

# The Philadelphia Education Fund

## College Access Toolkit: Building a Structured, Proactive Plan for High School Students

*Everyone Graduates Center*  
**Pathways to Adult Success (PAS) Design Challenge**  
**May 2022**

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## Project Design

### Problem of Practice

- **26%** of Philadelphians live in poverty
- **92nd** out of **100** cities in college attainment
- **69%** high school graduation rate

### Our Student Population

- **We Serve:** Over 1,700 low-income, first-generation-to-college Philadelphia youth in grades 9-12 attending one of six high-poverty, low-graduation rate neighborhood high schools

**College Access**



**College Success**

## Our Project Goals & Strategies

- **The Toolkit:** Because College Access Program (CAP) students must draw upon their **social emotional skills** to achieve success during the admissions and financial aid process for college, we wanted to create a **time-sensitive, structured college access toolkit** to help students make informed decisions about their post-secondary process
- **Our Approach:** We address the postsecondary pathways challenge of helping students make better, more informed decisions during high school, especially during their fall semester of senior year through a proactive guided 1:1 approach
- **Our Goal:** Is for students to apply, matriculate, persist and achieve post-secondary attainment as aligned with the PAS framework of helping students navigate pathways to adult success. By focusing on **proactivity**, we will help to facilitate preparation, structure and informed decision-making in the college match and fit process for our students

# The Toolkit

## SEPTEMBER CHECKLIST

## NOTES

**SET REMINDERS**  
in phone calendars for all admissions deadlines for all interested colleges:  
[Match and Fit Tool](#) and [Comparing Colleges Worksheet](#)

**BEGIN USING AND TRACKING APPLICATIONS**  
with your CAP Coordinator:  
[College Application Tracker Tool](#)

**CREATE SEPARATE FOLDERS**  
for each of the schools that interest you and keep the materials organized

**COMPLETE A PERSONAL "BRAG" SHEET**  
or resume with your CAP Coordinator for college applications (if needed)

**MEET WITH CAP COORDINATOR**  
to prepare for what information is needed for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)  
• Collect documents needed for FAFSA from parent(s)

**BEGIN WRITING DRAFTS**  
of your college essay, work with your CAP Coordinator as a second set of eyes:  
[College Essay Tool](#) and brainstorming [worksheet](#)

**START COMPLETING EARLY ADMISSION COLLEGE APPLICATION**  
[Applying to College](#)

**MEET WITH ADMISSION REPRESENTATIVES**  
who visit your high school

**ATTEND VIRTUAL TOURS**  
of college campuses/visit college campuses if you can

**ASK AND THEN REQUEST**  
letters of recommendation from teachers, school counselors, and CAP Coordinators to accompany your admissions applications

**BEGIN CHECKING EMAIL**  
at least once a day to make sure colleges have not emailed you requesting additional information

**COLLECT THE NEEDED INFORMATION**  
to setup an Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID for you and your parent(s) through the FAFSA (emails, social security numbers, etc.)

Have you created an account on the [Common App](#) portal?  
 YES  NO

Connect your Naviance account to the Common App portal

Outline of college essay completed

Attend a financial aid workshop (hosted by CAP)

Attend a college admissions presentation/workshop (hosted by CAP)

Finalize list of schools you're applying to and deadlines

Ask/request recommendation letters?  
 YES  NO

## Project Input

*As we distribute the tool to our rising seniors, we wonder how we could best develop a detailed evaluation plan for key objectives students are completing.*

*Some example questions of what a detailed evaluation plan could answer:*

- Which objectives have students completed independently, without the assistance of a College Access Program Coordinator? **(Ideal outcome – proactivity & independence)**
- Which objectives have students completed with assistance of a College Access Program Coordinator that the student initiated? **(Next ideal – proactivity but dependent)**
- Which objectives have students completed with assistance of a College Access Program Coordinator that the College Access coordinator initiated? **(Not as ideal – reactive, dependent)**
- Which objectives have students not completed at all, despite attempts from the College Access Program Coordinator to provide that support? **(Worst outcome, no action taken)**

## Contact Information

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**THANK YOU!**