

Student Resource Guide

Step **1** Apply to College

COLLEGE
APPLICATION
DAY

Step **2** Apply for
Financial Aid

Filling out the free FAFSA...
we're making it EASY!



SOUTH CAROLINA
can go to college



@sccango



SC CAN GO

Dear High School Senior,

It is probably hard to believe your senior year is finally here. With it comes planning for what you will do next year. As you have probably read, education beyond the high school level is important in today's economy. Hopefully, you have spent the last twelve years in school preparing for life after high school. Now is the time to put those plans into motion.

It's officially time for you to apply to college. There are a lot of options out there and it can be a little overwhelming. This booklet is designed as a tool to help you sort through all that data. We've included important factors to consider as you decide which college you would like to attend.

This Fall, you will have the opportunity to apply to the college of your choice during College Application Day. Your school counselor will help you get ready for this unique opportunity and provide you with the specific date of your event at or near your school.

Deciding on a college is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. So, go ahead. Explore this booklet, ask questions, and prepare to apply to college during your local College Application event.

We wish you the best of luck as you begin this exciting time in your life!

Sincerely,
The College Application Day Team



Step 1 Apply to College

**Plan Ahead
and Save the Date**

COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY

Location:

Date:

Time:

College Application Day at YOUR School

The goal of **College Application Day** is to provide a forum for all South Carolina seniors to complete and file college applications. Throughout this Fall, high schools across the state will host **College Application Day events** to assist students with the college application process.



Talk and Listen to YOUR High School Counselor

Your School
Counselor's
Name: _____

Room Number: _____

Your GPA: _____

Your Class Rank: _____

Your school counselor is one of your best resources as you plan for college. School counselors have information about admission tests, college preparation, and career options.

Here are some basic questions to help get your conversation started:

1. What courses do I need to take to be ready for college?
2. How should I plan my schedule so I'll complete all needed courses?
3. Which elective courses do you recommend?
4. Which AP courses should I consider taking?
5. When is the PSAT/NMSQT going to be given?
6. How should I study for the SAT, and is it given at this high school or do I need to go somewhere nearby?
7. Do you have any college planning sessions scheduled?
8. Do you have college handbooks or other guides that I can browse or borrow?
9. What activities can I do at home and over the summer to get ready for college?
10. What grades are required by different colleges?
11. Are there any college fairs at this school, or nearby?
12. What colleges do other students from our school go to?
13. What are the requirements or standards for the honor society?
14. Can you put me in touch with recent grads who are going to the colleges on my wish list?
15. Do you have any information to help me start exploring careers?
16. If my colleges need a recommendation from you, how can I help you know me better, so it can be more personal?
17. Are there any special scholarships or awards that I should know about now, so I can work toward them?
18. Can I see my transcript as it stands now, to see if everything is as I think it should be?
19. What forms do I use to apply for financial aid and where I can find them online?
20. How does our school compare to others, in terms of test scores?

Choosing a College Major

A **major** is a specific subject area that students specialize in. Typically, between one-third and one-half of the courses you'll take in college will be in your major or related to it.

What type of career can you see yourself in?

What type of work do you enjoy?

What are your interests?

Which subjects did you enjoy studying the most in high school?

What careers are offered in the area you would like to live?

It is not uncommon for college students to change majors one or more times after they enroll in college.

Additional resources:

www.kudernavigator.com

www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org

List YOUR top 3 college major choices:

1st Choice: _____

2nd Choice: _____

3rd Choice: _____

If you haven't taken or if you are retaking the SAT or ACT, it is important to schedule it as soon as possible if you are a graduating senior.

Testing: SAT and ACT

The SAT is offered seven times a year - January, March (US only), May, June, October, November and December. Visit www.sat.collegeboard.org or check with your guidance counselor for exact dates.

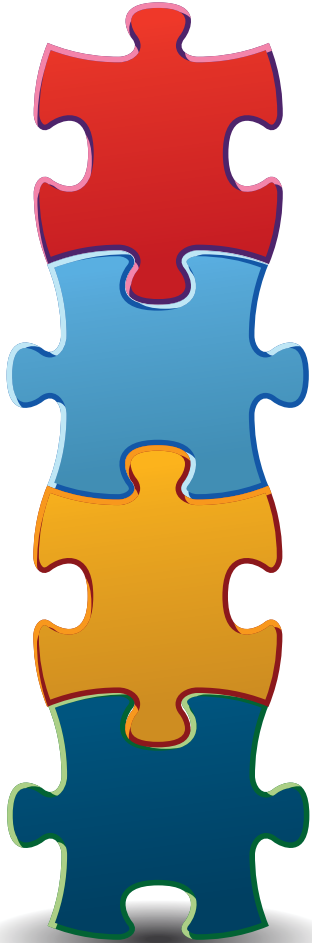
The ACT is also offered multiple times during the year. More information, including test dates, can be found at www.actstudent.org.

Choosing a College

Check out South Carolina colleges and universities with the college search feature at

www.sccango.org. To search for national colleges and universities, please visit www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator. Both sites allow you to gather information about a variety of colleges and universities. Create a checklist to keep track of college admission requirements for your top three colleges.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT



SIZE

Large or Small Campus?
Everybody Knows You or Anonymity of a Crowd?
On or Off-Campus Living?
Large or Small Class Size?
Professors or Teaching Assistants?
Lots of Extracurricular Activities or Just a Few?

TYPE

2-Year or 4-Year School?
Specific Skill or Broad Education?
Single Sex or Coed?
Religious Affiliation?
Public or Private?

GEOGRAPHY

City or Rural Area?
Close to Home or Far Away?

COST

In-State or Out-of-State Tuition?
Scholarship or No Scholarship?
Work Study Programs Available or Not?
Less or More Expensive than National/State Average?

Based on your research, choose **YOUR** top three colleges:

Compare Your Colleges

	School 1	School 2	School 3
Geographic Location (distance from home)			
Campus Setting			
Admission or Placement Test Requirements			
Number of Students Enrolled			
Student Graduation Rate			
College Housing Options			
College Transportation			
Application Fee			
Fee Waiver Available?			
Tuition (Yearly)			
Room and Board (Yearly)			
Books and Additional Fees (Yearly)			
Total Estimated Yearly Cost			
Grants (participates in federal and/or state grant program?)			
Scholarships			
Work Study			
Loans			
Financial Aid Deadline			
% of Undergraduates Receiving Financial Aid			

Although the cost of tuition is an important factor in choosing a college, you shouldn't be discouraged if the cost of education seems overwhelming—financial aid is available for students who qualify. See pages 10-11 for information on state scholarships. Private scholarships, grants, loans and work study programs may also be available.

Financial Aid events will be held throughout the month of February in South Carolina. More information about College Goal SC can be found on pages 22-23 of this booklet. This event is a great opportunity for all graduating seniors to receive FREE help applying for financial aid.

Find someone that attended each of the schools of your choice. Interview them and find out more about the college.

Questions you may want to ask:

- What was your major?
- Did you change majors while in school?
- What did you like/dislike about the school?
- Did you stay on campus?
- Were you the first in your family to go to college?
- Were you in a sorority/fraternity?
- Do you think this school is a good fit for me?

SCHOOL #1

Person Interviewed: _____

Notes: _____

SCHOOL #2

Person Interviewed: _____

Notes: _____

SCHOOL #3

Person Interviewed: _____

Notes: _____

Are you the first in your family to go to college?

Congratulations! You are on your way to being the first in your family to attend college. Although this process can seem overwhelming and confusing, know that the achievement of receiving a college diploma is rewarding.

Many first-generation students may not have a parent who can guide them through college or help them understand what it's like. Your counselor, your teachers, and trusted community leaders may be able to answer questions and concerns you have about college life and attending school away from home.

While at college, you can find support and advice from student service programs, college counselors, peer study groups and even professors.

Don't give up! Just remember, you are not alone. Your success can lead the way for your younger brother or sister, and your future children.

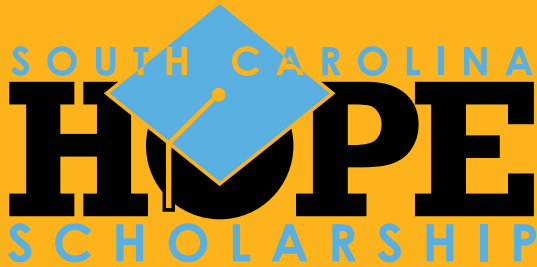
Additional resources for first-generation students:

- www.firstinthefamily.org
- www.firstgenerationstudent.com

You are **READY** to succeed.

You should be able to answer these questions:

- When is College Application Day?
- What would you like to major in?
- What colleges are you considering?



Initial Eligibility Criteria

- Graduate from high school with at least a cumulative 3.0 GPA based on the SC Uniform Grading Policy.
- Not be a recipient of the LIFE, Palmetto Fellows or Lottery Tuition Assistance awards.
- Be a SC resident and US citizen/legal permanent resident at the time of high school graduation and college enrollment; and
- Enroll as a full time degree seeking student at an eligible four year institution in South Carolina.



Initial Eligibility at four-year institutions

- Students must meet two of the following three criteria:
- Graduate from high school with at least a cumulative 3.0 GPA based on the SC Uniform Grading Policy.
- Rank* in the top 30 percent of the graduating class based on the uniform grading policy.
- Score at least 1100 on the SAT (or 24 on the ACT) by June of the senior year. Only the math and critical reading scores of the SAT may be included.

Initial Eligibility at two-year institutions

- Graduate from high school with at least a cumulative 3.0 GPA based on the SC Uniform Grading Policy.
- Be a SC resident and US citizen/legal permanent resident at the time of high school graduation and college enrollment; and
- Not be recipients of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, SC HOPE Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance.

For more information on state scholarships and grants, please visit the SC Commission on Higher Education's website: www.che.sc.gov



Eligibility

Students meet one of the following criteria:

- Earn a cumulative 3.5 GPA (based on the SC UGP)
- Rank* in the top 6% at the end of the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade academic year
- Earn a 1200 on the SAT or 27 on the ACT

OR

- Earn a cumulative 4.0 GPA
- Earn a 1400 on the SAT or 32 on the ACT.

Please work with your guidance counselor/home school representative to review your eligibility. A student must attend an eligible 4-year SC institution the fall semester following high school graduation.

**Rank is based on the policy in place at the high school/home school association. The student will need to be in compliance with their school's rank policy.*

SC Need-based Grant

The purpose of the S.C. Need-based grant is to provide additional financial aid to South Carolina's neediest students. A student must enroll full-time or part-time as a degree-seeking student at an eligible SC public institution. To apply, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The financial aid office at each eligible SC public college administers the SC Need-based Grant, as well as determines the students' eligibility.

Lottery Tuition Assistance Program

The Lottery Tuition Assistance Program (LTAP) is available to those students on a first come, first served basis who attend an eligible SC 2-year institution. LTAP goes directly to the cost of tuition. A student needs to complete a FAFSA application for eligibility. The student should contact the institutional financial aid office for questions of any additional steps that are necessary to be considered for LTAP.

Am I going to be one of the only students depending on financial aid?

The truth is that more than half of current college students rely on at least some form of financial aid, whether it's a savings plan, scholarship, grant, loan or work-study program.

WHAT'S THE SECRET TO A GREAT COLLEGE ESSAY?

There's no magic formula for writing exactly what an admissions officer wants to see, but your best bet is always to be yourself. Let your essay be a unique reflection of your personality, your interests and your perspective on something you're passionate about.



FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS

Remember that those reading your essay want to hear about you, so keep your focus clear throughout your draft.

BE ORIGINAL

Avoid cliché language that sounds like anyone could write it. Keep your statements personal, accessible and informative.

SURPRISE THEM

Use your essay as an opportunity to communicate something about yourself that your application can't say. Don't talk about things the reader will already know from reviewing your application.

BE YOURSELF

Write the way you normally speak. That doesn't mean using slang or casual language, but it also doesn't mean using lofty, unrealistic words when everyday ones will do.

TAKE YOUR TIME

Start early enough so you don't have to rush. Give yourself plenty of time to do the best you can.

USE YOUR RESOURCES

Have your English teacher read your essay and listen carefully to their opinion and/or suggestions.

Remember:

Bring your essay(s) to your College Application Event.

Your college(s) of choice may require you to submit an admission essay or personal statement with your application. **Bring your essay(s) with you preloaded on a USB drive** so you can easily copy your essay into your online application. Make sure you also have a hard copy for backup.

These questions will help you get started when talking to your parents about paying for college.

- I've been thinking about how I'm going to pay for my college education. Is this something you've been preparing for?
- One of the pieces of information I need to submit in order to apply for financial aid is the FAFSA. It's easier to fill out if you have already filed your taxes. When do you think we will have our taxes completed?
- There are some scholarships and grants that have been created for students of specific socioeconomic status or ethnic backgrounds. Do you know if I may be eligible to apply for any of these? Do you know of any specific scholarships that I may be a good candidate for? Is it possible that your workplace, church, social, or alumni organizations sponsor any scholarships?

- Decision Partners Inc., PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.

Most colleges require an application fee (averaging \$35-\$70) when you submit an online application. Applying to several colleges can be expensive for any student.

The introduction page to the application will inform you of the fee amount, if any. Unless you have a fee waiver from your school counselor, you need to be prepared to enter a credit/debit card number or mail a check once you complete your online application. If you think you may be eligible for an application fee waiver, contact your high school counselor.

The application fee amount and the waiver information is located under each institution [on at www.che.sc.gov/sccango](http://www.che.sc.gov/sccango)

Application Fees

You have
SET
your goals.

Important: Fee Waivers are available to students that are unable to pay for college application fees. Make sure to apply as soon as possible.

You should be able to answer these questions:

When is College Application Day?

Do I qualify for an application fee waiver?

Do the colleges I am applying to require an essay? If so, am I satisfied with my completed essay?

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A COLLEGE APPLICATION?

Official Transcript

Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. Other information that might be included on a transcript: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, courses in progress. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.

Standardized Test Scores

SAT or ACT Scores

The Application Form

No matter what school or what application, these will be important components:

- Personal and Educational Data (i.e., name, address, phone number, e-mail, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, standardized test scores)
- Honors and Awards
- Extracurricular, Personal, and Volunteer Activities
- Employment, Internships, and Summer Activities (Some colleges allow you to submit a resume in addition to the activity section of their application.)
- Essays, both short answer and a longer personal essay
- Disciplinary information
- Application Fee (Many colleges will accept fee waivers which can be obtained from the guidance office.)
- Signature
- For certain majors, students might be required to audition or asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work.

Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form

This is not required by all colleges, but if it is required, the high school is responsible for submitting this form to the college. However, you will need to request that it be sent. It is important to know and follow your high school's procedures.

Mid-Year Report Form

This form is not required by all colleges, but if it is required, it will be submitted by your high school. However, you must request that it be sent. The purpose of the form is for the college to see your grades from the first term of your senior year.

Teacher Recommendation Form

This form is not required by all colleges, but if it is, the teacher is responsible for sending it. However, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving that teacher all the necessary information. Look over this form and imagine what one of your teachers would say about you. Colleges are not only looking for teachers from courses where you have received an A, but from teachers who know you well and can talk about your work ethic, inquisitive nature, and motivation to learn.

Do all South Carolina institutions accept the same application?

Institutions at www.che.sc.gov/sccango that are highlighted are registered with CollegeNet (The Common Application). All other institutions will require you to fill out different applications.

Do I need to create a new CollegeNet college application account if I already have one?

If you have already created college application accounts or completed college applications, please bring your account information with them. You will not need to create a new account.

How do I submit an official transcript?

Most colleges and universities require applicants to submit their transcript, including their senior year schedule. This is normally sent directly from your high school counselor to the college.

How do I submit a teacher recommendation form?

A teacher recommendation form is not required by all colleges, but if you are submitting one and if the teacher agrees to write the letter, the teacher is responsible for sending it. However, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving the teacher all the necessary information. It is the student's responsibility to make sure the form (and any other supporting materials) were sent to the college.

Checklist of items NEEDED from you in order to successfully complete and submit your college applications during College Application Day:

- Completed College Application Worksheets (Student Resource Guide)
- USB drive with uploaded essays or personal statements (if applicable)
- Credit card information for college application fees (or fee waiver information)



College Prerequisites



FOUR UNITS OF ENGLISH

At least two units must have strong grammar and composition components, at least one must be in English literature, and at least one must be in American literature. Completion of College Preparatory English I, II, III, and IV will meet these criteria.



FOUR UNITS OF MATHEMATICS

These include Algebra I (for which Applied Mathematics I and II may count together as a substitute, if a student successfully completes Algebra II), Algebra II, and Geometry. A fourth higher-level mathematics course should be selected from among Algebra III/Trigonometry, Precalculus, Calculus, Statistics, Discrete Mathematics, or a capstone mathematics course should be taken during the senior year.



THREE UNITS OF LABORATORY SCIENCE

Two units must be taken in two different fields of the physical or life sciences and selected from among Biology, Chemistry, or Physics. The third unit may be from the same field as one of the first two units (Biology, Chemistry, or Physics) or from any laboratory science for which Biology and/or Chemistry is a prerequisite. Courses in earth science, general physical science, or introductory or general environmental science for which Biology and/or Chemistry is not a prerequisite will not meet this requirement. It is strongly recommended that students take Physical Science (taught as a laboratory science) as a prerequisite to the three required units of laboratory science outlined in this section. It is also strongly recommended that students desiring to pursue careers in science, mathematics, engineering or technology take one course in all three fields.



TWO UNITS OF THE SAME FOREIGN LANGUAGE

College Prerequisites



THREE UNITS OF SOCIAL STUDIES

One unit of U.S. History is required; a half unit of Economics and a half unit in Government are strongly recommended.



ONE UNIT OF FINE ARTS

One unit in Appreciation of; History of or Performance in one of the fine arts.



ONE ELECTIVE

One unit must be taken as an elective. A college preparatory course in computer science (i.e., one involving significant programming content, not simply keyboarding) is strongly recommended for this elective. Other acceptable electives include college preparatory courses in English; fine arts; foreign languages; social sciences; humanities; laboratory science (excluding Earth Science, general Physical Science, general Environmental Science, or other introductory science courses for which Biology and/or Chemistry is not a prerequisite); or mathematics above the level of Algebra II.



ONE UNIT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION OR ROTC

NOTES

1. Each institution may make exceptions in admitting (a) students who do not meet all of the prerequisites, limited to those individual cases in which the failure to meet one or more prerequisites is due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student; or, (b) students who have taken the Tech Prep (Applied Academics) courses rather than the required college preparatory curriculum described above and who meet all other institutional admissions criteria.
2. The College Preparatory Course Prerequisite Requirements are minimal requirements for four-year public college admission. Therefore, students should check early with colleges of their choice to plan to meet additional high school prerequisites that might be required for admission.

Approved by the SC Commission on Higher Education

College Application Worksheet

Complete this information **before** the College Application event. This information is confidential, so you should keep this document in a safe place.

Write your college application user ID and password here. User ID: _____ Password: _____

Full Name (First, Middle, Last) _____
Permanent Address (where all mail will be sent) _____
City, State, Zip _____
Home Phone Number _____
Mobile Phone Number _____
E-Mail Address _____

Bring your social security number or memorize it. You will need it at the event.

Driver's License Number _____ **Date Issued:** _____

Use this space to write down your credit card / prepaid credit card information. If you do not wish to write it here, **please have it on the day you fill out your college application because you will need it to pay your application fee.** You may also want to check with your guidance counselor to see if you are eligible for a fee waiver.



	Parent / Guardian #1	Parent / Guardian #2
Full Name (First, Middle, Last)	_____	_____
Relationship to You	_____	_____
Street Address	_____	_____
City, State, Zip	_____	_____
Telephone Number	_____	_____
E-Mail Address	_____	_____

Highest Level of Education Completed:

<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
<input type="checkbox"/> K-8	<input type="checkbox"/> K-8
<input type="checkbox"/> High School	<input type="checkbox"/> High School
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Years College*	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Years College*
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Years College*	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Years College*
<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate School*	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate School*

*Institution: _____ *Institution: _____

*Degree: _____ *Degree: _____

Familiarize yourself with your parent / guardian's job (company / organization's name, occupation and job title). Some applications may ask for salary range.

College Application Worksheet

Complete this information **before** the College Application event. This information is confidential, so you should keep this document in a safe place.

Name of Current High School _____
Mailing Address _____
Telephone Number _____
Date Entering High School _____
Anticipated Graduation Date _____

Please list any other high schools you have attended:

High School Name _____
Mailing Address _____
Telephone _____
Dates of Attendance _____

List any colleges you have attended for which you expect to receive college credit:

College Name _____
City, State _____
Dates of Attendance _____

List the courses you are taking during your senior year. Please indicate any that are Honor, AP, IB or Dual Enrollment (College Courses):

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

List any other courses (summer school, online, etc.) _____

SAT Test Date (Month / Year)	_____	_____	_____
Critical Reading Score	_____	_____	_____
Math Score	_____	_____	_____
Writing Score	_____	_____	_____
ACT Test Date (Month / Year)	_____	_____	_____
Composite Score	_____	_____	_____
English Score	_____	_____	_____
Verbal Score	_____	_____	_____
Reading Score	_____	_____	_____
Science Score	_____	_____	_____

College Application Worksheet

Complete this information **before** the College Application event. This information is confidential, so you should keep this document in a safe place.

Date of Birth _____

Place of Birth _____

Citizenship (check one) _____ U.S. citizen
_____ NOT a U.S. citizen, but permanent resident of the U.S.

Date of resident status granted: _____

Other, give visa type: _____

If not a U.S. citizen, are you a legal immigrant (permanent resident alien of the U.S.)?

_____ Yes

_____ No**

**If you answered "no", be prepared to answer the following:

Country of Citizenship _____

Permanent Residence _____

Resident Alien Number _____

Country of Birth _____

List your extracurricular, community and family activities, and hobbies. Be prepared to include specific events and major accomplishments such as musical or artistic talent or volunteer services.

Activity	Grade Level				Approx. Time Spent		When?		Positions Held, Honors Won, Letters Earned or Personal Contributions & Achievements
	9	10	11	12	Hours/Week	Weeks/Year	School Year	Summer	

Work Experience:

Nature of Work / Position Held	Employer	Dates of Employment	Hours/Week

WAY to go...

You are ready to
APPLY
to the college of your choice.



You should be able to answer these questions:

- When is College Application Day?
- What should I bring to the College Application Day event?
- What is my social security number?
- What is included in a college application?

Your Notes / Checklist

Step 2 Apply for Financial Aid

Filling out the free FAFSA...
we're making it EASY!



Coming in
FEBRUARY

www.che.sc.gov/sccango

(The website will continue to be updated with new College Goal South Carolina locations.)

College Goal South Carolina is an annual event during the month of February which helps students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is the single most important financial aid form you will complete as you apply to college. Also, the FAFSA can be a prerequisite for qualifying for private awards.

In addition to receiving professional financial aid assistance in completing the FAFSA at the College Goal South Carolina event, students are also provided information on state scholarship programs, as well as information about the state's two and four year higher education institutions.

Who participates in College Goal South Carolina?

College Goal South Carolina is open to all college-bound students regardless of age. Whether a traditional student right out of high school, or an adult who is returning or pursuing higher education for the first time, College Goal South Carolina will help you complete the FAFSA accurately and on time. Dependent students (those under 24) should bring a parent or legal guardian. Independent students (24 or over) will not require a parent's income information.

What if I'm not sure I'll attend college?

Many students are not sure if they will be attending right after high school. When you complete the FAFSA, you aren't obligated to attend college. However, by completing it, you ensure that you won't miss any deadlines, which is important in case you decide to apply to college later in the year.

What should I bring to College Goal South Carolina?

Checklist of items NEEDED from you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to successfully complete and submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during a College Goal South Carolina event*:

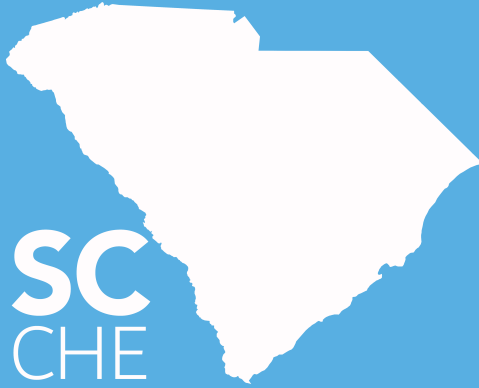
- ✓ Social Security Number
- ✓ Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- ✓ Most recent federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned**
- ✓ Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- ✓ Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
- ✓ Federal Student Aid PIN to sign electronically (if you do not already have one, visit www.pin.ed.gov)

**If you are not a dependent student, you do not need the listed items from your parent(s)/guardian(s).*

***You may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.*

Mark Your Calendars...

College Goal South Carolina is coming to a location near you in February!



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
1122 Lady Street, Suite 400
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
(803) 737-2260