



December 2024

Welcome to the December edition of the Parent and Student Newsletter! The 2025-2026 FAFSA is now open and we are here to help you throughout your application journey! Read on for more information on our upcoming FAFSA workshops, scholarship opportunities and what you can do this month and over winter break to plans for your educational future.

Be sure to pass along this information to your parent(s)/guardian(s) and reach out to your [College Now advisor](#) for any questions or additional details. College Now is dedicated to supporting YOU as you embark on your path toward a successful career.

FAFSA UPDATES



The 2025-2026 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is now open!

The [FAFSA](#) is your avenue to access grants (money that doesn't need to be repaid!), work-study funds and loans for your college or career journey. Spread the word and review these details to learn more about the smoother application process.

Complete your FAFSA at an in-person workshop!

Join us at one of our FREE, in-person workshops for line-by-line assistance in completing your FAFSA. The workshops take place at College Now's downtown Cleveland office and at public libraries throughout the region. Special thanks to our public library partners throughout Northeast Ohio for hosting several FAFSA completion events with College Now.

[Register for a workshop here!](#)

We also offer virtual FAFSA completion appointments! Get one-on-one assistance on your own time with our College Now Advisors.

[Schedule a virtual appointment here!](#)

As always, College Now is here to guide you through the financial aid process. Find your College Now advisor [here!](#)

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Scholarships are an incredible source of financial assistance for college students. Unlike loans, scholarship funds are free money. That means you don't have to pay them back over time -- an assurance that can vastly reduce financial stress and help you focus more on your studies.

Check out the opportunity below!



College Now

Greater Cleveland

College Now Traditional Scholarship

Application deadline: March 7, 2025

Our Traditional Student Scholarship provides students with scholarship dollars and mentoring throughout their college journey. This is a last-dollar scholarship that covers the remainder of tuition after other forms of financial aid have been applied.

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must:

- Attend a [College Now-served high school](#)
- Have a cumulative weighted GPA of at least a 2.5 through their first semester of their senior year
- Have a minimum ACT composite score of 18 or a combined verbal and math SAT score of 960
- File the 2025-2026 FAFSA/ FAFSA Submission Summary
- Qualify for the Federal Pell Grant
- Show ambition by working with your College Now advisor
- Submit required documents by the deadline

[Apply here!](#)

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM
TEST PREP



Upcoming Test Dates

Have you registered for the ACT or SAT yet? Even though some colleges/universities do not require entrance exam scores, we recommend that high school students take at least two entrance exams before submitting college applications. Scoring well can increase your chances of earning scholarships!

ACT

February 8, 2025

- Registration deadline:
January 8, 2025

[Register for the ACT here](#)

SAT

March 8, 2025

- Registration deadline:
February 21, 2025

[Register for the SAT here](#)



Get paid to study for the ACT and SAT through College Now's *impact* program!

College Now's impact! program provides students with SAT, ACT or PSAT test preparation and guides students through college and career research. Each session is in-person and attendance throughout the entire session is required to participate.

This program is open to all high school students in Northeast Ohio, and any high school student can participate at any location!

The best part? Students that complete an impact! session are eligible to receive a stipend and will be able to participate in college exposure opportunities!

[Register here!](#)

COLLEGE READINESS WEBINARS

**Mastering FAFSA: Your
Key to Financial Aid**

**Scholarship Secrets: Finding
and Winning Free Money**

Tuesday, January 14
6 - 7:30 p.m.

Start the new year with a clear understanding of the FAFSA process and how to secure financial aid for college. Early FAFSA submission can increase your chances of receiving aid.

[Register here](#)

Webinar

Tuesday, January 28
6 - 7:30 p.m.

Learn more about finding and earning scholarships to fund your education. Scholarships can provide crucial financial support throughout your college journey.

[Register here](#)

Unable to make these webinars? See future events [here](#).

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT



“Xplore” business and finance careers with KeyBank next semester!

College Now, in partnership with KeyBank, presents KeyBank Xplore! This program is designed to help students explore college majors and future careers in the fields of business and finance. During the program, students will learn about various careers, meet local business owners and entrepreneurs, tour colleges with exceptional business programs and create their own pathway to the business or finance career of their dreams. Students will also learn transferable soft skills that will help them succeed in any career that they may choose in the future.

This program is open to all high school students across Northeast Ohio. Sessions will take place on the following Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the College Now downtown office (1500 W. 3rd St. Cleveland, OH 44113). See directions to our office [here](#).

Note: Students must attend every session day to complete the program.

- January 11, 2025
- January 25, 2025
- March 8, 2025
- March 29, 2025

- February 8, 2025
- February 22, 2025
- April 5, 2025
- April 19, 2025

[Register here](#)

STUDENT CHECKLIST

What should you do now to support your future?

Finish your semester off strong by reviewing and checking off the list items below!

Freshmen

- Volunteer at a local organization over winter break.
- Review and discuss course options with your family and school counselor to ensure you are on the right track.
- Review PSAT results and create a plan to improve your score, if needed. [Register](#) for a College Now impact session if you need assistance preparing for the next test!
- Prepare for end-of-semester exams. Make sure you understand how these tests might impact your GPA and ability to earn course credit.
- Read for fun during winter break.

Sophomores

- Review your PSAT scores with your school counselor. [Register](#) for a College Now impact session if you need assistance preparing for the next test!
- Prepare for end-of-semester exams.
- Research the admissions requirements for your colleges of interest. Compare your grades and test scores to the incoming student profiles on their admissions pages to see if you meet the criteria.

Juniors

- Review your PSAT scores with your College Now advisor.
- Register for an ACT/SAT test prep program such as impact or a bootcamp with College Now.
- Register for the [SAT](#) or [ACT](#) national test date. Ask your counselor if you qualify for a fee waiver.
- Register for a College Now impact session if you need assistance preparing for the next ACT or SAT.

- Consider setting up a job shadowing opportunity to see if the field you are interested in is really what you think it is. Ask your counselor or College Now [advisor](#) for assistance.

Seniors

- Complete the [FAFSA](#). If you need assistance, [register](#) for a College Now FAFSA completion workshop.
- After completing the FAFSA, watch your email for notification from the U.S. Department of Education that your FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS) is available and take any recommended or required actions.
- If you applied Early Decision or Early Action, look for admissions decisions to arrive by email, U.S. mail and/or your college portal.
- Continue submitting college applications for upcoming regular decision deadlines. Make sure that all required components have been sent (e.g. transcripts and test scores).
- Check deadlines for local scholarships. Winter break is an excellent time to prepare the applications.
- Once you have been accepted to college, check the student portal regularly for announcements and items that need to be completed.

FAMILY CHECKLIST

What should you be doing with your student to support your future?

Winter break is around the corner, and you may have a lot more time at home with your student. Holidays are a great time to talk about developing interests, using extra time to explore hobbies and for you to understand your student's interests and passions.

- Take time over break to discuss your student's future. Perhaps head to the library for some 'break time' reading and exploration. Help your student find books or biographies of people in their careers of interest.
- Check to make sure your student's GPA is on track.
- For freshman and sophomores, earning and maintaining a 2.5 or higher is critical at this point of their academic career.
- For juniors and seniors, earning a 3.0 or higher is critical for scholarships and financial aid.

Are you wondering how you can support your senior while they prepare for college?

- Learn the total cost for postsecondary education. Both college and trade schools can have costs associated with them. Make sure your family understands all the various costs associated with education after high school. While it may seem like a lot, remember, getting a degree after high school can earn you thousands more per year.

- Aim to support your student in submitting all college applications before the end of the calendar year. Be mindful of institutions with application deadlines in January.
- If your student has applied Early Decision for any colleges or programs, make sure that you have reviewed all the paperwork and are ready to submit any required material or documentation.
- Make sure your student's FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the CSS Profile (College Scholarship Service Profile) has been submitted. Attend a College Now FAFSA completion [workshop](#) if you need assistance filling out the FAFSA.
- If your student is taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses, talk to your student and their teachers about the exams coming up in the winter semester.

*See you next month! In the meantime, reach out to your
College Now [advisor](#)!*



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