The following is a guide for the college application process. Since there are so many steps, experts say a good way for students to get started is to create a to-do list during their junior year of high school. There are multiple parts of a completed admissions application, and each college requires something slightly different.

Included below is a comprehensive list of what could be required in an application, in addition to whom must make the submission:

Submitted by you

1) The Application – Many colleges have their own unique application form, which can be viewed and printed on the internet by searching your preferred university. These universities will state their specific process, as well as projected costs within the student application section. For specificity on the cost of college, you would then go to tuition and aid.

2) Others Colleges use the Common Application process, which can save you substantial time by allowing you to apply to multiple schools through a single portal. Regardless of the format, colleges often ask for the following on the application form:

   A) Personal Information – Input your name, email address, phone number, high school, college credits already earned, standardized test scores, citizenship information. Personal information is usually very specific in instructions and all information MUST be completed or you cannot apply.

   B) Extracurriculars – This is where you explain what you’ve done outside of class, and how much time you devoted to it. This is also where you would input any charity work, In addition to including part-time jobs or other obligations like taking care of siblings.

   C) Summer Activities - Explain summer jobs, internships, or other enrichment opportunities. Charity or non profit work can also be included within this section if done during the summer.

   D) Essays – Submit the essays that you’ve written. Each school will have their own essay topic, which range from personal experiences (both positive and negative), future plans or why their school is right for you. This is where you showcase your self from your own perspective which can be very moving to others who read it.

   E) Honors – List any honors you’ve received along with the context of your strengths in weakness. How many students competed for the honor? How many students received it? Why is it important?

   F) Disciplinary Infractions – Detail information on any suspensions or expulsions. You MUST be honest or face severe consequences if caught lying.

   G) Application fee – Pay for your application to officially submit it the application all together. If the cost is too high, speak with your guidance counselor or the college’s financial aid office; fee waivers are often available so that you can submit the applications for FREE.
H) Standardized Test Scores – Your SAT and/or ACT scores must be included in the college application, you will be required to submit official score reports and may have to re-take if scores are low for school standards. These must come sent directly from the College Board (SAT) or the ACT to the college. You can select colleges to receive your scores while you are registering to take the tests, or you can do it later when you get your scores back. Many colleges also ask that you submit results for AP or SAT Subject tests that you’ve taken any. These advanced courses can also be used as college credit limiting how many courses you need to pay for in college.

Submitted by your guidance counselor or high school college advisor

3) Official High School Transcript – The official transcript lists each of the classes you have taken during your specific time in high school, complemented by the grades and credits that you have earned. This will showcase your intelligence to colleges and is usually sent directly from your advisor/counselor to your specified college. Be sure to inform him/her of each of the colleges where you are applying along with the relevant deadlines. Deadlines are extremely crucial and can prevent an individual from going to college.

4) Mid-Year and Final-Year Grade Reports – The initial transcript that you submit with your college application only includes grades through your junior year, which means you must update your colleges on your later grades. Colleges typically ask for an update on your grades from your advisor/counselor after the first half of your senior year and again once you finish senior year. “Colleges do reserve the right to change their mind about your admission (specifically, reject you after you were already accepted) if your academic performance takes a nosedive.”

5) Secondary School Report and/or Counselor Recommendation – The secondary school report allows your guidance counselor to place your academic experience in context in addition to helping form the big picture colleges are trying to get of their potential students. This may require some personal conversations with your advisor/counselor, but it is best to make sure they know your circumstances so her or she can relay accurate information of your successes. Submitted by your teachers and or Mentor

6) Teacher Recommendation – The teacher recommendation is meant to give colleges insight into how you perform academically within the classroom. MUST be completed in a timely manor according to the college guidelines.

Now with all of the requirements laid out, the following is a rough timeline of the activities necessary to successfully apply to college

End of Junior Year-
1. Begin Compiling a list of schools to apply to.
   a. Important Factors
      i. Tuition, Cost of living, Acceptance rate, Average ACT and SAT, Location, similar interest groups, and University racial/ethnic breakdown
   b. Don’t make your list too long, applications become overwhelming quickly. Only apply to schools you feel are the best fit for you
c. Build your list with a schools that are great fits, reaches, and safeties

2. Test Prep
   a. Begin preparations(studying) for the SAT, ACT, or both
   b. Take a practice test to give yourself a baseline for where you currently are compared to where you want to be.

3. Expand your extracurriculars
   a. Search out leadership roles and clubs to join
   b. Look to volunteer in the community

**Summer before Senior year**
1. Begin narrowing school list down
   a. If you have the resources and time visit the schools you are interested to get

2. Complete your common application
   a. Information about this is available above

**Fall of Senior year**
1. Look for college fairs available or any school representatives coming to get information not available online in order to help narrowing your list

2. Test taking
   a. Look for registration dates in August and September for the SAT and ACT
   b. Ace your Test

3. Collect paperwork
   a. Request your transcript to send to colleges
   b. When the fall semester is over send your grades as soon as possible to schools

4. Applications
   a. Look for school specific applications on your list and school specific college essays
   b. Begin applying for financial aid (the sooner the better)
   c. Submit your applications when you are done. (once again the sooner the better)

**Spring Senior year**
1. Application reception confirmations will begin to trickle in

2. Acceptances
   a. During the spring acceptances will first begin to come in.
   b. Another option to acceptance is the waitlist
      i. This a huge ordered list of students who gain acceptances as a spot opens up
   c. After acceptances, you have to notify the school you are accepting their offer, and often put down a deposit
   d. A final transcript is expected after graduation.

**Scholarships Links**
1. Texas scholarships

2. Refugee Scholarships
a. CharterUp National Scholarship For Immigrants And Refugees  
   i. $10,000 each year  

b. Paul and Daisy Soros fellowship for new Americans  
   i. $90,000 over two years

3. First generation scholarships  

4. Additional scholarships are often available from community centers, churches, school districts. Other larger scholarships are also available based on your background and accomplishments. These are typically decide by your resume.