

College Decisions Resources List: 2016-17

Many great resources offer students the tools and information to help them decide where to apply for college. School counselors, mentors, college access professionals and other caring adults can help guide students through the process. Here are some websites, handouts and other resources that can help students make more informed college decisions:

Apply Yourself Florida (Florida College Application Week) Toolkit

Link(s): <http://www.floridacollegeaccess.org/about-apply-yourself-florida/> (includes Apply Yourself Site Coordinator and Student Guides)

Florida College Access Network offers a free “how-to guide” for educators, counselors and community members interested in hosting an Apply Yourself Florida event. The toolkit, which is adapted from toolkits created by the American College Application Campaign (ACAC) and Michigan College Access Network (MCAN), provides valuable information on how to navigate to and through the college application process and how to plan and host an Apply Yourself Florida event. It also includes a student guide to help navigate the college-going process.

FloridaShines -- Florida's Student Hub of Innovative Educational Services

Link(s): <https://www.floridashines.org/>, <https://www.floridashines.org/go-to-college/get-ready-for-college-careers> (College Checklist and College & Career Planner worksheets), <https://www.floridashines.org/go-to-college/explore-colleges-universities> (explore Florida colleges and universities)

FloridaShines, a service of Florida Virtual Campus, provides online access to educational services for high school and postsecondary students across the state. Students have the ability to search and explore online courses and degree programs at state colleges and universities, check their transcripts and apply to take courses at other institutions.

MyCareerShines

Link(s): <http://www.mycareershines.org/>

MyCareerShines uses a series of inventories to help students find careers that might be a good fit, provides information on the education needed to pursue those careers, and allows students to search for schools that offer the program they need. The MyCareerShines search includes technical schools as well as 2- and 4-year colleges and universities.

Florida Economic Security Report, Beyondeducation.org

Link(s): http://beyondeducation.org/temp/ER_Report.pdf (Economic Security report), <http://beyondeducation.org/> (report landing page), <http://esm.beyondeducation.org/esm/florida/> (accompanying workforce outcomes database)

School counselors and educators who provide information to students about financial assistance for college are sometimes faced with questions such as, “Is college worth it?”. In 2013, the Florida Legislature passed a bill to provide economic and workforce outcome data for graduates of all public postsecondary institutions in the state, which can be a useful resource when discussing the costs and benefits of a postsecondary education with students and families.

Florida Scholarship and Grant Programs

Link(s): <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/home/uamain.htm>, https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/pdf/nm4c_brochure.pdf (Money for College brochure)

The Florida Department of Education’s Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) administers a variety of state-funded grants and scholarships to assist Florida students with the cost of their postsecondary educations. Visit this site for detailed eligibility and award information for over ten state aid programs. OSFA also offers a brochure, which has a briefer, printable version of the state’s financial aid programs.

College Scorecard

Link(s): <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

The College Scorecard, which is offered by the U.S. Department of Education, provides students and families the critical information they need to make smart decisions about where to enroll for higher education. The interactive tool highlights key indicators about the cost and value of institutions across the country to help students choose schools that are well-suited to meet their needs, priced affordably, and are consistent with their educational and career goals.

Up Next

Link(s): <https://www.whatsupnext.us/> (website), bit.ly/UpNextPromo (promo kit)

*UP NEXT, supported by the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative and Better Make Room campaign, is a text messaging tool that provides students with the information and support they need to get to and through college successfully. Students who sign up will receive free and personalized messages on a variety of important information, including how to register for college admissions tests, when and where to file for the FAFSA, and what to do when it comes time to repay federal student loans. To get started, all students need to do is **text "COLLEGE" to 44044.***

Financial Aid Toolkit

Link(s): <http://www.financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/>

The Financial Aid Toolkit, a resource from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid, provides information and outreach tools for counselors, college access professionals, nonprofit mentors and others. It includes videos, infographics, how-to guides, presentation templates and a variety of other financial assistance resources.

College Abacus, Pell Abacus

Link(s): <https://collegeabacus.org/>, <https://pell.collegeabacus.org/>

College Abacus is a one-stop, secure search site that helps students and families compare the net price estimates of 5,000+ colleges. Pell Abacus, released in September 2015, is a tool that helps students who qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch to get net price estimates quickly without answering detailed financial questions that would require a parent or tax form.

¡Ahora en español! For families that would prefer to view this information in Spanish, there is College Ábaco or Pell Ábaco.

Link(s): <https://collegeabaco.org/>, <https://pellabaco.org/>

BigFuture

Link(s): <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

Big Future, a college information portal created by College Board, provides a wealth of information on colleges and universities across the country. Big Future's college search function allows users to find postsecondary institutions by test scores and selectivity, academic program, a college's cost and even which colleges have application fee waivers available.

ACT Profile

Link(s): <http://www.actprofile.org/>

ACT Profile provides students with access to detailed information on nearly 6,000 different careers and 1,500 popular majors. By signing up and creating a profile, students can search detailed information on the careers and majors they are already interested in or take a series of self-assessments to help them pinpoint options that align with their unique interests, skills and values. Students can also explore colleges using the tool's college search function.

Florida College Access Network's mission is to create and strengthen a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to improve college & career preparation, access, and completion for all students. For more information, visit www.floridacollegeaccess.org.

