

COLLEGE CORNER

Getting Into College: What Students Need To Know

(NAPSA)—It doesn't take a higher degree to recognize the importance of going to college.

In fact, one study found that nine in 10 students expected to participate in postsecondary education, and eight in 10 expected to attain a bachelor's degree or higher—and with good reason. The College Board reports that, on average, people with undergraduate degrees earned about \$19,000 more in one year than people who only have high school degrees.

Yet despite these high aspirations, low-income and first-generation students are underrepresented on college campuses. One reason may be that it takes a lot more than good grades to get into college. Many of these students lack the information, guidance or know-how needed to get into schools. The following tips may help. They come from the American Council on Education, Lumina Foundation for Education and the Ad Council.

- **Be a pain.** Students need to tell everyone they know that they want to go to college. They should tell their parents, teachers, counselors, coaches and clergy that they want to go to college and not stop until they find an adult who can help them.

- **Push yourself.** Colleges require students to take certain classes in high school, and they need to find out what classes are needed to meet entrance requirements. Colleges look for students who've taken classes that challenged them in high school. Here are other steps they should take:

- Take the right courses. Ask a guidance counselor about them.

- Get off to a good start! Students should study hard, turn in all assignments and strive to earn good grades.

- Sign up for pre-algebra, trigonometry or chemistry.

- Read, read, read!

- **Find the right fit.** There are more than 4,000 two- and four-year colleges, universities and trade schools in the country.



A smart approach can help students from different backgrounds get into college.

These schools range in size from fewer than 100 to more than 50,000 students and offer thousands of courses, subjects, degrees and certificates. So students have an extraordinary range of options. It's important to find an institution that matches their career interests and reflects their goals and personality. Students should:

- Start thinking about future and career possibilities.

- Explore different occupations that match their interests.

- Review academic strengths and weaknesses. Talk with friends and family about careers and possible college choices.

- Visit a local college campus to help get a feel for college and build excitement about going.

- **Put your hands on some cash.** There is money available to help pay for college or trade school. Each year, federal student aid gives eligible students over \$80 billion in grants, work study and loans. Filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step to getting federal financial aid as well as aid from many state, regional and private aid programs.

- Attend financial planning or "how to afford college" programs offered at the local school, church or in the community.

- If a student is a senior in high school, he or she can fill out the FAFSA and submit it as early as January 1.

For more information, visit www.KnowHow2GO.org.