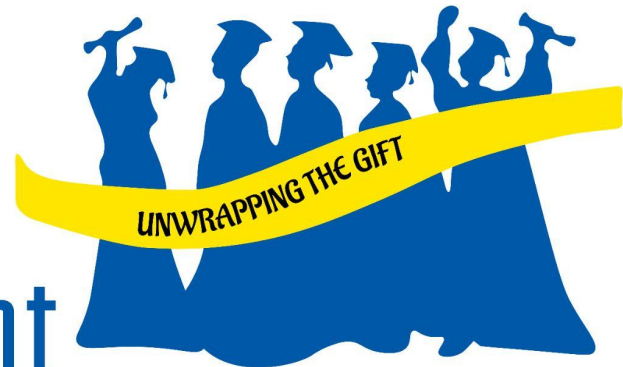


# Academy of Scholastic Achievement



Unwrap the gift, unveil the potential.

## College Planning Handbook

**This manual provides an overview of the major steps required to apply for college and financial aid, reach a college decision, and complete college enrollment.**

**We encourage ASA's families to use this as a guide throughout senior year and to ask questions and request advice whenever necessary.**

|                               | <b>CREDIT BEARING REQUIREMENTS</b>   |                   |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Required Course               | Description  | Units Required    |
| English                       | 4 years of English, 1 year of which may be related to a career pathway   | 4 credits         |
| Mathematics                   | Must include 1 year of Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II or Algebra/Trig   | 3 credits         |
| Science                       | Must include 1 year of Biology, Environmental Science and Chemistry  | 3 credits         |
| Social Science                | At least 1 year must be U.S. History or combination of American Government and U.S. History. One semester (18 weeks) must be Civics  | 3 credits         |
| World Language                | 1 credit of foreign language   | 1 credit          |
| Fine Arts                     | 1 credit of fine arts  | 1 credit          |
| Health/P.E.                   | 1 credit   | 1 credit          |
| Computer Literacy             | 1 credit   | 1 credit          |
| Electives                     | Selection of additional courses not already listed above   | 1 credit          |
| <b>Total Credits Required</b> | Students must earn a minimum of 18 credits as described above to earn a diploma from the YCCS-ASA campus   | <b>18 credits</b> |
|                               | <b>OTHER REQUIREMENTS</b>  |                   |
| Writing Intensive Course      | 2 courses that contain a writing intensive component, 1 year is part of an English Language Art course and the other year may be part of an English Language Arts course or part of another course                 |                   |
| Consumer Education            | Minimum of 1 quarter (9 weeks) of Consumer Education   |                   |
| Health Education              | Minimum of 1 semester (18 weeks) of Health Education   |                   |
| Public Law 195                | Demonstrate knowledge of U.S. and Illinois Constitutions as part of subject area curricula and/or Constitution test. No student shall receive certification or graduation without passing an exam on such subjects |                   |
| Life Skills                   | Minimum of 40 hours  |                   |

|                                 |   |  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Civics/Service Learning         | 40 hours of approved service learning activities: 20 of the 40 hours must be connected to classroom project/community service   |  |
| STAR                            | Minimum of 10th grade reading level, as measured by the STAR  |  |
| SAT                             | Students are required to take a standardized assessment, as determined by the State of Illinois, as a condition of receiving a regular high school diploma                                      |  |
| Senior Portfolio                | Must complete the required components of the senior portfolio: resume, cover letter, thank you letter, personal statement, a minimum of 3 college acceptance letters, 4 exhibitions of learning |  |
| Residency                       | Minimum of 1 semester (90 days) of residency  |  |
| FAFSA                           | Complete the <i>Free Application for Federal Student Aid</i> (FAFSA)  |  |
| Learn-Plan-Succeed and Naviance | Must complete all requirements of both to graduate  |  |
| SEQ                             | Senior Exit Questionnaire   |  |

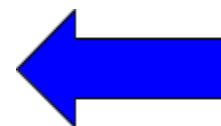
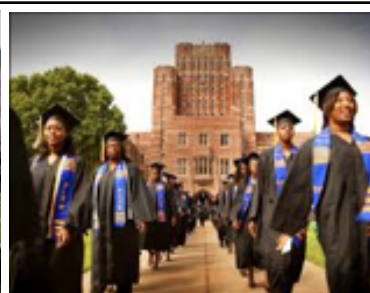
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### Senior Year at a Glance

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>September</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue college research.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make a list of intended college apps.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Request necessary letters of recommendation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin submitting college applications.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be enrolled in Senior Seminar/start Senior Portfolio</li> </ul>  | <p><b>January and February</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Apply to additional colleges, as necessary.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> File tax returns.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that your FAFSA has been shared with all colleges where you have been admitted.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue scholarship applications.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>October</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue submitting college applications.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) based on the previous school year's taxes. (i.e., 2021-2022 school year, you will need a 2020 tax return)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain a Tax Return Transcript (or a statement of non-filing if you were not required to file and did not do so). This is a free document from the IRS.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visit college campuses</li> </ul> | <p><b>March and April</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain financial aid award letters.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit additional verification documents to colleges as required.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue scholarship applications.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>November</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finish at least 3 college applications.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin scholarship applications.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet with your counselor.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>May and June</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reach a decision to attend the best college you can afford. (National College Decision Day is May 1!)</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete all enrollment steps for your college.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attend prom and graduation!</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue scholarship applications.</li> </ul> |
| <b>December</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finish at least 3 college applications.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue scholarship applications.</li> </ul> | <b>July and August</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm all enrollment steps and financial arrangements.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact counseling staff for support as needed.</li> </ul>                  |



## Quick Guide of College Planning Resource

### Counseling Team

- Stephen Bora, 773-921-1315 ext. 318, [sbora@asaschool.org](mailto:sbora@asaschool.org)
- Develyn Kirkman, 773-921-1121 ext. 319, [dkirkman@asaschool.org](mailto:dkirkman@asaschool.org)
- Senior Seminar Teachers
  - ISAC (Illinois Student Assistance Commission), 773-453-9520
    - Students can simply text their name to that number



### **College Board Big Future** ([bigfuture.collegeboard.org/majors-careers](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/majors-careers))

- This particular part of the College Board's website helps students understand the relationship between college majors and possible careers. Search by major or career, and then search for colleges according to your preferred criteria.

**College Results** ([collegeresults.org](http://collegeresults.org))

- This site compiles federally reported data about colleges' graduation rates, academic profiles, demographic information, and financial outcomes.

**Common Application** ([commonapp.org](http://commonapp.org))

- Students applying to most 4-year colleges will benefit from using the Common Application, since over 700 colleges use it. Students must connect their Common App account to their Naviance account (see below).

**Federal Student Aid** ([studentaid.ed.gov](http://studentaid.ed.gov))

- This is the federal Department of Education's online resource about financial aid, student loans, and the FAFSA.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** ([fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov))

- This is the free financial aid application required of all students who are U.S. citizens, permanent legal residents, or current visa holders. This determines eligibility for government grants and loans but does not obligate or guarantee financial aid by itself.

**Naviance** (<https://student.naviance.com/yccsasahs>)

- This is a free college and career readiness tool. Naviance is also used to document your postsecondary plan.

## Using Naviance for Your College Search

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**What is Naviance?**

Naviance is a comprehensive college and career readiness tool that helps schools align student strengths and interests to postsecondary goals, improving student outcomes and connecting learning to life. Naviance's "Family Connection" is a web-based program for academic planning and college and career research. Naviance helps students and families connect what students do in the classroom to their life goals.

Specifically for college planning, students use Naviance to research colleges of interest and determine schools that best fit their personal and career goals, academic performance, and college entrance exam results from the SAT and/or ACT. Naviance collects information that can be transferred to college applications, manages student-counselor communications and college recommendation requests, and tracks applications submitted to schools.

### **How do I login?**

Link: <https://student.naviance.com/yccsasahs>

Student's username is their ID number. Students will reset their password on their own through their ASA email. Recommended Passwords: ASA4651\*\*\*

*If students need their password reset or assistance logging in, please see a counselor.*

### **How do I create a college list?**

Click on the College tab in Naviance to begin your search. You can filter by state, major, athletics, size of the campus, and several other factors. Colleges that you “heart” will be saved to your list, and you can go back to your list to learn more about each school and determine if it’s a potential fit. Your counselor can also view your list and make recommendations.

The image shows two screenshots of the Naviance Student interface. The top screenshot displays the 'Colleges' search page with a search bar and navigation tabs. The bottom screenshot shows a detailed view of a college list with columns for College, Delivery type, Added By, Expected Difficulty, Application Deadlines, and Interest.

| College  | Delivery type | Added By  | Expected Difficulty* | Application Deadlines | Interest |
|--|---------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> + The University of Akron Main Campus       | CA            | Counselor | N/A                  | Multiple Deadlines    | N/A      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + The University of Alabama                 | CA            | Student   | N/A                  | Multiple Deadlines    | N/A      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Albion College                              | CA            | Student   | N/A                  | Multiple Deadlines    | N/A      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + Anderson University                       | CA            | Student   | N/A                  | Multiple Deadlines    | N/A      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago | CA            | Student   | N/A                  | N/A                   | N/A      |



### What if I don't know what colleges I am interested in?

You should complete the Supermatch. The Supermatch Task allows you to input your specific academic information in addition to what you are looking for in a school, and it pairs you with schools that might be a good fit.

How do I access it?

1. Login to Naviance using your credentials
2. Click Colleges at the center/top of page
3. Under Find Your Fit, Click Supermatch
4. Complete the supermatch to the best of your ability

You are viewing Naviance Student as **Kaliyah Butler**

NAVIANCE BY POWERSCHOOL

Home Self-Discovery Careers **Colleges** Planner

**SuperMatch College Search**

III Choose Fit Criteria Location

Your Fit Criteria

13 selected criteria  
To refine your results, use the arrows to move your

College Home

Find Your fit

SuperMatch College Search

College Match

College Events

Advanced College Search

College Lookup

Research Colleges

Colleges I'm Thinking About

College Visits

College Compare

College Resources

Acceptance History

Enrichment Programs

College Maps

Apply to College

Colleges I'm Applying to

Letters of Recommendation

Test Scores

Scholarships & Money

College-Specific Scholarships

National Scholarship Search

Scholarship Search

Favorite Scholarships

NAVIANCE TO HAVE IS

### How to add colleges that I've APPLIED TO to my Naviance account?

Students must complete their application and submit it directly to the institution. Once that is done, students must add the application to their Naviance accounts. This notifies your counselor to submit your transcript to the college. If your documents are not submitted to the college, your application is incomplete.

1. Click colleges in the center/top
2. Under Apply to College, click colleges I'm applying to

You are viewing Naviance Student as **Kaliyah Butler**

NAVIANCE BY POWERSCHOOL

Home Self-Discovery Careers **Colleges** Planner

**SuperMatch College Search**

III Choose Fit Criteria Location

Your Fit Criteria

13 selected criteria  
To refine your results, use the arrows to move your

College Home

Find Your fit

SuperMatch College Search

College Match

College Events

Advanced College Search

College Lookup

Research Colleges

Colleges I'm Thinking About

College Visits

College Compare

College Resources

Acceptance History

Enrichment Programs

College Maps

Apply to College

Colleges I'm Applying to

Letters of Recommendation

Test Scores

Scholarships & Money

College-Specific Scholarships

National Scholarship Search

Scholarship Search

Favorite Scholarships

NAVIANCE TO HAVE IS

3. Click the PINK PLUS SIGN to start adding the school

Colleges I'm applying to

Search for colleges

It looks like you are not currently able to apply to Common App schools. Match your Common App account to Naviance Student account to get started. [Click for Matching Help](#) Match Accounts

Application Milestones Compare Me +

- Add your college information. Please remember you must have submitted your college application before adding it to Naviance

[Cancel](#)

**Which college are you applying to?**

Colleges already in your application list would be unavailable for selection.

**App type**  
Regular Decision

**I'll submit my application**

I've submitted my application

Add Application

[Cancel](#)

**Which college are you applying to?**

Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, IL

Colleges already in your application list would be unavailable for selection.

**App type**  
Other (Rolling Admission - Fall) May 15

**I'll submit my application**  
Direct to the institution

I've submitted my application

Add Application

## Application Process

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When applying to colleges, students typically submit applications electronically. Most often, students apply by submitting an application through their Common App or by going directly to the college's website. Depending on the requirements, each application may require the following materials: official transcripts, personal statement, supplemental essays, teacher letter of recommendation, counselor letter of recommendation, standardized test report, or fee waiver form.

**After submitting an application, students will email the confirmation email to their counselors and senior seminar teacher AND add it to their "Colleges I'm Thinking About List."** Counselors send materials electronically through Naviance, so students must add colleges to their Naviance account to complete the process.

### **How do I find the college application?**

- Go to the college website (you can find the link through your Naviance search and/or through a quick Google search of the school).
- The College Application is located under the ADMISSIONS tab on the website.
- You are applying as an undergraduate student.

- Undergraduate -: a student at a college or university who has not received a first and especially a bachelor's degree
- You will need to create an account/portal to apply. It is recommended that you save the username/password in your notes, Google drive, or somewhere where you will remember it so that you can track your application.

### **Completing the Application**

- Some colleges will require supplemental essay questions. Prompt examples may include “why are you interested in our college,” “why do you think you would be a good fit for our college,” or “what excites you most about living on campus.”

**Best Practice:** Create a Google Doc where you can copy the prompts and save your responses. The response you write for one essay may be useful for another school’s essay. This will save you time.

- Take your time and ask for feedback. Answer supplemental essay questions thoughtfully - this is one way to differentiate yourself from other applicants. Ask a teacher, or another adult, to review your response and make edits and suggestions. Once you make final edits, it is best to take a break and return for one final read.

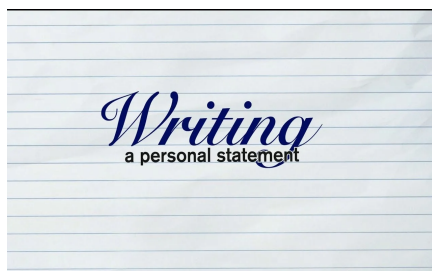
### **Application Fees**

- If you qualify for a Fee Waiver (typically determined by family income or Free/Reduced Lunch Status), college application fees will be waived. In your Common App account, you will check the box indicating that you are eligible for the fee waiver. For non-Common App colleges, your counselor will submit the NACAC Fee Waiver form, which [you should complete at the beginning of your senior year](#). This form needs to be signed by your counselor and is then uploaded into your Naviance account.

Additionally, sometimes specific schools have their fee waiver. Coordinate with your counselor to complete it. You can send/request assistance via email and/or in person.

## **Personal Statements**

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Many colleges require a personal statement as a way to get to know you...your character, personality, or events that have been impactful. This is a chance for you to tell your story beyond your academic record and extra-curricular activities.

### **What to Write?**

- Colleges want to know what interests you; they do not expect you to have had a full career before high school graduation.
- Answer the question asked in the requested format. If you use one essay for multiple schools, make sure that it isn't so generic that it's apparent that you wrote it for another college.
- A college essay is an autobiographical statement, not an autobiography...you don't need to tell your whole life story. Pick a piece that has made an impression on you.
- Avoid writing a laundry list of all of your achievements. Instead, focus on one or two experiences that highlight your qualities.
- Spend time brainstorming topics - Think about what's important to you, what people or events have shaped you, and what you think is interesting about yourself. Think of events, themes, experiences, and more that are somewhat unique to you and how they've impacted you.
- Reveal something new about yourself. Take this opportunity to give the admissions office insight into something new about you. Whether your religion impacts your education, how a mentor helped you realize your potential, or an event that's shaped who you are today, write about something with substance that adds another dimension to your application.
- If you're having trouble thinking of topics, ask your friends and family for examples of stories about you that exemplify your characteristics.
- Don't be modest. Don't exaggerate. Do be your "best self."

### **Mechanics of the Essay**

Be mindful of word choice, tone, and voice. Your essay should sound like you wrote it, so don't overload it with long vocabulary words, complex sentence structure, or a lofty tone if that's not how you normally write or speak. That being said, don't be afraid to stretch your writing skills. The personal statement should demonstrate your best writing, so take your time to carefully craft an essay that clearly conveys your story and your voice. Avoid redundant words or phrases, filler words that don't add any value or confusing language that muddles the message. Proofread. Proofread. Proofread!

## Letters of Recommendation

Some colleges, definitely NOT ALL colleges, will require one or two teacher letters of recommendation. It is important to select teachers who can confidently write about your participation and contribution to the classroom environment. Well-written letters of recommendation will give college admissions representatives a deeper understanding of your perseverance, initiative, and drive for success. It is okay to use the same letter of recommendation for all of your college applications, but there are times when you would want to ask a teacher for a specific recommendation, for example, if the teacher attended the college that you are now applying to.

Some scholarship applications will also require a letter of recommendation. Be sure to read the directions carefully on each application to ensure you are satisfying letter of recommendation requirements.

### Who should you ask?

You should ask a trusted teacher/staff member (counselors, paraprofessionals, assistant principal, principals, etc.) who can speak highly of your academic abilities, personality, and character traits.

Letters of recommendation


Add new request

Here you can ask a teacher to write you a letter of recommendation. If you don't have any colleges in your list yet, you may still make a request. Make sure you give your teachers plenty of time to write your recommendations!

1. Who would you like to write this recommendation?\*

Select A Teacher

2. Select which colleges this request is for:\*

All current and future colleges I add to my *Colleges I'm Applying To* list 

\*Select only if you have no preference for which teachers will meet the recommendation requirements for each college

### When should you ask?

It is customary to ask for a letter of recommendation at least two weeks in advance. Earlier is better, especially because the teacher may be writing letters for other students.

### How do you ask?

Ask a teacher in person, follow up with an email, and then make the request in [Naviance](#). Once the teacher gives confirmation that they will be able to write your letter, you must make the official request in Naviance. This is done by navigating to the “Colleges” tab in Naviance, scrolling down to the “Apply to Colleges” section, and click on “Letters of Recommendation.” From there you will click “Add Request” and use the drop-down box to select the teacher. [This short video](#) explains how to make the request in Naviance.

## FAFSA Application and Timeline

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In early October during senior year, students will electronically submit their [FAFSA](#) (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The FAFSA determines student financial aid from the government and from colleges. The form collects personal and financial information from students and parents, and applies a formula to determine your Expected Family Contribution, or [EFC](#). Most financial aid is need-based. Filing the FAFSA form automatically allows a student to apply for all the possible loans and grants that federal and state agencies offer. Colleges require the FAFSA to receive financial aid and some colleges also require an additional aid form called the [CSS Profile](#). Please note that Dreamers (students without social security numbers) are not eligible to file FAFSA; however, they are able to complete the CSS Profile and the [Illinois RISE Application](#).

### **FAFSA completion is an Illinois Graduation Requirement for all Illinois High School Seniors**

Students are typically awarded a “financial aid award package” made up of the following:

1. Awards, grants, or scholarships which are given to the student and do not have to be repaid. An award may be for one year only or may be renewable if academic requirements are met.
2. A loan; which the student must begin to repay 6 months after leaving college. Most federal student loan programs allow lengthy repayment periods and very low interest rates.
3. Part-time employment, possibly related to a student’s field of study. Campus jobs are convenient and often flexible with the student’s class schedule.

### **Sources of Financial Aid**

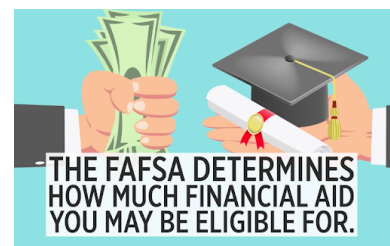
#### **Institutional Funds**

Most colleges have their own scholarships or grants, as well as loan and work programs funded from endowments and operational budgets. These are often, but not always offered at the time of admission. Except for Early Decision or athletic scholarship offers, students may wait to accept a scholarship offered by a college or university until May 1st.

#### **Federal Programs**

Please note that financial aid programs sponsored by the federal government may be changed through legislation from year to year. Three major federal programs that are directly administered by colleges are:

1. [Federal Work Study](#) - This program provides jobs for students with demonstrated need. Colleges may also administer additional federal programs, including ones to assist students who enter nursing and other health programs.



2. [Federal Direct Loan Program](#) - This federally sponsored program is an important source of loan funds for students. Loans are based on demonstrated need and include Direct Subsidized and Direct Unsubsidized Loans. These loans have very low interest rates!
3. [Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students](#) (PLUS) - The federally sponsored Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students allows parents of students to borrow money to help with their children's college costs. (Note: PLUS loans charge lower interest than most bank loans)
4. [Federal Pell Grant](#) - funded by the U.S. government and **does not need to be repaid** since the government has contributed these funds for your education at no cost to you. The Pell Grant works on an income-based system, which means it considers both your income and your parents' income levels.

### **State Programs**

All states have scholarships or grant programs to help students attend their college of choice. The regulations and application procedures for these programs vary from state to state. Illinois [Monetary Award Program](#) (MAP Program) - MAP grants, which do not need to be repaid, are available to eligible Illinois residents who attend [approved Illinois colleges](#) and demonstrate financial need based on the information provided on the FAFSA.

- 1) [Retention of Illinois Students & Equity](#) (RISE Program) - Allows eligible undocumented students and transgender students who are disqualified from federal financial aid to apply for all forms of state financial aid. The Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid provides a pathway for these qualified students to apply for Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants, the state's largest need-based grant program for low-income college students.

### **Some important considerations regarding financial aid:**

- A college will not calculate a financial aid package unless the student has been offered admission
- **NEVER** let a college's cost deter you from applying! Most higher-cost colleges have more grant money to use as part of the package. You will not know the cost of attending that school until you receive the financial aid package.
- Wait until you receive a financial aid package from ALL the schools to which you have been admitted before you make your decision to attend a college; if financial considerations are important to you,

### **Additional Information Related to Submitting FAFSA**

- Students and parents will submit [FAFSA](#) based on the prior year's taxes. \* **This is a senior obligation\***
  - Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, if available, to link your FAFSA directly to electronic data from parents' 2020 tax returns (and students' if applicable)
- Obtain a Tax Return Transcript (or a statement of non-filing if you were not required to file and did not do so). This is a free document from the IRS.



- Online at [www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript](http://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript). (To obtain this online, you will need to be able to answer questions about a credit card, a home loan, or a car loan in your name. This is how they confirm your identity to make sure that your information is not being hacked.)
- Request by fax by submitting IRS form 4506-T.
- Make an individual appointment at the IRS office in downtown Chicago (230 S. Dearborn) by calling 844-545-5640. The appointment is brief, and you will leave the office with the document you need.

**Forward all confirmation emails from Federal Student Aid to your counselor and senior seminar teacher. This will help us identify, and resolve, any problems with your FAFSA.**



## Scholarships

---

ASA will assist all students with searching for scholarships utilizing various resources available. Below are a few resources to get you started.

- [College Greenlight](#) - create a College Greenlight profile and scholarships will be matched to your qualifications
- [Going Merry](#) - create an account and scholarships are matched to your qualifications; local scholarships are also available on this website
- [CPS Academic Works](#) - login with CPS credentials to peruse local scholarship opportunities - this platform is only available to Chicago Public School students



**Merit Scholarships** - Scholarship dollars are awarded to students based on GPA or other academic criteria. Some merit scholarships are automatically awarded to students once they are admitted to a college or university. Other merit scholarships require additional applications and essays.

**Extracurricular Scholarships** - Scholarship dollars are awarded to students for a talent, hobby, or activity. These include musical, theater, and community service scholarships.

### **Best Practices**

- Create a Google doc to save your responses to different scholarship applications - you can usually reuse pieces of your writing for multiple scholarships
- Plan to put time and effort into your scholarship applications - some may require teacher or counselor letters of recommendation, a resume, or a video response
- Don't ignore micro-scholarships (award amounts of \$1,000, \$500, \$250) - these dollars add up and can make a big difference in final cost of attendance
- Never pay for a scholarship search platform - you don't need to pay to be considered for a scholarship

## **Supplemental College Support Programs**

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ASA has postsecondary support in place for students. We assist students with their college application process and college decision. If students require additional support, we will connect them to the following programs:

**Malcolm X College-Trio Program**

**Introspect Youth Services**

Students in need of more one-to-one support will be connected to programs as needed.