial Aid Office and the Admission Office where you plan to attend?

Have you checked into the Work Study program at the Financial Aid Office?

Have you researched all of the possible options for funding your higher education?

### **Some proven websites to help you in your scholarship/financial aid search:**

**www.idahocis.org** -- The Idaho Career Information System (CIS) maintained by the State of Idaho and access provided by the Preston School District to help you make smart career, education, and financial decisions including financial aid resources. To log in to the CIS, the user name is "**preston**" and the password is "**indians04**".

Financial links include: Paying for School, Scholarship, and Financial Aid Sort

**www.fafsa.gov** -- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) beginning Jan 1, 2013 for Fall Semester 2013.

**www.boardofed.idaho.gov** -- Search for scholarships and financial aid offered via the Idaho State Board of Education Website.

**www.collegescholarships.org** -- Find scholarships, grants, loans, and financial aid via non-profit website

**www.collegeboard.org/scholarship** -- Search for scholarships and financial aid on the non-profit college board website.

**www.fastweb.com** -- Find scholarships and financial aid matched to your qualifications and interests.

**www.finaid.org** -- A smart guide to financial aid

**www.hsf.net** -- Scholarship and financial aid website for students of Hispanic background

**Scholarship applications for PHS sponsored scholarships will be available on March 1st!**

**Be careful to avoid scholarship scams!**

**The Federal Trade Commission cautions students to look for these tell-tale lines used in scholarship scams:**

*"The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back."*

*"You can't get this information anywhere else."*

*"I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship."*

*"We'll do all the work."*

*"The scholarship will cost some money."*

*"You've been selected by a 'national foundation' to receive a scholarship" or "You're a finalist" in a contest you never entered.*

**Consider these 8 scholarship tips:**

- 1. Be organized.** Organize scholarships by deadlines, gather all pertinent documents, and make copies of everything you submit. It is a good idea to send your applications by certified mail to ensure receipt.
- 2. Be on time.** Send in your application on time or early if possible.
- 3. Be honest.** Don't exaggerate your grades, memberships, skills, or qualifications. It is better to focus on the scholarships for which you have a reasonable chance of selection.
- 4. Be persistent in searching and applying.** Obtaining scholarships and financial aid requires a concerted effort of finding and completing applications. Don't just settle for one scholarship!
- 5. Make sure you meet the minimum qualifications.** Don't waste your time applying for a scholarship or financial aid if you don't meet the minimum qualifications.
- 6. Follow instructions carefully.** Some scholarships require you to write an essay; others may want letters of recommendation. Send in all items requested and proofread everything. Missing materials could cost you a scholarship.
- 7. Type your application if possible.** It will look much more professional.
- 8. Ask for letters of recommendation early.** Give your references at least two weeks to write a letter of recommendation for you. It's common courtesy, and typically you will get a better recommendation.