



# FIRST-GENERATION TOOL KIT

This guide is for corporations, nonprofits, and schools to celebrate the success of first generation college students.



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# Table of Contents

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About First-Generation Day	01
Create a Celebration	02
First-Gen Stories	03
Informational Flyer	04
Email Scripts	05
Sample Event Agenda	06
Logos	07
Supporter Sticker	08
Digital Slide	09
Display Board	10
Ideas for Celebrations	11
Student College Prep Guide	14

# About the First-Generation Celebration in November

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**First-Generation Celebration Day is a nationwide celebration of people who are the first in their family to attend or complete college.**

Launched in 2017 by the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) and the Center for First Generation Student Success, the Celebration is a nationwide annual event. During November, colleges, universities, corporations, nonprofits, and K-12 schools are encouraged to celebrate the success of first-generation college students, faculty, staff, and alumni in any and every way possible. This toolkit was developed by the first generation collaboration to help you get involved in planning celebrations across your community.

# Create a Celebration

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## Pick a time in November to honor first-generation students.

This toolkit includes materials you can customize and use for your event, including an informational flyer, logos, slides, display board, and more to help you get creative. Links are provided so you can download them. In the back, there is a list of ways to celebrate first-generation experiences and we are actively inviting speakers who you will be able to invite to your event to share their first-generation stories.

### Event Agenda



A typical first-gen celebration includes hosting a presentation or discussion featuring a notable first-generation speaker. The goal is to help attendees understand first-gen experiences and connect them to career and education options. You may consider:

- Show a display board.....Page 10
- Invite a First-Gen speaker.....Page 3
- Give out stickers .....Page 8
- Many more ideas .....Page 11



### Register an Event

Scan the QR code to fill out a short survey so that we can post the event on the ISU website and share on social media.

When sharing information about your event on social platforms, be sure to tag @COEtalk and @FirstgenCenter and use the #CelebrateFirstGen!

# First-Gen Stories

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## Need a speaker for your event?

We are looking for people from Idaho willing to tell their first-generation story of struggle, perseverance, and resilience. We are in the process of creating a list of first-gen speakers, presenters, and facilitators for first-gen student success conversations that will be up on our website soon. We could use your submission to share with the community so other first-gen students can feel your support! Scan the QR code below.

### Viola Davis Talks About First-gen



[youtu.be/aeSGViZpJ8s](https://youtu.be/aeSGViZpJ8s)

### Michelle Obama's Inspiring Message



[youtu.be/aeSGViZpJ8s](https://youtu.be/aeSGViZpJ8s)

## Share Your Story

If you are a first-generation college student, we want to hear your story. Please scan the QR code to fill out a form to share more about you, your background, and what being a first-gen means to you.



# Information Handout

## UNDERSTANDING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS



### FIRST-GEN CHALLENGES

- 1 Lack of Understanding**  
 Students often deal with all applications (FASFA, admissions, registering for classes, etc.) and college journey by themselves.
- 2 Students are intimidated by college costs**  
 High prices of college may stop students from applying to dream schools.
- 3 Students are afraid to seek help**  
 Many students don't know how to apply for college, financial aid, or scholarships and might not know when or who to ask for help.

### What does first generation mean?

A student is first-generation if neither the parent/permanent guardian has completed a 4 year degree.

### Median Parental Income for Dependent Students

**\$41,000** for first-generation students

**\$90,000** for continuing generation students



### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Tell your FIRST-GEN story**  
 Telling your story can give confidence to first-generation students. Seeing your success can motivate them to follow their dream.
- Celebrate FIRST-GEN Day**  
 Celebrating first-gen day on November 8 by providing key resources and celebrations can help students find pride within themselves and their journey.
- Be open to answering questions**  
 Helping first-generation students navigate the ins and out of getting into college can be crucial to their success.

isu.edu/firstgen | 208-282-3242 | firstgens@isu.edu

For a digital copy go to:

[isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/](https://isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/)

# Email Scripts

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## Request to Speak at Event

Hello [insert name]

The Eastern Idaho First-Generation Collaboration has identified you as a First-Generation Rockstar! Being the first person in your family to complete a 4-year college degree is no easy feat. Our task force recognizes your hard work, dedication, and success. The nationwide First-Generation Day is on November 8th, 2022 and we would like to invite you to share your story so that you might inspire others. It is our hope that your story will motivate current first-gen students to follow their dreams.

We need your help! Please use the link below to complete a short form to be added to our speaker list so that event organizers might call on you to join their first-gen celebration in November.

[Add Form Link]

## Invitation to an Event

Hello [insert name]

[Insert Date, Time and Location]

In celebration of National First-Generation Day, future first-gen college students at Century High School are invited to First-Gen Night. It will be an evening of storytelling and conversation with first-gen teachers, staff, alumni, and employer guests. Attendees will hear stories of the successes and challenges of first-gen college graduates and how they connect their degree to the world of work.

Freshman through senior students are encouraged to attend and bring their parents! Pizza will be served! First-gen supporter buttons will be provided for attendees.

We are committed to supporting our first-gen students year-round. Follow along on social media with #CelebrateFirstGen!

[Attach Flyer]

# Sample Event Agenda

**Date:** [Date]

**Time:** [Time]

**High School:** [High School Name]

**Facilitator:** [Facilitator]

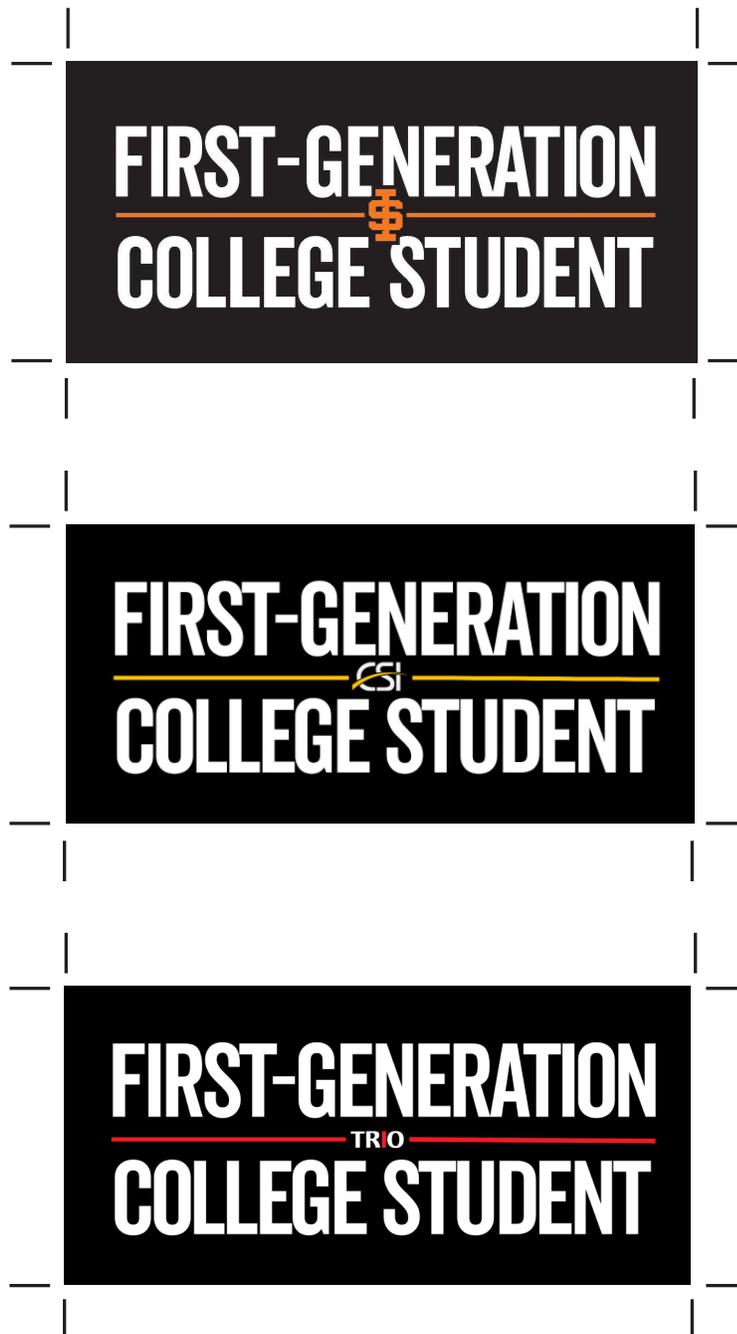
Time	Item
	Welcome
	Define first-generation
	Introduce Guest Speaker
	Share Story – Guest Speaker
	Why “going-on” to college is important
	Provide resource information
	Attending college is not just for high school students
	CTE and Workforce options
	Questions and Answer time
	Sign up for additional assistance
	Thank you for attending
	Adjournment

For a digital copy go to:

[isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/](https://isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/)

# Logos

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For a digital copy go to:

[isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/](https://isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/)

# Sticker

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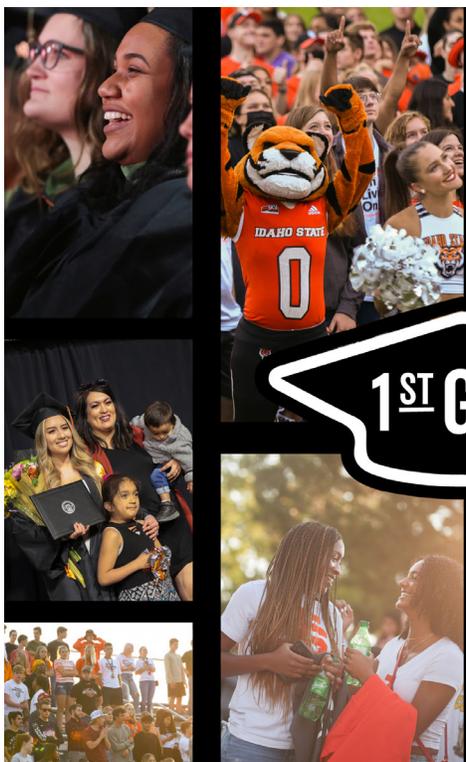


For a digital copy go to:

[isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/](https://isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/)

# Display Banner

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**FIRST-GEN**  
*noun first-gen \furst jen\*

a person who is the first in the family to attend and/or graduate from college

**1<sup>ST</sup> GEN**

**ARE YOU FIRST?**  
You're not the only one. Connect and thrive. Find your community and your way at:

[isu.edu/firstgen](https://isu.edu/firstgen)

 COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN IDAHO

 Idaho State University

For a digital copy go to:

[isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/](https://isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/)

# Digital Slides

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UNDERSTANDING

## FIRST-GEN STUDENTS

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For a digital copy go to:

[isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/](https://isu.edu/firstgen/resources/firstgeninitiative/plan-a-first-gen-event/)

# Ideas for Celebrations

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Below is a list of ideas to engage on November 8 and throughout the academic year. Some suggestions may require creativity and support of partners, but the First Generation Collaboration Committee is here to help with planning, promoting and supporting your events.

- Host a campus event or rally featuring notable first-generation alumni, faculty, staff, students. Empower first-generation student leaders to get involved in planning or to emcee the event.
- Host panel discussions or forums featuring first-generation members of your campus community to discuss their college experiences.
- Celebrate the legacy of TRIO programs on your campus. If possible, identify numbers of students served or major milestones.
- Coordinate a positive language campaign to combat the use of deficit language surrounding first-generation college students.
- Incorporate first-generation faculty experiences into classroom discussions.
- Orchestrate listening sessions by administration, faculty, and staff about first-generation students' experiences and needs on campus.
- Create multimedia materials of first-generation students for use in admissions, orientation, and campus development sessions.
- Interviews with trustees, administrators, and faculty who are first-generation. Consider profiling these individuals in your campus newspaper, websites, or on campus TVs.
- Launch a first-generation student logo development contest to be use for programs, services, and events.
- Distribution first-generation swag to promote your celebration events and continued opportunities. For your celebrations, COE offers t-shirts, sweatshirts, bags, mugs, and stickers in a variety of colors and styles at Teespring.
- Engage local and campus media to cover your celebrations and events. Prepare a short set of talking points to distribute so accurate and appropriate information regarding first-generation students is shared.
- Host a breakfast, luncheon, or snack break for first-generation students to celebrate their success. Invite first-generation leaders, faculty, and staff to attend. Partner with campus offices, bookstores, local eateries, and gas stations to add gift card raffles to your celebration events.
- Ask your university president or member of the leadership to send a public statement support first-generation student success.
- Launch a lecture series for the university community to understand recent media and scholarship surrounding first-generation student success. Start by identifying faculty or staff on your campus who may have scholarship in this area!

- Kick off a brown bag lecture series for faculty to discuss topics related to classroom experiences for first-generation students and offer approaches for improvement.
- Not sure who on your campus is first-generation? Use your celebrations as a way for faculty and staff to identify as first-gen and get them signed up to support first-gen students in some way!
- Highlight the contributions of first-generation students to your campus community. Think about campus leaders, those contributing through service hours, academic achievement, recent award winners, student-athletes.
- Create an infographic highlighting facts specific to first-generation students on your campus to post in academic and student spaces and online.
- Host first-generation alumni networking and career development events.
- Offer resume and interview workshops to offer tips on how to best frame first-generation status in the hiring process.
- Host a job recruitment fair featuring companies committed to hiring first-generation college students.
- Curate a “we’re glad you are here” campaign to remind first-generation students of the ways in which they contribute to strengthening your campus community.
- Meet students where they are, literally! Set up stations in commuter student parking areas to offer breakfast-on-the-go or car winterization kits to students just to brighten their day and feel encouraged and encouraged.
- Designate a campus athletics event as “first-generation” and recognize players, coaches, attendees who are first-generation. Offer a discount to attend.
- Profile first-generation students and programs on the university and departmental websites and social media
- Kick off a campaign to raise funds for first-generation student scholarships or program expansion.
- Announce your commitment to host a graduation ceremony or celebration for first-generation students and their families.
- Send a letter or postcard home to the families of first-generation students to acknowledge the university’s support of their attendance and to highlight successes.
- Ask colleagues to identify how they are considering first-generation students on their programs and services. Offer a “first-gen friendly” designation to reward those doing outstanding work.
- Ask colleagues to perform a “document analysis” of campus publications to see how first-generation students are included and celebrated.
- Partner with campus librarians to curate first-generation book collection. Ideas may include tips on first-generation student success, books with central characters as first-gen students, or authors who are first-gen. Create an online resource!
- Create a visual display of famous or successful first-generation alumni or prominent leaders. Customize for academic spaces (i.e., Michelle Obama, Sonya Sotomayor and Bill Clinton near law or politics spaces, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz in the business school, Common and Viola Davis in performing arts areas.)
- Create a first-generation “bulletin board in a bag” for resident assistants to post in their communities.

- Create programs that also highlight the intersectional nature of first-generation student experiences. Consider beginning with veterans to coincide with Veteran's Day.
- Invite student organizations who may already serve a large population of first-generation students through their membership to come together for a campus dialogue. Have each organization select one first-generation member to sit on a collective first-gen task force or committee to identify collaborative opportunities.
- Coordinate letters or emails from your university president to each first-generation student to reinforce their place within your community.
- Create a university first-generation Snapchat filter and ask students to create stories!
- Launch a "Why I'm First" campaign where first-generation students anonymously or openly submit why it was important for them to go to college to be displayed on campus.
- Announce the creation of awards for "outstanding first-generation college student" and "outstanding campus advocate for first-generation students."
- Organize a first-generation 5k race to raise funds for student scholarships or programs.
- Garner the support of university food service for a "first-gen fill up" opportunity. Each first-generation student receives a special travel mug good for free or discounted beverages on campus.
- Host a "university dinner" at the beginning of each academic semester and invite all first-generation students to attend. If you don't already do this on your campus, plan one for November 8!
- Develop a "First-gen Fellows" program where first-generation students can shadow university leadership, faculty, staff, and community members to learn more about a particular career, interest, research opportunity, etc.
- Identify and promote undergraduate research opportunities for first-generation college students.
- Invite first-generation students from local high schools to participate in programming or celebrations. Develop mentoring relationships between first-generation college students and those in local high schools.
- Support students in establishing a first-generation student organization on campus. Identify first-gen faculty/staff to serve as advisors.
- First-gen Friday: offer a weekly engagement opportunity for students. This could be formal programming, a meal or social gathering, or simply a place to hang out.
- Host a letter-writing campaign to remind state legislators, boards of trustees and state higher education agencies of the needs of first-generation college students.
- Train campus ambassadors, tour guides, and orientation staff on how your campus welcomes first gen students
- Create a programming series for first-generation seniors to begin preparing for life beyond college.

# Student College Prep Guide

## 7-8 SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE

### Student:

- Use an online inventory such as [idaholaunch.com](http://idaholaunch.com) to explore your career interests.
- Talk to a trusted adult about going to college.
- Make schoolwork, participation and attendance your top priority. Ask for help if you need it.
- Seek out extra classes and enrichment activities.

### Parent or Guardian

- Contribute to a college savings plan to begin preparing to pay for colleges.

### Together:

- Read, read, read.

## 9 FALL NINTH GRADE

### Student:

- Work with your counselor to review the approved CourseTransfer list ([coursetransfer.idaho.gov](http://coursetransfer.idaho.gov)).
- With your counselor, create a four-year schedule that meets high school graduation and college entrance requirements.

### Parent or Guardian:

- Establish regular communication with your student's teachers and counselors, so that everyone on your team is up-to-date on college preparation.
- Encourage your student to explore extracurricular activities at school and in the community.
- Check the high school website for events, testing dates, attendance reports and access to your student's grades.
- Find out if your school has educational outreach programs, such as the Upward Bound Programs, Educational Talent Search, Bridge to Success, Liberal Arts High, Road Scholarship, Dual Enrollment opportunities, TRIO.

## WINTER NINTH GRADE

### Student:

- Talk with your adult support team about your academic strengths and weaknesses. Explore tutoring resources to improve in weak areas.
- Enroll in honors courses in subjects at which you excel.

### Parent or Guardian:

- Check in with teachers and counselors to find out how your student is doing academically and socially. (Social challenges can affect academic performance.)

### Together:

- Create a folder for college-related materials.
- Follow the Idaho State University on social media. Find links at [isu.edu/firstgen](http://isu.edu/firstgen)

## SPRING NINTH GRADE

### Student:

- Make an early start on your search for summer internships or jobs, giving thought to positions and companies that are aligned with your goals.

### Together:

- Begin to explore summer academic enrichment opportunities. Some may require applications as early as March.

## SUMMER NINTH GRADE

### Student:

- Create a summer reading list, with input from teachers, counselors and the local library.

## 10 FALL TENTH GRADE

### Student:

- Review your four-year academic plan with your adult support team. Make sure you are on track with college course requirements.
- With a counselor, discuss whether or not you will be taking the PSAT, SAT or ACT entrance exams. Many universities are not requiring or considering scores for these tests in the admissions process. Entrance exams might be required for admission to private universities or colleges.

## WINTER TENTH GRADE

### Student:

- Consider setting up free online accounts with College Board ([collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org)), Next Steps Idaho ([nextsteps.idaho.gov](http://nextsteps.idaho.gov)) and/or Khan Academy ([khanacademy.org](http://khanacademy.org)) to help you research colleges and academic subject preparation.
- Set up a separate email account for all college-related correspondence and check it regularly.

## SPRING TENTH GRADE

### Student:

- Begin early to explore summer jobs and opportunities for academic enrichment and volunteering, being mindful of application deadlines. Ask your counselor about summer courses available to you at local colleges.
- Meet with your counselor to discuss junior year coursework, especially AP and honors courses.

## SUMMER TENTH GRADE

### Student:

- Confirm your summer plans.
- Create a summer reading list, with recommendations from teachers, counselors and the local library.

### Parent or Guardian:

- Meet your student's teachers and counselors.
- Encourage your student to seek help with challenging subjects, enlisting a tutor if necessary.
- Work with your student to find activities, events and performances for the family. Let them take the lead in planning and scheduling.

### Together:

- Seek out and attend college nights, financial aid workshops and other events for prospective college applicants.

### Parent or Guardian:

- Talk to your student about their progress in school. Identify areas in which they excel, and encourage enrollment in honors and Advanced Placement courses in those subjects.
- Discuss potential career paths with your student. Help identify people you know whose careers are of interest, and arrange meetings with them.

### Together:

- Research and discuss colleges and costs. Look into the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship requirements and complete the State Board of Education scholarship application by March 1 ([boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships/idaho-opportunity-scholarship/](http://boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships/idaho-opportunity-scholarship/)).
- Take a tour of a local college or university while school is in session.

### Parent or Guardian:

- Meet with your student to discuss the activities listed at left.

### Together:

- Explore how ISU supports diverse students and communities at [isu.edu/drc](http://isu.edu/drc)

Students who plan to participate in Division I or II college sports should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center in the summer of junior year.

## 11 FALL ELEVENTH GRADE

### Student:

- If you plan to take the PSAT, sign up in October. (See 10<sup>th</sup>-grade notes on entrance exams.)
- Make a list of colleges you are considering, noting campus size, location and resources.
- Learn the entrance requirements for the schools on your list.

### Parent or Guardian:

- Discuss your student's college-preparation progress with teachers and counselor.
- Students who are not eligible for a Social Security Number may be eligible for state aid through the Idaho State Board of Education scholarship page ([boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships](http://boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships)).

### Together:

- Attend college nights and college fairs.
- Take a tour of a local college while classes are in session, to get a feel for the campus.
- Begin researching scholarships at your target colleges.
- Familiarize yourselves with the costs of college: tuition, fees, housing, food, transportation and supplies.

## WINTER ELEVENTH GRADE

### Student:

- Winter break is a good time to meet with friends (and their parents) who are returning from their first semester at college.

### Parent or Guardian:

- If your student plans to apply to a college or university that requires a college entrance exam, ask your student's counselor about fee waivers.

### Together:

- If you plan to apply to a college or university that requires a college entrance exam, register for the SAT and/or ACT 6–8 weeks ahead to get the best exam dates and locations.

## SPRING ELEVENTH GRADE

### Student:

- Review your senior-year schedule with your counselor.
- Research and apply for summer jobs, classes and/or volunteer work.
- Prepare early for the May AP exams.

### Parent or Guardian:

- Use Online tools such as ISU financial aid calculators ([isu.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/net-price-calculator](http://isu.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/net-price-calculator)) to estimate financial aid and get the best estimate of net costs. (You and your student can do this together.)

### Together:

- Begin actively searching for scholarships.
- Continue college visits while classes are in session.

## SUMMER ELEVENTH GRADE

### Student:

- Create a summer reading list, with recommendations from teachers, counselors and the local library.
- Review the ISU website to see if the program you are interested in has a separate Program Application. Practice drafting responses to the application questions. Learn more about your intended program on the ISU Programs website ([isu.edu/academics](http://isu.edu/academics)).

### Parent or Guardian:

- If planning a summer vacation, include a college tour.

### Together:

- Continue to refine your list of target schools, noting their various admission requirements. Consider freshman and transfer pathways.
- Mark your calendars with important deadlines for applications and financial aid.
- If you plan to apply for admission to a college or university that requires an entrance exam, register for fall ACT, SAT. Early registration will ensure availability of the best locations and dates for you.

## 12 FALL TWELFTH GRADE

### Student:

- Identify three or four people whose judgment you trust to review your application materials. Do this early, so they have time to give you helpful feedback with enough time for you to make use of it.
- Ask for letters of recommendation for colleges that require them at least three weeks before they are due. Provide your sources with your résumé, transcript and any other information about your activities, accomplishments and future goals.
- Make sure your guidance counselor sends your transcripts to colleges that require them.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) ([fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov)) for financial aid consideration. DACA students can use their DACA SSN to fill out the form.

### WINTER TWELFTH GRADE

#### Student:

- If you have college friends, meet with them over winter break and gather their suggestions on preparing for the first semester of college.

### Parent or Guardian:

- Review all the steps at left with your student to make sure they are completed on time.
- Review information about October's College Application Month to learn about events hosted in your area on the Next Steps Idaho website([nextsteps.idaho.gov/resources/college-application-week](https://nextsteps.idaho.gov/resources/college-application-week)).

### Together:

- Go over all the admission requirements and deadlines.
- Review details with counselor.
- Apply for any college application fee waivers directly through each college. If you've received an SAT fee waiver, you may be eligible for an application fee waiver.
- If you are eligible for a fee waiver, use it to apply for free to up to Idaho State University ([isu.edu/admissions/freshman](https://isu.edu/admissions/freshman)).
- Attend a college fair or college open house. Review information about October's College Application Month to learn about events hosted in your area on the Next Steps Idaho website([nextsteps.idaho.gov/resources/college-application-week](https://nextsteps.idaho.gov/resources/college-application-week)).
- Create your application account in Apply Idaho ([apply.nextsteps.idaho.gov/account/login](https://apply.nextsteps.idaho.gov/account/login)).
- Parent and student will each create Federal Student Aid IDs (FSA ID) at <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch> to apply for financial aid online.
- For undocumented-status parents of students who are U.S. citizens, you will need to send the provided signature page to the Department of Education, instead of creating an FSA ID, to complete the application process. The signature page will indicate where to send it. Check out this informational document for additional information about Financial Aid and Undocumented Students ( [studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/financial-aid-and-undocumented-students.pdf](https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/financial-aid-and-undocumented-students.pdf)).

### Together:

- Take note of scholarship applications due in December and February
- Attend a financial aid night at your student's school and/or a community event such as TRIO application events for help with filling out the FAFSA and college applications.
- Submit the FAFSA no later than March 1 for priority consideration.
- You will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) electronically or via mail (if you didn't provide an email) within three weeks after you've completed the FAFSA. Verify the information, update (if necessary) and return it. If you don't receive it, call 800-433-3243.

**SPRING TWELFTH GRADE****Student:**

- If you plan to attend a community college first and then transfer to Idaho State University schedule an appointment with the ISU representative located on your community college's campus.
- Look for a summer job, internship or volunteer opportunity.
- Continue to maintain good grades and attendance. Colleges have been known to rescind offers of admission when students don't maintain good grades in their final high school term.
- Look for admissions decisions (and financial aid awards) to arrive in February/March.
- Prepare for the AP exams, held in the first two weeks of May. If your scores qualify, you can earn course credit at many colleges. Send your scores to the college you will attend in the fall.
- If you have been wait-listed, contact the admissions office and express your continued interest in the school.
- Find out about test dates for any placement exams your college might require.

**Parent or Guardian:**

- Review all the steps at left with your student to make sure they are completed on time.
- Compare financial aid award letters. Contact financial aid officers if you have questions. If you have not received enough aid, ask if other options are available.
- Make arrangements for you and your student to attend open house or preview day events.

**Together:**

- Review all acceptance and financial aid letters. Notify all colleges of acceptance or rejection of admission or financial aid offers by May.
- If you have not received financial aid award information from a college within a month of receiving an acceptance letter, contact the college's financial aid office immediately.
- Inquire about summer preparatory programs at the college the student will attend. Some programs offer for-credit courses and can provide a successful start to college.

**SUMMER TWELFTH GRADE****Student:**

- Confirm that your final transcripts have been sent to the college you will attend in the fall.

**Together:**

- Make preparations for the following school year.

