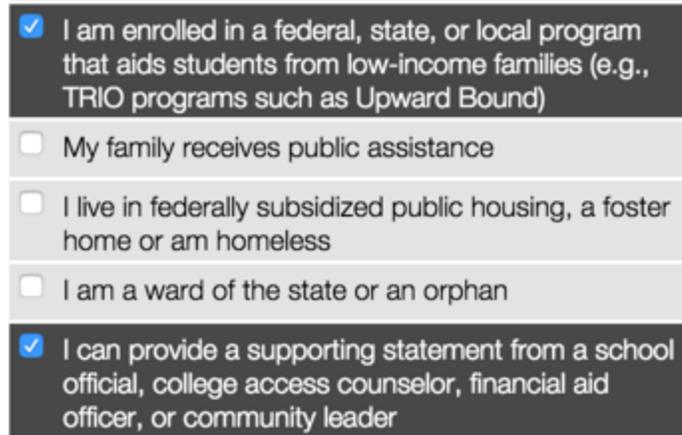


2015 Common Application Key Points Checklist

PROFILE

Common App Fee Waiver -

- For Onsite, everyone should select "Yes" - all app fees are waived for Onsite schools
- Select at least these 2 indicators of eligibility (and more if they apply to you)



A screenshot of a Common App fee waiver eligibility form. It features five radio button options. The first and last options are selected with blue checkmarks. The options are: 'I am enrolled in a federal, state, or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., TRIO programs such as Upward Bound)', 'My family receives public assistance', 'I live in federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or am homeless', 'I am a ward of the state or an orphan', and 'I can provide a supporting statement from a school official, college access counselor, financial aid officer, or community leader'.

- If you think you're otherwise not eligible for a fee waiver, make sure to return to this question and change your answer to "No" after submitting ALL your Onsite applications.

Citizenship -

- Everyone with a Social Security Number should enter it in this section - **it's necessary to be considered for federal and state financial aid.**
- If you do not have an SSN or you do have a DACA number, leave this question blank. Do NOT use an I-TIN or DACA number in this space.

FAMILY:

- Parents marital status / permanent home - every student and family's situation is a little bit different. If you're uncertain how to answer this question, email us and ask!

Parent/Sibling education -

- List specific colleges/universities where your family members have attended. Some schools give preference in admissions if family members have attended the institution.
- If your parent(s) attended college in another country and did NOT receive a degree, you can choose whether to list their college or simply put "Graduated from high/secondary school or equivalent" (because some colleges outside the U.S. do not appear on the Common App's search function)

EDUCATION:

Community Based Organizations:

- For the Onsite, you'll list AT LEAST 2 organizations here. You should include Chicago Scholars (even if you're not in their program - this will let schools know you're doing Onsite) and 'Other' for Illinois Tech Global Leaders. Our name isn't in the list, but a blank will show up where you can enter it.
- If you're applying through POSSE or Questbridge, you'll want to include them here too.
- If you're not in Chicago Scholars, you can come back to this section AFTER SUBMITTING the Onsite applications and remove them from your list.

- ❑ Here's what the Community-Based Organization section should look like for many Scholars:

▼ Community-Based Organizations

Indicate the number of community programs or organizations that have provided you with free assistance in your application process. *

Organization 1 *

Organization 2 *

Organization 3 *

Specify other organization *

Counselor's organization *

Specify other organization *

Counselor's prefix *

Counselor's first name *

Counselor's middle initial

Counselor's last name *

Testing (if you're applying test-optional, please view the videos on Blackboard for alternative directions about filling out this section) -

- ❑ ACT Scores: include your highest Composite score, along with your highest score in each section (Math, English, etc.). For each score, you must list the exact date when you took the test and earned that specific score (i.e. March 3, 2015). This will let schools calculate your Super Score (if you've taken the exam more than once)
- ❑ AP Tests: include all AP exams you'll take this year (with "May 2016" as the testing date), as well as all previous exams where you scored a 3 or above.
- ❑ SAT Subject Tests: if you want to report these, list those here (mandatory if your college(s) require SAT Subject tests)
- ❑ IB and SAT - select and include these tests if applicable. If you're taking an IB exam next spring, you should report it here (with "May 2016" as the testing date).

Activities

- ❑ Be strategic. Put your most important experiences first. This could be the ones that matter the most to you, that you spend the most time on, or where you have the largest responsibility/leadership role. Think about what colleges most want to know - and what you most would want your reader to notice.
 - ❑ Example: "Participant on Chess Team, 9th grade, 3 hrs/week, 5 weeks/year" OR "Student Council Representative, 9-12 grade, 6 hrs/week, 36 weeks/year, Vice President Senior Year" → Which would you list first???
- ❑ Don't forget Illinois Tech Global Leaders Program and similar selective programs!
 - ❑ For GLP, you can list it one of two ways:
 - ❑ **Option 1** If you have lots of activities already, list as one activity. Talk about it being highly selective as well as a STEM, leadership development and college access program. Hours would be something like 4-6 hours/week, 48 weeks/year (grades 11-12). This averages out the summer program and your LGP/college work.
 - ❑ **Option 2** If you don't have 9-10 activities to list, split the program into two entries.

- ❑ First entry: Illinois Tech Global Leaders Program Summer Session, 40 hrs/week, 4 weeks/year (grades 11-12). If you want, you could mention one of your specific StS projects here.
 - ❑ Second entry: Illinois Tech Global Leaders. In the description, name your LGP and explain what you did in the project. Make sure to emphasize that you created your project with just a small group of your peers! You can also mention your college application work if there's space. This would be 3-4 hours/week, 40-48 weeks/year (grades 11-12).
- ❑ Use "resume language" - this means being specific and using action verbs. Talk about what you did and what you accomplished. Example:
 - ❑ not so good - "Participant in Math Team competitions"
 - ❑ much better - "Led Math Team practices for Junior year, when team improved its wins record by 200%. Directed solving of Calculus problems as this subject's specialist."
- ❑ Family Responsibilities - these count! Do you pick up a sibling from school? Babysit instead of being on a team at your school? Care for an older relative? Translate for your parents? Include that information here!
- ❑ Work - if you've had part-time work (especially during the school year), make sure to mention that here. It definitely counts as an activity, and shows your ability to juggle multiple obligations.

WRITING

❑ Personal Essay

- ❑ Goes by a number of names ("Personal Statement," "Common App Essay," etc.). This is the essay you've been spending the most time on, and you'll share it with all of your schools.
- ❑ You'll paste your essay in the box under these directions:

Please write an essay (250-650 words) on the topic selected. You can type directly into the box, or you can paste text from another source.
- ❑ We HIGHLY recommend writing and editing the essay somewhere else (Google Docs, etc.) and then pasting it in.
- ❑ Formatting note: you can't use "TAB" to indicate new paragraphs in this form. To make your essay clear and readable, skip a line between paragraphs (by pressing 'ENTER' twice').

❑ Additional Information

- ❑ This section allows you to explain any interruptions or inconsistencies in your education. If you've transferred schools to find a more rigorous curriculum, if your school closed, or if an illness made you miss significant time, explain that here.
- ❑ This is also a good place to explain things on your transcript that might be confusing. Questions to consider (and that application readers will be asking) :
 - ❑ Did you not take Honors/AP/IB when it was offered at your school? Why not?
 - ❑ You're interested in [subject area], why didn't you take the most advanced/rigorous course like this offered at your school?
 - ❑ Does your school limit how many AP/Honors/IB classes you can take? Or can only certain grades take these classes? Explain this to your reader!
- ❑ BE POSITIVE - this is still part of your application, and your reader will see it. If you're writing anything here, make sure it still shows how you've grown or overcome the challenges or circumstances you mention. Don't let the difficulties define you!