

Online Resources for list building

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College Essay Guy

CEG's "[How to Choose a College](#)" is a step-by-step guide for building a list of colleges that align well with what matters most to you.

CollegeXpress

A great source for searching for both colleges and scholarships. Check out their college lists and rankings, including lists you may not have considered, like "[S...p...r...e...a...d Out: College with the Most Acreage](#)" or "[Colleges Most Like Hogwarts](#)."

Niche

Explore Niche's Best Colleges lists. Their rankings are based on rigorous analysis of academic, admissions, financial, and student life data from the US Department of Education along with millions of reviews from students and alumni.

College Navigator

A free tool from the National Center of Education Statistics designed to help students, parents, counselors, and others get information about over 7,000 postsecondary institutions in the US.

Google's College Search

Search for a 4-year college and get standardized information about admissions, cost, student life, and more. Search results include not just total cost, but what kids actually pay. You can also see overlap schools - people who searched for this college also searched for these schools.

LinkedIn

Find people who have your dream job. See how they got there, including which colleges they attended, what they studied, and what sorts of internships and volunteer experiences they have.

Tips for list building

- There is no "right" way to build a list and there is no "ideal" list size. Building and refining your list will take some **time and research**, but hopefully save you the heartache (and expense!) of making the wrong choice.
- If you are working with a counselor, share your [Corsava Report](#) with them, then review and discuss your results together. They can discuss colleges that are a **good match for you** and their feedback may help you refine your preferences further. Remember, you can always [edit your preferences](#).
- Did you find Corsava on your own? Hook your school counselor up with a free account [here](#).
- Aim to have **a few schools in each** of the following categories: **high chance** of admission, **medium chance** of admission, and **low chance** of admission. How do you know? Well, you can't *actually know* your specific chances, but the College Essay Guy's "[How to Choose a College](#)" includes a few excellent tools for estimating your likelihood of admittance to a particular college. We did mention his guide is one of the best out there, right? Seriously, check it out now!
- **Be open to new locations**. Many colleges give additional merit scholarships to students from different parts of the country. Because of shifting demographics, colleges are reaching farther to find students who are a good fit, so search for colleges with your key attributes that might be farther away. Many also include travel expenses as part of their financial aid package.
- [Add your colleges](#) to your Corsava account.

Keep an eye on cost

- Your **education is an investment**, but be wary of assuming the most expensive education is the best education.
- Complete the **Net Price Calculator** for each college you are considering. This will give you the estimated **actual cost** you will pay. And don't forget that every college website has a "cost of attendance" page to give you real numbers.
- **Merit aid** may not appear in Net Price Calculators, so check out **these tables**, created by independent college counselors Jennie Kent and Jeff Levy, to see what merit and financial aid would likely be at a number of colleges and **avoid surprises** before finalizing your list.
- **Money's Best Colleges** includes some numbers that are hard to find elsewhere, like the percentage of students who receive merit aid.
- Don't forget about scholarships! **Search for scholarships** on **CollegeXpress**. Sign up for **Fastweb**, complete your profile, and view your scholarship matches - scholarships you are eligible to apply for based on your interests, strengths, and skills.
- Consider whether the schools on your list are a **good value**. **Return on Investment (ROI)** is one way to measure value. **Educate to Career** also ranks colleges based on several economic metrics, and has updated their rankings to consider distance learning capabilities.
- Another way to evaluate whether a particular school is a good investment of your time and /money? Use **College Scorecard** to see their student loan default rates. If you need to take out loans, you want to be able to pay them off reliably.

Offline Resources for list building

- The College Finder by Dr. Stephen R. Antonoff
 - More than offering just a bunch of college descriptions, this comprehensive resource will help you pick the school that's right for you--academically and socially. With up-to-the-minute information on more than 1,000 colleges, arranged in more than 500 quick-reference lists, you can't go wrong.
 - Most of Dr. Antonoff's lists are available on **CollegeXpress** too!
- Fiske Guide to Colleges by Edward B. Fiske
 - Published annually since 1982
 - For more than 35 years, the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* has been the leading guide to 320+ four-year schools, including quotes from real students and information you won't find on college websites.
 - Online access available, for approximately \$20, at **collegecountdown.com**.
- Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges by Frederick E. Rugg
 - Currently on its 35th edition.
 - Rugg's focuses on academic departments (majors), rather than schools as a whole.
 - The 35th edition is available for purchase as a downloadable PDF **here**.

Now what?

Congratulations! You've got a list of colleges you are interested in and would love to attend. Maybe it's a long list, maybe it's short and sweet, but before you start your applications, take some time to really get to know your schools. Check out **Refining Your College List** for additional resources and advice.