



# Cash for College Planner



## Ready. Set. Plan.

If planning for college sounds complicated, relax. No one expects you to be an instant expert. That's why PNC created the **Cash for College Planner**.

It's simple to use and helps you every step of the way. You'll learn when to start the hunt for "free" money; how to figure out the real cost of school; the musts for managing your money and more.

Each section is designed to help you stay on top of important events and give you smart tips on keeping your bills paid—and money in your pocket. Follow the planner, checking each box as you go, and you'll stay on track.

## Getting Into College

The college application process requires a lot of coordination. But with a little planning, you can keep it under control. Here are some things to think about, actions to take and tips about everything from scholarships to understanding your Total Cost of Degree (TCD). Stay organized by using the check boxes to mark completed items as you go.

	TIMING	ACTIONS	DONE!	SMART MONEY TIPS
<b>High School Junior</b>	<b>As early as possible</b>	Search for scholarships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Find Free Money</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Search out various sources</li> <li>▪ Beware of scams—like paying to apply for scholarships</li> <li>▪ Remember, the money adds up—every \$500 award counts</li> <li>▪ Get a high score on your PSAT and you could earn a National Merit Scholarship or other awards</li> <li>▪ Open more doors to scholarship opportunities with good SAT scores</li> </ul> <p><b>Scouting Campuses? Scout Costs, Too</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Look for special savings/student discounts</li> <li>▪ Compare cost areas across different schools (Example: the cost of a hamburger, chemistry book, hotel room near campus, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Compare the Facts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Figure out each school's Total Cost of Degree (TCD)</li> <li>▪ Know when applications are due (school, financial aid) and what is required</li> <li>▪ Get key contact names, school IDs for FAFSA/SATs, address information</li> </ul>
	<b>October</b>	Take the PSAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>April/May</b>	Research schools Take the SAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>June</b>	Make campus visits Get a summer job to save cash for college	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>December</b>	Save holiday cash gifts for school	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>High School Senior</b>	<b>Early in the process</b>	Keep researching scholarships	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>Fall</b>	Take SAT again if necessary  Narrow school selection; get details on top choices  Apply to schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Getting Ready For College

You've done a lot of hard work to get to this point—now set yourself up for success, academically and financially. Here are some ideas that will help you get ready to start an amazing new phase of your life. Stay organized by using the check boxes to mark completed items as you go.

### High School Senior

TIMING	ACTIONS	DONE!
<b>January</b>	Fill out your FAFSA (as soon as possible after January 1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>February</b>	Receive acceptance letters	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>March</b>	Review your student aid report (SAR)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Review aid packages	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Compare final schools based on their TCD and then on financial aid	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select school based on preference AND bottom-line cost	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>May/June</b>	Celebrate high school graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Summer</b>	Cover freshman year costs (deposits and selecting aid)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sign up for classes and housing	
	Define budget for first semester (with parents)	
	Do back-to-school shopping	

### SMART MONEY TIPS

#### ***Avoid Financial Surprises***

- Check your Student Aid Report (SAR) for errors! Any problems with your SAR can make a big difference in the student aid your college offers you

#### ***Money Management Musts***

- Save cash gifts for college
- Open a free checking account; understand how it works—terms, conditions, fees
- Research credit/debit cards that earn points; earn rewards for everyday purchases
- Consider online banking to manage checking, savings and bill paying

#### ***The Money Trail***

- Know the steps required to secure all education funding; are they required each year?
- Does the school require a deposit before registration?
- Know important dates and confirm who is responsible for making sure money arrives on time (talk to parents)
- Check school web sites to understand each school's specific financial aid process
- Sign master promissory note (MPN) with lender for any federal aid
- Fill out required applications for any private loans

#### ***College Countdown***

- Contact roommate to split purchases; buy small-size appliances that fit into dorm room
- Use credit/debit card to earn reward points when shopping
- Make list of items to buy (check to see if the school has a suggested list) and look for sales
- Scout out inexpensive shopping spots near campus

## Getting Through College

You'll remember your college years as some of the best years of your life. And you can make them even more enjoyable by avoiding a cash crunch. Check out some of the steps along the way, and get some help from our Smart Money Tips. Many of them apply each and every year, such as:

- Never stop searching for new sources of “free” money—cash from scholarships and grants!
- Make sure your financing is in place for each academic year:
  - File your FAFSA for next year as soon as possible after January 1
  - Re-sign your promissory note if needed
  - Apply for any additional aid you'll need (some private loans provide funding for one school year only)
- Feed your savings. Even small amounts add up when you save on a regular basis.
- Stick to your budget.

	TIMING	ACTIONS	DONE!	SMART MONEY TIPS
<b>College Freshman</b>	<b>Fall</b>	Take entrance counseling for government loans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Make Your College Budget Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It's a balancing act—where can you save so you can splurge somewhere else?</li> <li>▪ Limit credit card use and avoid carrying an unpaid balance</li> <li>▪ Do a regular “budget reality check” with your parents. Talk about lessons learned and smart choices</li> </ul> <p><b>Search Out New Sources of Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Set loose your inner entrepreneur—tutor other students for extra cash; turn a hobby into a moneymaker; sell your used textbooks</li> <li>▪ Never stop your scholarship search—new ones are available every year</li> </ul>
		Establish a realistic budget and stick to it	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Stash you cash — build some reserves	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>College Sophomore</b>	<b>Fall</b>	Research work-study options (great for your resume)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		Build credit history	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>College Junior</b>		Begin to think about next steps after college — go for grad school or job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>Early Winter</b>	Apply for summer internship	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Getting Through College (continued)

### College Senior

ACTIONS	DONE!
Decide what's next!	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research job or grad school opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Network with recent graduates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review student loan repayment options	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get ready for life after graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>

### SMART MONEY TIPS

#### **Grad School or Job?** **Ask Yourself These Questions**

- What's the total cost of an additional degree?
- How will graduate school provide a career advantage?
- What's the cost of living going to be in your new hometown? What about employment options?

#### **Know Before You Go**

- Organize loan statements—know who gets paid, how much, and when the first payments are due
- Remember, exit counseling is required for all federal loans

#### **Visit Your Bank Branch**

- Meet with branch manager before leaving campus; ask for advice
- Take a look at products that will be helpful in getting established
- Look at interest-bearing checking accounts and higher-yield savings plans & investment options

You'll learn a lot in college, and smart money management could be one of your most important lessons. Invest a bit of time now to learn the financial basics. Get organized, plan ahead and remember to ask for advice along the way. Instead of stressing about how much it all costs, you'll be able to focus on your education, having fun and an exciting future with a strong financial foundation.

If you have any questions to help you stay money-wise while in school, please don't hesitate to visit PNC online at [pnconcampus.com](http://pnconcampus.com).

#### CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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