



# COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Fall 2017

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): Information, 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)
  - [mefapathway.org](http://mefapathway.org)



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## 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



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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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Stay Organized!

- Use a system to keep everything in one place, such as MEFA's College Admissions Toolkit (available on [mefa.org](http://mefa.org))



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### Developing The College List

- Think about “fit” and match the student’s needs
- Research thoroughly
- Balancing the college list
  - Academic
  - Financial
  - Size/Setting



Try the College Match Me tool at [mefapathway.org](http://mefapathway.org)

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### Assess Prospects for Admission

Develop a final list with colleges of each type:

- **Probable:** Chances for admission are strong (Make sure at least one is affordable)
- **Target:** Chances for admission are 50/50
- **Reach:** Chances for admission are less than 50%

Important: Make sure the student would be excited to attend every school on the list

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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 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
  - Both the SAT and ACT offer free test prep online
- SAT Subject Tests & AP Tests** show subject knowledge
- There are over 900 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?
- 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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### Net Price Calculators

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



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**Paying for College in MA: You Have Options**

- **Tuition Break**
  - Reduction on out-of-state tuition costs at New England schools
  - For programs not offered in your home state
- **MassTransfer: Gen Ed Foundation**
  - Guaranteed credit transfer from community college to 4-yr public MA school
- **MassTransfer: A2B Degree**
  - Guaranteed credit transfer from community college to 4-yr public MA school
  - No application fee or essay
  - Guaranteed admission and tuition credit based on GPA
- **MassTransfer: A2B & Commonwealth Commitment**
  - Guaranteed credit transfer from community college to 4-yr public MA school
  - No application fee or essay
  - Guaranteed admission and tuition credit based on GPA
  - Receive 10% off and then a freeze on tuition & fees if 3.00 GPA maintained

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**Applying for Financial Aid**

- **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):**
  - Required by every college and university
  - 2018-19 FAFSA: Available Oct 1, 2017
  - Will ask for 2016 income
- **CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE:**
  - Required by 400+ colleges and scholarship agencies
  - 2018-19 PROFILE: Available Oct 1, 2017
  - Will ask for 2016 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**

**Spring/Summer Junior Year**

- Research colleges
- Visit campuses & college fairs
- Identify 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
- Write the college essay(s)
- Attend MEFA's *College Financing* seminar
- Complete all admissions applications
- Submit financial aid apps early

**Winter Senior Year**

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

**Spring Senior Year**

- Receive admission and financial aid offers
- Attend MEFA's *Understanding Your Financial Aid and Paying for College* seminar
- Choose your college by May 1

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

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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
- Set up a profile at [mefapathway.org](http://mefapathway.org)




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Thank You

Questions or Comments?

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

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