

Visit www.ICANSucceed.org or call (877) CPC-IOWA to schedule a free appointment for assistance with college planning or financial aid applications.

August

- Beware of scholarship search and financial aid service organizations that charge a fee. Check with your high school counselor or search for free at www.ICANSucceed.org.
- Get involved! Find an activity at your school or in your community that you enjoy.
- Stay organized by using a planner or an electronic organizer.

September

- Attend college fairs in your area and meet with college representatives who visit your high school.
- Plan to attend the Golden Circle College Fair — the largest in Iowa. Visit www.ICANSucceed.org/collegefairs for date, time and information.
- Consider taking the PLAN[®] (a pre-ACT test) or the PSAT/NMSQT[®] (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) as practice for the actual college entrance exams.
- Keep your grades up. Colleges look at the grades you've earned each year.

October

- Talk with your parents about your college and career goals and what it will take to attain them.
- Have you attended a college fair yet? You can find information on college fairs in Iowa at www.ICANSucceed.org/collegefairs.
- Find a mentor that can assist you through high school as well as the college search process, such as a teacher, parent, family member or family friend.

November

- Visit www.ICANSucceed.org for information on tuition and other fees at colleges and universities in Iowa.
- Talk to family members, friends, teachers, counselors and coaches about their college experiences.
- Keep a record of your extracurricular involvement in an activities portfolio — a concise summary of your achievements, talents and interests.

December

- College can be affordable! Through financial aid, most colleges help ensure your out-of-pocket costs are manageable.
- Talk to your school counselor about college admission requirements and make sure you take the right classes.
- Education after high school doesn't have to include a four-year degree. Find out more about certificate programs, two-year degrees and other programs at www.ICANSucceed.org.

January

- Become familiar with the types of financial aid available for college. Financial aid includes grants, scholarships, work-study and loans. Grants and scholarships don't have to be paid back. Work-study enables students to earn money by working. Loans must be repaid.
- What subjects do you like in school? Search for careers related to those subjects at www.ihaveaplaniowa.gov.*

February

- Begin thinking about college majors. Which majors match your skills and interests? Use an online program that can help you research college majors, like www.ihaveaplaniowa.gov.
- Saving money is the best way to prepare for the cost of a college education. Check out www.ICANSucceed.org for information on paying for college.
- If you're an athlete hoping to play sports in college, plan ahead. Find the academic requirements at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

March

- Visit www.ICANSucceed.org/collegefairs for information on Iowa college fairs.
- Do you know people who work in a job related to your career interest? Interview them about the educational requirements and what they like most about their work.
- Keep saving money for college.
- If your family is planning a summer vacation, try to visit a few college campuses along the way.

April

- Meet with your school counselor to make sure your junior classes meet college admission requirements.
- Get a taste of a future career through job shadowing, volunteer work or a summer internship.
- Participate in hobbies and activities that enable you to explore your career interests.
- Attend a college planning night if your school offers one. Check with your counselor for the date and time.

May

- Check with your school counselor to see if AP[®] classes will fit into your schedule. Challenging courses in high school can better prepare you for college.
- Ask your school counselor if there are any summer camp programs you could attend to help get you ahead.
- Look for a summer job that's related to your interests. Be sure to save some of your summer earnings for college.

June

- Compare several careers. Consider the required education or training, tasks that have to be performed and starting salary, and the characteristics that appeal to you most. Visit www.ICANSucceed.org for links to career research tools.
- Start a summer reading list. Try reading books that will help increase your vocabulary.
- Have a great summer!

July

- Are you attending summer camp on a college campus? If so, take a look around to see if you could imagine attending the school.
- Talk to your parents about college expenses and make a plan to cover them.
- Stay in touch with teachers, school counselors, coaches and community members. Later you may ask them to write a letter of recommendation for scholarship and/or college admission applications.

*IHaveaPlanIowa is a free resource for education and career planning provided by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission and endorsed by the Iowa Department of Education.