

College Application Checklist 2025-26

These steps are tailored to students applying in-state.

Upcoming:

Schedule your REQUIRED senior meeting with your counselor: <https://www.wcpss.net/Page/57660>

[Senior Handbook](#)

College Application Steps

☐ **Create a CFNC Account**

- ☐ <https://www.cfnc.org/>
- ☐ This will be your hub for all things related to your NC applications
- ☐ Be sure to use your personal (and appropriate) email address, not your school email address

☐ **Create a Common App Account**

- ☐ <https://apply.commonapp.org/createaccount>
- ☐ This is a great place to apply to a lot of major 4-year universities including most NC colleges.
- ☐ Be sure to use your personal (and appropriate) email address, not your school email address
- ☐ **To add your counselor so we can upload your transcript:** Click on one of your colleges in your list, and go to the Waive Ferpa/Add Recommenders section. Click Invite Counselor and add your [counselors info](#).

☐ **OPTIONAL: Create a Common Black App Account to apply to Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

- ☐ <https://commonblackcollegeapp.com/instructions/>
- ☐ There is a one time fee of \$20 and then you can apply to tons of HBCUs.
- ☐ Check their list of HBCUs to make sure it has all the ones you want to apply to.
- ☐ Be sure to use your personal (and appropriate) email address, not your school email address

☐ **Complete Residency Determination Service (RDS)**

- ☐ North Carolina residents should complete the [online residency form](#).
- ☐ This gets you in-state tuition
- ☐ Parents/guardians need to be involved in this step, as it requires a good amount of parent information.
- ☐ IF IT KICKS BACK OUT-OF-STATE, tell your counselor ASAP

☐ **NC College Connect**

- ☐ <https://www.cfnc.org/nc-college-connect/>
- ☐ If you got a letter from CFNC for College Connect you are eligible to apply to the schools on your list for an abbreviated application.
- ☐ You MUST still apply to be accepted. You login with your credentials and complete the application. It should be a shorter 4 question application. THIS is your college application, you do not also need to apply via Common App.
- ☐ Once you finish your application, you still do your residency and YOU send the transcript via CFNC.
- ☐ When you receive your acceptance email, they may also contact you about applying separately to their honors college, or specialized programs.
- ☐ The NC College Connect application is JUST to get into the institution NOT into a specific school (i.e nursing, engineering, business, etc).

☐ **NC Promise Schools**

- ☐ Is cost a major factor for a 4-year university? Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, UNC Pembroke, and Western Carolina University are \$500 per semester for in-state and \$2,500 for out-of-state undergraduate students.

☐ **Write your College essay**

- <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/college-essay>
- Have someone else read your essay before submitting it! Can be a previous or current English teacher, parent, trusted adult/friend, etc.
- Read your essay out loud to check flow/potential missed filler words (example: to, if, it, etc)

☐ **Ask for letter(s) of recommendation**

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/apply-to-college/application-process/how-to-get-a-great-letter-of-recommendation>
- Not every college requires letters of recommendation, but most do.
- Some colleges require more than one!
- Fill out [brag sheet](#) to provide to teachers/counselor
- Give your recommender TIME to complete your letter! Give a minimum of 2 weeks if you can!

☐ **Determine if you need to send SAT/ACT scores**

- ☐ A lot of colleges are still test optional, so you should consider if the places you are applying for expect it
- ☐ UNC system requirements: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/students/admission/>
- ☐ [NC admission stats](#)
- ☐ YOU are responsible for sending SAT/ACT scores. SAT is via CollegeBoard and ACT is via ACT.org

☐ **SUGGESTED: Make a resume or list of extracurricular activities**

- ☐ <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/high-school-resume>
- ☐ Sometimes this is required
- ☐ This can be really helpful to summarize the things you've done in high school
- ☐ Make sure you have someone review it before submitting it to colleges
- ☐ [Canva](#) has a lot of free templates, do not pay for a resume template!!

☐ **Send Transcripts**

- CFNC - you send transcripts. In your application hub, there is a section that says 'show tasks' and an option that says 'send transcripts'. It pulls your transcript directly from your PowerSchool for you. You send the final transcript via CFNC.
- CommonApp - Counselor uploads your transcript on your behalf to all schools. Final transcripts YOU must send via [scriborder](#).
- Out of state, non-common app applications - request via [scriborder](#). If you apply directly, sometimes the school does not tell us and we will not know unless YOU tell us.

☐ **Athletics**

- If you are planning to play sports in college, go over the NCAA eligibility requirements with your coach

Financial Aid Steps: APPLICATION IS OPEN

☐ **Create an FSA ID**

- <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>
- Create an FSA ID before FAFSA is open so that you can apply to FAFSA when it does open.
- This is just an account to verify identity.

☐ **Complete the FAFSA**

- [Free Application for Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) is an important step to qualify for grants, loans, and scholarships.
- Remember, you'll do the FAFSA each year of college, not just once.
- [FAFSA Quick Guide](#)
- FAFSA Advisor: VSHARPE@WCPSS.NET

☐ **OPTIONAL: Complete the College Scholarship Service Profile**

- <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/getting-started>
- If you plan to apply to UNC Chapel Hill, Duke University, Wake Forest University, Davidson College, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary or Elon University, you MUST complete this application
- Other schools outside of NC use it too, so [check for them as well here](#)
- This gets you non-federal aid for these specific schools.

☐ **Apply for scholarships**

- <https://www.cfnc.org/pay-for-college/scholarship-search/>
- <https://www.fastweb.com/>
- <https://www.ncseaa.edu/>
- <https://www.goingmerry.com/>
- <https://www.scholarships.com/>
- There are more databases out there, these are just a few! Scholarship applications should always be free, do not pay to apply for a scholarship!
- [Local scholarships](#) usually open after winter break

Misc:

☐ **Cap & Gown**

- Order through [Jostens](#)
- You also order your yearbook here
- At minimum to walk at graduation, you need: cap, gown, tassel
- [Basic package](#)
- If you have a cap & gown already (from a sibling, friend, etc) and just need a tassel, you can see Ms. Young. They're \$15.

☐ **Need career/major advice?**

- Not sure what to major in at college? Email Ms. Murray: cmurray@wcpss.net

☐ **Important Dates**

- October 31st Cap and Gown Order Deadline for Mid-Year Grads
- January 22th, 6pm Mid Year Graduation Ceremony – Auditorium
- March & April TBD Cap and Gown Distribution
- April 17th, 8pm Prom
- April 29th, 9am Senior Assembly
- May 22nd, 9am Class of 2026 Awards Ceremony
- May 22nd, Noon Class of 2026 Picnic
- TBD Baccalaureate Service
- June 1st all Senior Fees must be paid
- June 13th, 8pm Graduation Ceremony – Raleigh