Data Sources

During the challenge we've been highlighting different factors that go into creating your student's perfect college list. Now it's time to put all that information together and build. We've selected some of the best data sources to help you get the most accurate information you can use to make the best college choice for your family.

Step 1: Visit these Sources

IPEDS: The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System - IPEDS is government data used to analyze trends in postsecondary education in terms of the numbers of students enrolled, financial aid used, staff employed, dollars expended, and degrees, certificates earned and more.

Common Data Set - The Common Data Set (CDS) initiative is a collaborative effort among data providers in the higher education community as represented by the College Board, Peterson's, and U.S. News & World Report. The combined goal of this collaboration is to improve the quality and accuracy of information provided to all involved in a student's transition into higher education, as well as to reduce the reporting burden on data providers.

College Data Spreadsheet - Combines IPEDS, Common Data Set, and compiled data for 1500 4 year public and private schools. The spreadsheet gives the ability to filter, sort and easily compare on any variable.

CollegeData - Helps you conduct a college search, qualify for college admission, predict admission chances, calculate financial aid, calculate EFC, and more.

Niche - Families like Niche to view Niche scattergrams to see where their student falls on the scattergram relative to other students.

Big Future From The College Board - The official college search site of the College Board. Detailed information on each college from deadlines, admissions data, financial aid, and campus life. Ability to compare colleges is more limited.

PayScale - Research and compare graduating salaries by major.

Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce College ROI - Search site to research the 10 to 40 year college ROI based on alumni earnings.

FairTest- FairTest compiles a list of test optional schools.

YouTube - Search for schools on YouTube to see all sorts of videos of college campuses, dorms, classes, activities and more.

Step 2: Putting It All Together & Building The List

It's time to put it all together. Build your list in Excel or Google Sheets and put in the pieces of information most important to you and your student (*i.e what you've found in the past homework assignments*). On the next page, you'll see a sample. You can also visit this link to see the complete template and copy it over into your personal sheet. [Online Sample Template Here.](#)

College Comparisons

	School 1	School 2	School 3
City, State			
Distance From Home			
# of Undergraduates			
Type of Campus			
Early Decision/Early Action			
Admission App. Deadline			
SAT Subject Tests Required			
Potential Major			
Male - Female Ratio			
Athletic Division			
Student-Faculty Ratio			
SAT Superscoring vs. Score Choice			
Tuition and Fees (Per Yr)			
Room and Board (Per Yr)			
Other Fees and Expenses			
Total Cost (Per Yr)			
Avg Need Based Aid			
Avg Merit Based Aid			
NPC Estimated Contribution			
CSS Profile Deadline			
Avg. Freshman GPA			

The College List Drives Everything!