



CAMPAIGN KIT 10 | COLLEGE

College Search Tools

Counselor Guide

KEY TAKEAWAY College search tools can help build a list, but students should verify programs, admission, cost, deadlines, and support on each institution's official website.

Use this guide to help a student turn interest in college search tools into one verified, documented next step. Preserve local counselor judgment and confirm school- or program-specific requirements with the responsible owner.

Counseling conversation

1. Teach the difference between a discovery tool and an official institution commitment.
2. Help the student apply the same criteria across options.
3. Explain data year, geography, sample-size, and outcome limitations when relevant.
4. Verify high-stakes details with the institution or program owner.
5. Document why each institution remains on or leaves the list.

What students and families should know

- Start with the student's program, location, affordability, support, and campus-experience priorities.
- Use federal comparison tools for consistent institutional data and treat rankings or reviews as secondary context.
- Data definitions and reporting years differ, so record the source and date for important comparisons.

Verify before advising

- Do not rely on rankings as the primary rule.
- Do not treat third-party estimates as institution commitments.

Local flexibility: Schools may sequence counseling activities differently. Confirm dates, eligibility, costs, availability, and required documents with the school, college, employer, agency, or program that owns the decision.

Close the loop

Student's next action: Record one action, the information owner, and a completion date.

Follow-up: Schedule a check-back and update the plan if verified information changes.

Sources and verification

Use the linked official sources to confirm current details before release or student use.

1. [Collegescorecard.Ed: Official Resource](#) |
2. [National Center for Education Statistics: Official Resource](#) |
3. [Delawarestudentsuccess: Official Resource](#)