

5 Things Every College-bound Student Should Know

1

Everyone should fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Even if you aren't looking for a federal loan, it's a good idea to submit the application as all colleges and universities use the FAFSA as the first step in determining financial need. Plus many organizations require a FAFSA to be considered for their scholarships. You can find the FAFSA at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>

2

Think scholarships. Think local.

It's best to be strategic when applying for scholarships. Local community organizations are a good place to begin since the odds of winning these scholarships is greater because the pool of applicants is smaller. Besides asking your teachers and guidance counselors you can also use a free scholarship web tool such as www.fastweb.com to help match your interests to available scholarships.

3

Associate to Bachelor degree pathways can save you tens of thousands of dollars in tuition.

Maximize your higher education budget by earning your associate degree at a community college and transferring your credits to a four-year college or university to complete your Bachelor's degree. Connecticut Community Colleges average annual tuition and fees is \$4,431. Compare that to a public university or private college tuition and you'll see why transfer pathways are an excellent return on investment. Here's a listing of [guaranteed transfer pathways](#) available at NVCC.

4

Take a career assessment test to determine the best degree program for you.

It's not unusual to feel overwhelmed about your future career. A career assessment test narrows down your options and helps you focus on what degree programs you'll want a college to offer. Try www.mynextmove.org for a free assessment to see what careers best fit your interests. Salary info and job growth projections are also included on the site.

5

Education is age-blind. It's never too late to get your degree or sharpen your skills.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) [projects an increase of 18%](#) for students age 25 and over enrolled in degree-granting institutions from 2014-2015. Returning Veterans, workers looking to make a career change or unemployed individuals are all members of this growing group of students. Look for institutions that follow work-force trends to find academic programs designed to meet the needs of industry sectors.