

**Rice Lake High School  
Post-Secondary Planning and  
Informational Guide for**

*Class of*

**2021**



# Welcome

Congratulations on entering your senior year at RLHS!!

Navigating senior year can be stressful, not only are you still focused on your grades and fulfilling all of your graduation requirements, but senior year brings about a lot of planning and preparation for beyond high school. This guide is designed to help lead you through the process of selecting and applying for college and financial aid. Make good use of RLHS Staff throughout the year, we have helped students navigate this process for many years and are a valuable resource to you and your family.

We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

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# Senior Checklist

## September/October

- Register for October or December ACT if needed
- Map out application deadlines, check for Early Decision deadlines, those are quickly approaching
- Write college essays
- Begin asking for letters of recommendation
- Meet with college reps in the fall (many colleges are allowing virtual meetings)
- Visit colleges (virtual tours are available!) and attend virtual college fairs
- Visit with your School Counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements
- Narrow down your list of colleges. Make sure you have the application and financial aid information for each school. Find out if you qualify for any scholarships at these schools
- Both students and parents can apply for their FSA ID, this will help speed up the FAFSA process next month
- Work on college applications
- Request transcripts through Parchment
- Start Common Application if needed
- Fill out the FAFSA, beginning October 1st
- If you cannot afford the application fees that many colleges charge, ask your Counselor to help you request a fee waiver
- Research different scholarship opportunities including through your college and on our school website:

[https://rlhs.ricelake.k12.wi.us/student\\_services\\_home\\_page/scholarships](https://rlhs.ricelake.k12.wi.us/student_services_home_page/scholarships)

## November

- Pay attention to deadlines
- Athletes: register with the NCAA & NAIA if you haven't already
- Keep all records: test score reports, copies of applications and financial aid
- Continue applying for scholarships
- Finish applications and submit

## December/January

- Watch virtual tours of college campuses over break
- Continue applying for scholarships
- Finish applications and submit

## February/March/April

- Continue to focus on grades, colleges will want to see your Terms 3 and 4 grades
- Acceptance letters and financial aid offers begin to arrive. Review acceptances, compare financial aid packages, and visit final choices, if you haven't already
- Continue applying for scholarships

## May/June

- Notify your college of choice and send in your deposit, also notify schools you will not attend
- If you've been offered financial aid, accept the offer and follow the instructions given
- Request final transcript be sent (Parchment)
- Check Parchment username and change to a personal email if you haven't already
- If you are "waitlisted" by a college you really want to attend, visit, call and write the admission office to make your interest clear. Ask how you can strengthen your application

# Post-Secondary Options

Most careers require at least some education or training beyond high school. One career may require four years of college while another may require a six-month program at a technical school. In most cases, your career goal will determine which of the following options is the most appropriate:

Two-Year Colleges

Career and Technical Colleges

Military

Apprenticeships

Employment

Four-Year Universities

## Two-Year Colleges

Students may start their education at one of the thirteen UW colleges two-year campuses in Wisconsin and then transfer to a four-year UW University to earn a bachelor's degree. Two-year colleges are sometimes referred to as freshmen/sophomore colleges because students usually complete their general education requirements at these schools, which take about two years to do. Admission requirements into a two-year college is also typically less competitive than a four-year university, the class sizes are generally smaller, and the tuition is cheaper, which makes these schools very appealing to many students. The "Guaranteed Transfer Program" allows a student to transfer all their coursework from a two-year UW branch campus to a 4-year campus. Each campus has Advisors available to help students complete the requirements of this program.

[www.uwc.edu](http://www.uwc.edu). UWEC-Barron County is the two-year branch campus of Eau Claire.

## Career and Technical Colleges

Technical colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs, which enable students to begin their careers after only one or two (or less) years of college. Typically, class sizes are kept small and instructors have worked or are working in the career field. Career and technical college programs vary greatly, and they are designed to prepare students for specific careers. Many courses are also offered in the evening or online to make scheduling around work and other activities possible.

WI Technical Schools require a High School Diploma, GED, or HSED for admittance into their schools. Some programs require specific courses before students are admitted. For example, an associate degree in nursing requires high school Chemistry. The best way to know is to log on to the website of the school offering the program and check out the entrance requirements.

Some technical schools have a date at which they will start accepting applications. Check the website of the school and program of your choice to see if there is a registration deadline. Most nursing programs have a waiting list so it is important to apply as soon as possible for that program. It is important to get technical college applications in as many programs fill quickly. The key is to get the application sent before your program of choice fills up.

WI Technical Schools applications are available inside the *Wisconsin Technical College System* publication, which are located in the guidance office or in the magazine rack outside the office. **You may apply on-line at <http://www.witechcolleges.org>.** If you choose to submit the application electronically, you can pay the fee by credit card online or by mailing in a check or money order separately. Either way, please make sure you request a copy of your transcripts through Parchment.

There are 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System that offer over 300 different degree and certificate programs. [www.witechcolleges.com](http://www.witechcolleges.com). WITC is an example of a technical college.

## **Military**

The military trains young men and women so that they can protect the interests of our country. In order to do this, the military offers qualified high school graduates a good salary and free job training. The military also provides discipline and structure, as well as opportunities for career advancement and travel. The United States military is the nation's single largest employer. It offers training and employment in over 2,000 job specialties, 75,000 of which have civilian counterparts.

Military recruiters from each branch of the military are assigned to serve the students at Rice Lake High School. The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is the test people must take to enter into the US Military. Juniors and Seniors are able to take the ASVAB at Rice Lake High School each fall/early winter. Selective Service Registration affects all 18-year old men. It is the law in our country that all men must register for the Selective Service after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. You can register with Selective Service by logging onto [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov).

The U.S. Military consists of five active-duty Services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) and their respective Guard and Reserve units. Together, they offer a broad variety of ways to serve. College students who take ROTC will enter the military as officers, while academically gifted students will find excellent educational opportunities at the five military academies. More information on the Army can be found at [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com), information on the Navy can be found at [www.navy.com](http://www.navy.com), information on the Air Force can be found at [www.airforce.com](http://www.airforce.com), information on the Marines can be found at [www.marines.com](http://www.marines.com), and information on the Coast Guard can be found at [www.gocoastguard.com](http://www.gocoastguard.com).

## **Apprenticeship**

Students who prefer a hands-on approach to learning may want to consider an apprenticeship program. Apprentices learn a skilled trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Apprenticeship programs are considered by many to be the best way to receive training in the skilled trades. Apprenticeships are agreements in which employers pay individuals while they are learning their trade or profession. These programs demand hard work and dedication.

## **Employment**

Employment is an appropriate option for some high school graduates. High school graduates with no vocational training may find that they have limited career options. Therefore, researching and planning this direct route into employment is important. In some cases, graduates will find that they are not entering a career field as much as they are "getting a job". In these cases, they may find that they will not be making much more than minimum wage and opportunities for advancement may be very limited.

On the other hand, businesses and industries are always anxious to find employees who are hard working, polite, punctual, willing to learn, and able to get along well with others. Of course, if a student has a particular talent or skill in a specific needed area, he/she can be very valuable to an employer right out of high school.

## **Job Shadowing**

It's highly recommended that you complete one or more job shadowing experiences in your high school years. Job shadowing is often an important step a student takes in defining a career goal. Once a student has read what he/she can about an occupation, job shadowing allows the student to see the occupation in action and to ask employees important questions. This activity assists the student in deciding to either explore the career further or search for another. Students may explore a variety of positions within the community by observing employees perform their duties. This is an actual on-the-job experience where a student is paired with a person who is in a career in which the student has shown interest. Students are encouraged to make contact with individuals or businesses they would like to potentially shadow with.

## **Four-Year Colleges/Universities**

A four-year college education, or bachelor's degree, is necessary for approximately 20% of today's careers. A bachelor's degree can open doors, provide status, and prepare students for financially rewarding careers. All universities hope to attract bright, well-prepared students.

Four-year universities want students to have both a broad-based education and education in a specific subject area or major. In order to insure that students receive a well-rounded education, four-year universities require that students take 25 to 50% of their classes in general education courses like English, math, science, and history. Since many of the general education courses are taken during freshman year, "undecided" students can use their first year of college to fulfill general education requirements and then decide on a major.

Taking the proper high school course work is important. The stronger the college preparatory courses you complete, the more likely you'll succeed in college. High school courses should prepare you for college by developing strong academic skills. All UW campuses require a minimum of 17 college preparatory credits from high school including 4 credits in English; 3 credits in math including Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2; 3 credits in science; 3 credits in social studies; and 5 elective credits. Admissions offices primarily consider academic factors, including the college preparatory courses taken, grade point average, and ACT/SAT scores. They may also consider student experiences, work experience, leadership qualities, motivation, community service, and special talents. The student who has not taken several of the recommended college preparatory courses may want to start at a two-year college/campus, then transfer to a four-year college after a year or two. Degrees from a four-year college include a B.A. (Bachelors of Arts) or a B.S. (Bachelors of Science). After a bachelor's degree, some advanced degrees include: M.A. (Masters of Arts), M.S. (Masters of Science), Ed.D. (Doctorate of Education), Ph.D. (Doctorate of Philosophy), J.D. (Juris Doctorate (lawyer)), and M.D. (Medical Doctorate).

UW Schools: [www.uwhelp.wisconsin.edu](http://www.uwhelp.wisconsin.edu)

Private Wisconsin schools: [www.privatecollegezone.org](http://www.privatecollegezone.org).

# Four-Year College Admissions Factors

All parts of your application are considered during the review process. While there's an emphasis put on academics, colleges understand there's more to you than just grades and test scores. They look at how your academics are interconnected with other aspects like work experience and leadership qualities. This allows for a more comprehensive review of your application.

## Academic factors:

- Quality of high school coursework
- Standardized test scores (ACT)
- Grade Point Average (GPA)

## Other factors considered:

- Work experience
- Leadership qualities
- Motivation, creativity, resourcefulness, etc.
- Community service
- Special talents
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged
- Member of a historically underrepresented racial or ethnic group

**Students should be aware that their acceptance to a campus is TENTATIVE. Students are expected to maintain the academic record that they submitted at the time of admission. A student who drops/changes/fails classes MAY be jeopardizing their admission status.** Universities require an 8-semester transcript (which you will request through Parchment in May), so the school can confirm a student's graduation. **A university always has the prerogative to rescind admission to a student who does not complete what they indicated on their application.**

\*\*If you are considering a schedule change after you have applied to college, be sure to follow the university's procedure for senior year schedule changes.

## Grade Point Average (GPA) and Test Scores

GPA is basically a student's cumulative grades in number form. Even though individual colleges use their own criteria when evaluating prospective students, all UW System colleges consider a student's GPA. Since college applications are generally completed during the fall of the senior year, the GPA at the end of the junior year is very important. For information on minimum GPA and Test Scores required by each of the UW schools go to <https://uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/admission-guidelines/freshman/>.

**UW HELP is a service that provides students and parents with information on all UW System campuses. One may talk to an advisor toll-free, request printed materials, etc. in several ways. This helpline is EXTREMELY informative and will answer any and all questions!**

Phone Number: 1-800-442-6459

Email: [uwhelp@uwex.edu](mailto:uwhelp@uwex.edu)

Web Site: [uwhelp.wisconsin.edu](https://uwhelp.wisconsin.edu) (There is also a chat feature on the website)

# College Search

Deciding where to go to college isn't easy. But even if you've dreamed of going to a certain school your whole life, not checking out your other options can only do you a disservice. Searching for the "perfect fit" college or university is a time-consuming, sometimes stressful process, but it's worth the time and effort in the end. Regardless of how prestigious a college is or how much it costs, college success is all about finding the right college fit. This means finding a college that offers what you need in terms of academics, location, campus, and social life. If these factors don't fit you, then little else will matter. Consider what you need most to be comfortable and succeed. Prioritizing what matters to you will help you add or eliminate potential schools from your college search.

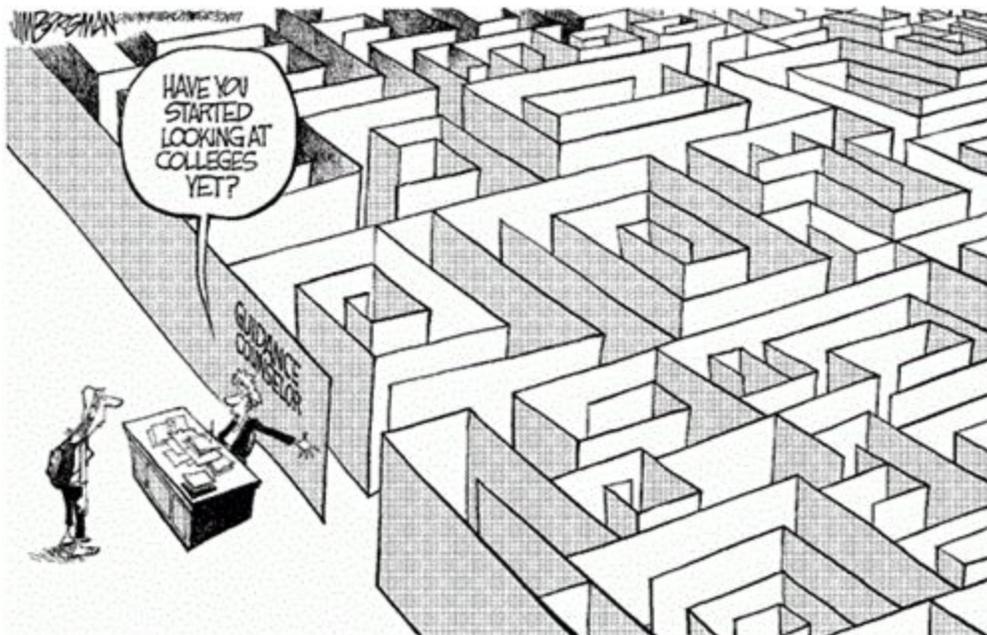
Utilize the following tools to help you make a list of schools you would like to apply to:

**Xello:** utilize the college, major, and career search features

**College Reps:** visit with reps from different colleges (either virtually or in-person)

**College Fairs:** attend virtual college fairs to learn

**Campus Visits:** one of the most important parts of your college research is the campus visit (most campuses are offering virtual campus visits!). Visiting the colleges on your list will give you a firsthand impression of the students, faculty, staff, facilities, and programs. On a visit you can learn what the admission office is looking for in its applicants, gain a feeling for the academic and social atmosphere, see the study/living/recreational facilities, talk with students, and get a sense of the surrounding community.



# Campus Visit Checklist

<b>CAMPUS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> How easy is it to get around campus? To the nearest town or city? <input type="checkbox"/> Where do students do their shopping (groceries, clothing, etc.)?
<b>DORMS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the campus crime rate like? <input type="checkbox"/> How many dorms are there, and how do they differ? <input type="checkbox"/> What are the off-campus living options, and what do they cost?
<b>ACADEMICS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the academic vibe like on campus? <input type="checkbox"/> What are midterms and finals like? <input type="checkbox"/> How many computer labs are available? Quiet spaces for studying? <input type="checkbox"/> How accessible are professors typically? <input type="checkbox"/> What student-faculty research opportunities exist? <input type="checkbox"/> What mentoring/advising relationships do students/faculty have? <input type="checkbox"/> What tutoring services are available to students? <input type="checkbox"/> How do class sizes compare?
<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> What is the social vibe like on campus? What is it like on weekends? <input type="checkbox"/> How involved are students in extracurriculars? What is most popular? <input type="checkbox"/> What is Greek life like, and how do students feel about it? <input type="checkbox"/> What do students do for fun on campus and off?
<b>GYM</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> How popular is the gym, and how late is it open? <input type="checkbox"/> How active is the student body in terms of sports? <input type="checkbox"/> How engaged are student fans in campus sporting events?
<b>DINING HALL</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> How's the food? (Pro tip: eat it!) Do they cater to special dietary needs? <input type="checkbox"/> Are meal plans required? <input type="checkbox"/> What other dining options are there on and around campus?
<b>CAREER CENTER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Where have students interned? <input type="checkbox"/> How long does it typically take recent grads to find a job in their field? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there any formal internship arrangements with local companies? <input type="checkbox"/> What kind of career advice is offered? <input type="checkbox"/> Do students have access to these services after graduation? <input type="checkbox"/> What networking or career fairs are held each year? <input type="checkbox"/> What kinds of on-campus or local part-time jobs are available?
<b>WELLNESS CENTER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> What services does the health center offer? <input type="checkbox"/> How do students typically pay for wellness services?

<b>TO DO:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to professors <input type="checkbox"/> Visit library <input type="checkbox"/> Tour campus <input type="checkbox"/> Sit in on class <input type="checkbox"/> Eat at cafeteria <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to admissions <input type="checkbox"/> Read college newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/> Check out computer labs <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to students <input type="checkbox"/> Visit student housing <input type="checkbox"/> Check out rec facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Check out student activities <input type="checkbox"/> Tour the city <input type="checkbox"/> Eat at an off-campus student hang-out <input type="checkbox"/> Picture yourself here	<b>RATE IT:</b> On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the best: rate the following: <input type="checkbox"/> Dorms <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Campus <input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Class <input type="checkbox"/> People <input type="checkbox"/> Social Life
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# Letters of Recommendation

Many job, college, and scholarship applications will require 1 to 3 letters of recommendation. These letters can come from teachers, counselors, coaches, your pastor, manager (if you have an after-school or summer job), and extracurricular or volunteer leaders, etc. There is proper etiquette to follow when requesting letters of recommendation. Consider the following:

1. Read all of your applications carefully to determine how many and what kind of recommendations are needed. **-MORE IS NOT BETTER-** Do not ask for letters for employers or colleges that do not request one, they do not want them and it will appear that you are not following directions.
2. Consider whom to ask: recent teachers are typically best. What teacher can best represent you as a student?
3. Meet face to face with the teacher you intend to ask and say, “Would you be willing to write me a letter of recommendation?” If they agree, provide them with details of the recommendation: what is it for, what is required to be in the letter, and **provide them with a copy of your Senior Brag Sheet and your transcript. Never put a recommender’s email address in an online application without asking them first.**
4. **Let your recommender know your first deadline date and make sure to allow at least four weeks before that date for them to write your letter.** A great letter takes time and attention to detail, they will have difficulty submitting quality letters with insufficient notice. Please be aware that your recommenders are not required to write letters and are looking to help and support you.
5. Some teachers will look to you for feedback on what your letter should include. Some topics to consider would be: your academic or personal strengths, potential major/career and why, subject knowledge/classroom experience or significant improvement.
6. **Send a brief thank you note or e-mail to the recommender** after your application process is complete. It is always nice to include where you were admitted or where you plan to attend.

\*If you are asking someone to write a letter of recommendation for you, you can share your “Senior Brag Sheet” with them so that they are able to better personalize the letter for you. (If you share electronically through your Google Drive, be sure to share with “View” access, not “Edit” access!)

# Personal Statement/Essay

Many applications require a letter of intent, personal statement, or essay. Personal statements give a better understanding of who you are, beyond the rigid constraints of the “fill-in-the-blank” application. Some students find the questions too open-ended and are scared to get started or make a mistake. Here are some fool proof tips from various college representatives:

**Be Yourself.** Write about family, education, talents, or passions. They want to hear about significant places or events in your life; about books you have read, people you have met or work you’ve done that has shaped the person you have become. It’s almost like going on a first date. You want to display your best qualities, but be yourself at the same time.

**Show Diversity.** A personal statement is really just a way to make the college fall in love with you. The essay is where you really get a chance to differentiate yourself from the other applicants. Explain why they should accept you. What will you contribute? What makes you unique out of all the other applicants? Tell things that have helped you grow as a person and built your character.

**Do Research and Tailor Your Essay Accordingly.** Do research to give concrete reasons why you’re interested in a particular program. Speak with a faculty member that you’re interested in working with or doing research for and mention that in your statement. It would also be beneficial to say what classes you’ve taken that were relevant to the field of study.

**Be Concise, Follow Directions, and Proofread.** Make sure you read the directions carefully. One of the biggest red flags for an admissions office are students who don’t adhere to word limitations or who do not use proper grammar or spelling. Don’t give them a reason to throw out your application. Believe it or not, there is a way to say everything you want in a page or less. If you need some help, ask a teacher to read over your essay and give you feedback.

**Go Beyond GPA and Test Scores.** Many students worry about how their GPA and test scores will affect the admissions process. The personal statement is an opportunity to explain any strengths or weaknesses in your application — such as changes in major, low GPA, or lack of experience. Explain what you did with your time to make up for the low GPA or test scores. Being on the varsity cheer team or an FBLA leader are great examples of how devoting your time to other things made an impact on your GPA.

**Tell a Story.** Nothing makes someone fall in love like a good story. It does not have to be the next Pulitzer winner. One of the worst things you can do is bore the admission officer. Make yourself memorable by telling a story about something distinctive from a creative or different angle.

# Common App

The Common Application (known as the Common App) is a not-for-profit member organization of more than 600 leading colleges and universities. Students may use this application to apply to any of the member schools with one application, this can save time from filling out a different application for each school a student applies to.

Check the Common App (<https://www.commonapp.org/>) site to check which schools are members. Below are some Common App essay prompts.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma — anything of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

# Academic & Career Planning and Xello

The Academic and Career Planning (ACP) is a process where students cultivate their own informed decisions for post-secondary success. Students utilize their ACP to improve their understanding of the post-secondary options, better connect their goals to educational coursework and career goal activities, and engage in long term planning for life after high school graduation. In the State of Wisconsin, an ACP is *required* for all students.

At RLHS, students begin working on their ACP in Freshman Success. Over four years, they select work for their ACP, reflecting on the work, reviewing, and adding to the ACP. During senior year, all students are required to take American Citizenship, where they finalize their ACP with a reflection paper.

Purpose of the ACP: The ACP is a collection of material that reflects students' academic progress, personal development, and future aspirations and dreams. These materials can be used for entrance into the larger world beyond high school:

- job applications and interviews
- applications for school and scholarships
- personal reflection and decision-making
- developing organizational skills
- methods for marketing oneself
- communicating effectively
- highlighting individual interests

RLHS provides each student with a free Xello account, which is accessible through the District Intranet page. Xello is a career and college tool that is rich with information on careers, education, employment trends and more. You can use your account to explore:

- About Me: learn more about yourself through learning styles, career matchmakers, skills, interests, goals
- Explore: search careers, colleges, and majors
- Goals & Plans: create a course, college, and career plan

## Get Organized

Important documents are frequently misplaced or forgotten because a student has not created an organized plan for keeping records. Start a file with the necessary items that you will need for your college applications, including: Social Security Number, high school transcript, personal resume, ACT scores, and letters of recommendation.

Make sure you keep track of all paperwork (and emails) from colleges regarding: application, scholarships, housing, meal plans, registration information and dates, campus visits, financial aid packages, loan documents.

### Helpful Hints for Good Organization:

- Make copies of everything you fill out and send in
- Record all important dates and deadlines in your planner
- Request parent/guardian involvement

# Transcript Requests

Send your official transcript anywhere in the world with just a few clicks!

Students, parents, and alumni can use Parchment, the leader in eTranscript exchange, to send high school transcripts electronically, securely and confidentially, all with real-time tracking.

Last spring, you were sent an email that included a link to use to create your Parchment account. Check your school email for the Parchment email with the link and follow those directions.

To order your transcript, click the big REQUEST MY TRANSCRIPT banner below (on the RLHS website under the Student Services tab) and follow the steps to place your order. You will be able to track your order 24/7.



Note: Please be sure to change the email address associated with your Parchment account (to a non-school district email address) so that you can continue using your account after graduation

[Click here for directions](#)

Parchment Transcript Request Website: <https://www.parchment.com/u/registration/26079/account>

Directions to change email address associated with Parchment account: <http://shorturl.at/bhsP1>

# Financial Aid

**What is financial Aid?** Financial Aid is any money a student receives to pay for college, this can include: grants, scholarships, student employment, loans, and veterans benefits. Any tuition not paid for through the above mentioned methods, becomes the student's responsibility. In this section, we will discuss cost of attendance, filing the FAFSA, and the different types of financial aid.

**Cost of Attendance (COA).** Each college or university will provide an estimated COA on their website, this will give you an idea of how much it will cost to attend that school as a full-time student. These costs will vary based on each student's situation. The COA might include personal expense costs, these are not up-front costs, but costs that a student *might* incur throughout the year. You will want to examine the estimated COA to determine your actual COA and to decide if you can afford to attend your school of choice.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).** The first step in securing financial aid is completing the FAFSA. The FAFSA qualifies you for both federal and state grants and loans. The FAFSA can be completed online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). **You can begin filing on October 1st, 2020.** This is strongly encouraged. The FAFSA will require tax information. A Data Retrieval Tool is provided to link your IRS taxes to your application. If you are under the age of 24, you will most likely need both you and your parents tax information. The first step in filing your FAFSA is to apply for a FSA ID, both you and your parents will need your own FSA ID's. **Keep track of your ID, password, email, and security answers to your FSA ID, it is very difficult to retrieve them later.** You will choose which schools you would like to electronically send your FAFSA results. The schools will then notify you with an Award Letter, outlining what types of financial aid you qualify for. Even though you might not qualify for federal aid, each student should file a FAFSA, each school uses the FAFSA to determine a financial aid package for that student.

***\*\*Many schools require the FAFSA to be completed in order to determine eligibility for scholarships.***

# Financial Aid

## Types of Financial Aid

**Grants:** Money that is given by the government to help those in need, this money is not repaid.

**Federal Pell Grant:** gift aid for college-related expenses for students showing financial need. The current range of the Pell grant is \$598-\$5,815 per year.

**Federal SEOG Grant:** helps students with the greatest financial need. Awards ranging from \$300-\$600.

**Loans:** Money that is loaned by the federal government or private loan agencies to help pay for college tuition and expenses. This money **MUST** be repaid to the lending agency. Use loans only as a last resort and only take out what you need.

**Federal Direct Subsidized Loans:** loans made to eligible undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need to help cover the costs of tuition. This type of loan does not begin to accrue interest until after the student has stopped or completed their degree.

**Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loans:** loans made to eligible undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, but in this case, the student does not have to demonstrate financial need to be eligible for the loan. This type of loan **DOES** begin to accrue interest the day the loan is taken out.

There are also private loan companies, such as Sallie Mae, that provide loans to college students as well. The terms and conditions vary company to company, find which one is right for you.

**Scholarships:** Money that is given to a student by a scholarship committee/organization. This money does not have to be repaid. It is often awarded after an application is submitted and the student chosen best exemplifies the qualities the committee/organization is looking for. More on scholarships on the next page.

# Scholarships

## **College Specific Scholarships.**

Each college provides their own scholarships. Some are simply awarded through the FAFSA or the college application, many are awarded based on a separate scholarship application. Use the specific college website to search for scholarships they might provide or you may also contact the admissions office for help.

## **\*\*Watch out for scholarship scams.**

If you have to pay to apply for the scholarship, it is a scam. Never divulge your checking or savings account numbers, social security number or other personal information, no matter how reasonable sounding the request. If you are unsure, check with your counselor.

## **Scholarship Resume.**

Scholarship applications will often ask for your high school activities and awards. It will save you time to create a high school resume which includes extracurricular activities, positions held, special projects, awards received, athletic participation, and religious and volunteer activities, all should include dates and number of years of participation. Save this so that it is quickly printed for applications and letters of recommendation. Your "Senior Brag Sheet" in Xello can be used for this.

## **Local Scholarships.**

A Message to the Senior Class of 2021:

Some scholarship opportunities on our website ask for documents to be returned to the Student Services Department. In order to submit these, you have the following options:

- email all documents to [younga@ricelake.k12.wi.us](mailto:younga@ricelake.k12.wi.us)
- bring hard copies of documents to Mrs. Young in Student Services

\*With either option, Mrs. Young will ensure that they will be submitted to the applicable scholarship program. Please include your name, scholarship you are applying for, and contact information.

As always, feel free to contact Mrs. Young by email with questions on any scholarships!

Local Scholarship List: [https://rlhs.ricelake.k12.wi.us/student\\_services\\_home\\_page/scholarships](https://rlhs.ricelake.k12.wi.us/student_services_home_page/scholarships)

# I'm Admitted... Now What?

**Do Not Rush Your Decision.** The National Candidates' Reply Date is typically May 1. No college should request a deposit before that date.

**Review Your Options Carefully.** Gather as much information as possible about your future options. Compare financial aid and scholarship offers, attend prospective student events at the colleges to which you were accepted, and talk with your parents and high school counselor about what you are thinking. Where are you going to be happy, healthy, and able to grow?

**Accept Only One Offer.** If the decision is proving difficult, you cannot buy more time by sending deposits to multiple schools. This is an unethical practice that may result in your acceptances being withdrawn by the colleges involved. If you need more time to make a decision, contact the admissions offices to request an extension.

**Notify the Colleges That You Chose Not to Attend.** For those colleges that you will now deny, notify those admissions offices that you will not be attending. Schools will then be able to go to their wait-list.

**Develop a Plan for Wait-List Offers.** Perhaps the most frustrating letter for a senior to receive is one that invites them to join the wait-list. You should only accept a spot on the wait-list if you really intend to attend that college. Do not pay to remain on the wait-list. Admissions offices are not permitted to request a deposit for a student to remain active on a wait-list.

**Get your acceptance in writing before submitting a deposit.** Wait-lists remain active until the incoming class is full, but not after August 1. If you receive an offer of admission from the wait-list, you should have a reasonable amount of time (at least 72 hours) to respond to the offer.

**Find out if you will be required to take a placement exam and when it will be offered.**

**Find out when new student orientation will be held.**

**Finish High School on a High Note.** You need to finish your senior year strong – both academically and socially. Reread your acceptance letters.

**The acceptance letter usually informs you that your joyous news is conditional upon the successful completion of your senior year. Colleges can, will, and do rescind their offers of admission if a student's grades/GPA decline or if a student becomes involved in a serious disciplinary situation after the offer of admission is made.**