



Seven Steps to College Success

Step #1 – Discover (9th and 10th Grades)

Getting ready for college begins a journey of *discovery*. Discover your interests, explore your ambitions, and learn valuable information as you talk with teachers, counselors, and family members. Learn about the different types of colleges and the many options available. Talk to students who are already in college. It is never too early to start to *discover your future!*

Tasks: Create an e-mail address to be used for your college search. Visit college web sites, get on their mailing lists.

Step #2 - Plan (9th and 10th Grades)

What is the difference between a dream and a plan? A dream is an idea in your mind. A plan is the *roadmap to achieving your dreams*. Developing a series of plans will lead you to your ultimate goal of success in both college and life.

No one can write your plan for you. It is yours. Read and use college guides and handbooks. Develop and follow a checklist of tasks, colleges to visit, and exams to take. Work on and refine your plan; it's *your future!* Your success is up to you.

Tasks: Use a college planner and create checklists. Keep to the plan.

Step #3 - Get Ready (11th Grade)

Just as you discover your interests and ambitions, you'll need to discover what *skills* are required for your chosen career. Every career and profession has required skills. Learn them, understand them, and work to be sure that you are ready when the time comes.

Tasks: Meet with professionals, do research on the internet, read a book written by someone doing what you want to do, visit the library, or do community service. Find practical and creative ways to learn more about the profession you are interested in.

Step #4 – Apply (12th Grade)

Your future is about *you*, what you have accomplished, what you have learned, and most importantly what you want to be. You have to tell the colleges why they should want you. Your applications to college should tell your story, what you have done and what you want to be.

Tasks: Write your college essays, go on campus visits, and complete the financial aid application (FAFSA, www.fafsa.ed.gov). Promptly follow up on all college communications and requests.

Step #5 - Financing and Facts (12th Grade)

There are many misperceptions regarding the cost of higher education. Say Yes to Education ensures that eligible students graduating from Syracuse City School District High Schools who enroll in a participating college will have their tuition covered by either grants and/or scholarships or by Say Yes.

Additional costs for a college education include books and fees. For students going away to college, there are also room and board expenses. The good news is financial aid is available to help with these expenses. *Explore all options and sources of funding.* Just like a college and academic plan, students need to have a financial plan for college.

Tasks: For each college to which you apply, create a worksheet listing the estimated costs for tuition, fees, books, transportation, room and board, and personal expenses. On this worksheet also identify all the different resources you have to help cover these expenses. Include financial aid, help from parents and other relatives, wages from part time work and summer jobs. If your resources do not cover the costs of your education, it is important that you talk to the Financial Aid Office at the college. Search for scholarships on the internet. Apply to scholarships for which you feel you are well qualified.

Step # 6 - Decisions (12th Grade)

Toward the end of your senior year, all your hard work will come together! As you hear from colleges, *evaluate your choices carefully.* Discuss your options with your family and counselors. Contact the colleges you are considering and get your questions answered. Don't make up your mind until you have all the information on each of your choices.

Tasks: Discuss college financing with your parents. Call or visit the financial aid office to understand the terms and conditions of all awards you are receiving.

Step #7 - Commit to Success (College Freshmen and Beyond)

Going to college is just the first step to success! From day one you need to *commit yourself* to completing the program in which you are enrolled. There will be a lot of help along the way if you need it. Contact us here at Syracuse Say Yes to Education with any questions or concerns you may have at either college@sayyessyracuse.org or 443-9993.

For more info about Say Yes:

www.sayyessyracuse.org

For more info on College Planning:

www.collegeboard.com