

A photograph of four diverse college students walking along a paved path on a campus. From left to right: a man in a teal polo shirt and khaki pants, a man in a maroon hoodie and grey pants, a woman in a green cardigan and dark jeans, and a woman in a purple cardigan and dark jeans. They are all smiling and appear to be in conversation. The background shows a white building with large windows and green trees under bright sunlight.

# College Application Fee Waivers

**A Higher Ed Guide**

# Dear Colleagues,

Every year, the College Board, along with its members, leads a national effort to propel low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students into the opportunities they have earned.

As a participating higher education institution in the College Board's SAT<sup>®</sup>-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program, you play an instrumental role in expanding opportunity to the most deserving students, improving diversity on campus, and streamlining the student application process.

## How Are We Doing?

We received positive feedback about the SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program from both counselors and participating colleges on a recent survey. We also received great suggestions for how to improve the information that we provide students, counselors, and participating colleges.

The College Board is pleased to provide you with new resources to help make this program as beneficial as possible for you and your prospective students.

## What's in This Guide?

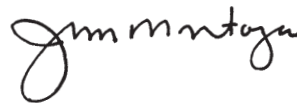
This guide provides higher ed institutions with the information they need to support the SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program.

Inside this guide you'll find:

- Overview and Refresher of the SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program;
- Enabling Electronic Submission of Fee Waivers: Tips and Case Studies;
- Frequently Asked Questions: Helping Higher Ed Institutions Address Fee-Waiver Issues; and
- Ideas to Promote Your Participation in the Program.

We hope that you find these tools and resources helpful. Thank you for your continued commitment to serving all students.

Best regards,



Jim Montoya  
Vice President, Higher Education & International  
The College Board



A Partnership for  
Expanding Student  
Access and Opportunity

# The SAT<sup>®</sup>-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program

## An Overview

- Every senior who has taken the SAT<sup>®</sup> or SAT Subject Tests<sup>™</sup> using a fee waiver receives four college application fee waivers for use at over 2,000 participating colleges.
- Beginning this past academic year (2014-15), the College Board began delivering the four college application fee waivers directly to students online through their SAT accounts.
- Eligibility conditions have not changed — by signing and submitting the waiver, students agree that they meet the criteria for receiving an SAT fee waiver, such as participation in the National School Lunch Program.
- Students can now use a new online tool to search for participating colleges and access relevant application instructions, which is available at [collegeboard.org/waiver-colleges](http://collegeboard.org/waiver-colleges); please contact [access@collegeboard.org](mailto:access@collegeboard.org) with any changes to your school's listing.
- Because students who take the SAT using a fee waiver have already been verified as eligible by their counselors, these new forms no longer require counselor approval. (Note: Colleges may receive fee-waiver forms that have been signed by high school counselors in cases where students were unable to access their fee waivers online.)
- Our fee-waiver forms took on a new look last year; admission officers should familiarize themselves with the new forms, which are available online at [collegeboard.org/collegeappfeewaivers](http://collegeboard.org/collegeappfeewaivers).

[CollegeBoard.org/CollegeAppFeeWaivers](http://CollegeBoard.org/CollegeAppFeeWaivers)

# Application Fee Waivers: Electronic Submission

## How It Works

Colleges have the option of enabling electronic submission of application fee waivers.

Each college application fee waiver has its own *unique application fee-waiver code*. Colleges may choose to program their online admission applications with the option for students to provide this code in lieu of printing and mailing the hard copy forms. A few things to remember:

- The *unique application fee-waiver code* can be found toward the bottom of the online fee-waiver form (see graphic).
- The code is 11 characters long, consisting of both letters and numbers. The first character is always a 9.
- If a code does not meet these specifications, you may want to display a message indicating that the fee waiver entered does not meet the required format.
- If desired, colleges can provide a data file to the College Board with student names and codes for off-line validation. We are exploring the opportunity to offer automated code validation in future years.

College Application Fee Waiver 2014-15 SAT

**MICHAEL STAPLETON**

Congratulations on all your success in high school! You deserve the opportunities a college degree can provide — take the next step by applying to college.

Address: 4213 Ramona Boulevard, El Monte, CA 91733

Date of Birth: 04/16/1999

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

By submitting this form, you agree that you:

- Are eligible to use college application fee waivers.
- Are aware that you can use as many as four fee waivers.
- Understand that participating colleges make the final decision on whether to waive their application fees.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

**STUDENT ELIGIBILITY**

You can choose from **thousands of colleges** that accept college application fee waivers if you meet all of the following criteria:

- You are eligible to use an SAT® fee waiver. (See [sat.org/fee-waivers](http://sat.org/fee-waivers).)
- You have used a fee waiver to take the SAT or one or more SAT Subject Tests™, or have taken an SAT that was paid for by your state or district.
- You are applying for college admission in the 2015-16 school year.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS**

Please complete this form and submit it with your college application.

**Be sure to double-check the following:**

- 1 That you have completed and signed the section above.
- 2 That you are applying to a college that will accept this fee waiver.
- 3 That you follow any instructions the college may have for submitting this form.

Search for colleges that accept application fee waivers at [collegeboard.org/waiver-colleges](http://collegeboard.org/waiver-colleges). Each college has the final say on whether to waive its application fees.

UNIQUE APPLICATION FEE-WAIVER CODE: **91ABC234DEF**

CollegeBoard THIS FORM IS NOT INTENDED AS A WAIVER OF TEST FEES FOR EITHER THE SAT OR THE SAT SUBJECT TESTS. © 2015. The College Board. www.collegeboard.org 16-224

# Electronic Submission Case Studies

Clemson University in South Carolina and East Carolina University in North Carolina share insights and tips about enabling electronic submission on their online application.

## **Clemson University**

Clemson University has seen firsthand how electronic submission of fee waivers can eliminate barriers for low-income students and help them meet standard admission completion deadlines (e.g., early decision, early action, scholarships). The traditional paper process may hinder the ability to meet these deadlines. Tim Galbreath, assistant director of admissions, says that electronic submission is “the best option for students, school counselors, and the colleges.”

The process allows students to focus on getting their additional requirements, like transcripts, test scores, and letters of recommendation, submitted. Electronic fee waivers enable the admissions office to receive the information faster and streamline

processing, possibly reducing 30–60 days from the paper fee-waiver process in getting an application complete.

Clemson acknowledges that electronic submissions may be more challenging for colleges that need to closely monitor fee-waiver usage for accounting purposes. Although the College Board can do an off-line validation to ensure that the applicant’s unique application fee-waiver code matches the code issued by the College Board, a more automated or real-time verification would be ideal. (The College Board is exploring potential options to do so in coming years.)



But overall, Clemson has found that the change has been beneficial both for their applicants and for internal operations. In the past, Clemson found that several hundred low-income applicants never sent their paper fee waivers, likely because they get discouraged by the extra steps required in the process. Now, the electronic submission process ensures that students applying in this manner have the same application experience as the rest of their applicant pool.

## East Carolina University

Dave Meredith, director of admissions at ECU, reported that his team receives over 5,000 fee-waiver requests out of the 20,000 admission applications they receive annually. "That is over 5K pieces of paper that need to be received, opened, processed, linked to applications, etc.," said Meredith.

ECU is working on a validation system that uses the unique code issued on the fee-waiver forms so that the system will process the code and allow the applicant to bypass the application fee section, eliminating the paperwork and staff time currently needed to process the fee waiver.



Schools thinking about implementing electronic submission should consider the following question: Once a student

enters a code in the application, what happens next? "The verification of the code format on the application form is pretty easy," Meredith said. "The slightly more tricky part is working with the payment vendor to ensure the fee-waiver code bypasses the need for a credit card. Because colleges often don't control the payment process itself, they need to work closely with the payment gateway vendors. It is important to be very explicit with payment vendors about the goals in enabling electronic submissions and communicate your institutional needs."



# Addressing Common Issues with Fee Waivers

## Issue 1: Students Sending Incomplete Forms

The College Board has implemented a few changes to the college application fee-waiver form that will better serve students and reduce the amount of time admission staff spends dealing with incomplete or incorrect forms.

- We have updated the fee-waiver form itself to include a more prominent signature to ensure that students remember to sign their forms before submitting them.
- We will expand the frequency and scope of our communications with students and counselors about the college application fee-waiver process and emphasize the requirements for completing the form.

We encourage you to direct students to contact College Board's SAT Customer Service directly with inquiries about the fee-waiver program at 866-756-7346; counselors should call the SAT Educator Help Line at 888-SAT-HELP (888-728-4357).

## Issue 2: Validation

Over the past year, the College Board has worked with select colleges to validate a set of fee waivers submitted by applicants. When provided with a student's name and his or her unique application fee-waiver code, we are able to validate that:

- The applicant registered for the SAT or SAT Subject Tests with a fee waiver and subsequently took the test(s).
- The applicant's unique application fee-waiver code matches the code issued by the College Board.

The College Board is happy to provide this off-line validation to colleges that request it. Please contact [access@collegeboard.org](mailto:access@collegeboard.org) for more information.





### Issue 3: Online Search Tool for Participating Colleges

This past year, the College Board introduced an online tool for students to search for colleges that accept application fee waivers and to check whether a school has special submission instructions. This tool is available at [collegeboard.org/waiver-colleges](https://collegeboard.org/waiver-colleges).

Colleges are encouraged to send any updates or additional information they would like reflected on the site to [access@collegeboard.org](mailto:access@collegeboard.org).

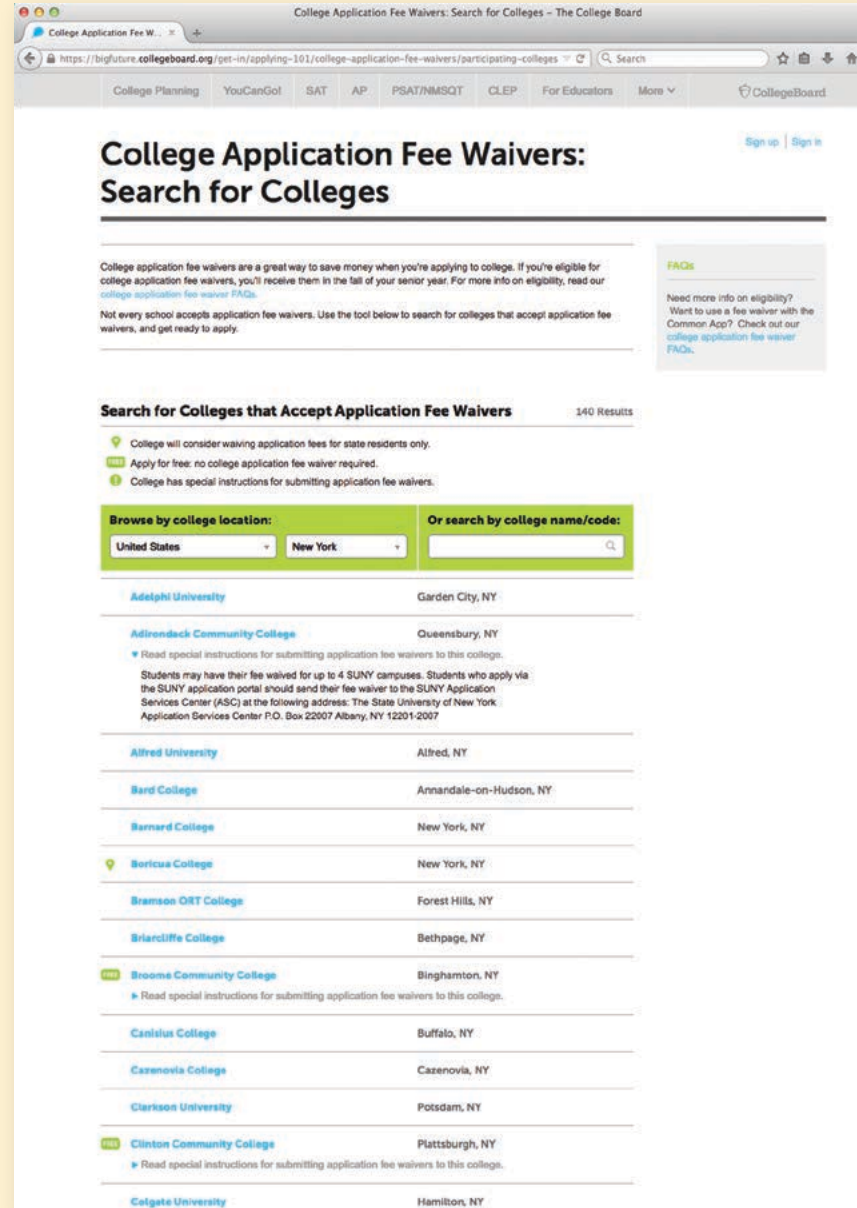
Examples of updates include the following:

- Students applying to Christmas State University should provide their unique application fee-waiver code via CSU's online application rather than printing and mailing the hard copy form.
- Students must send in their fee-waiver form to Christmas State University's admission office at the following address:

CSU Admission, 1 North Pole, North Pole, NP 90210

Note: We are not able to accept letters or memos from counselors in place of a fee-waiver form.

- Starting this year, Christmas State University will no longer charge an application fee.
- Christmas State University will consider waiving application fees for North Pole residents only.



# Promote Your Participation in the Fee-Waiver Program

## Talking Points for Colleges

This section provides several talking points for colleges and universities to use in communicating about their participation in the SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program. We encourage institutions to customize these messages to meet the needs of their prospective students.

We join more than 2,000 participating higher education institutions working to better serve all students through the College Board's SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program.

We know that the college application process can be complex and expensive, especially for students applying to more than one institution.

[INSTITUTION NAME]'s participation in the SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program aligns with our long-standing commitment to diversity on campus, ensuring that application fees are not a barrier to college access for low-income students.

Recent changes to the SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program streamline and simplify the process for students, counselors, and advisers by no longer requiring a second counselor validation.

Research shows that giving college application fee-waiver forms directly to low-income students improves their college application and enrollment rates.

Because students who take the SAT with fee waivers have already had their eligibility verified by their counselors, these forms do not require counselor approval, and students do not have to identify themselves as low income more than once.

## Short Message for Your Institution's Website

The College Board appreciates your support of the SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program. We realize that our collective success depends on keeping your prospective students informed about how they can take advantage of this program. Some institutions are promoting their participation in the program on their websites and in their publications. Based on that practice, we are sharing a sample message you may wish to use or modify.

Our institution proudly participates in the College Board's SAT-to-College Application Fee-Waiver Program. If you took the SAT using a fee waiver, you automatically qualify for a college application fee waiver to apply for admission here at Christmas State University. You can learn more about this program at:

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/  
applying-101/college-application-fee-waivers#](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-fee-waivers#)



For more information and updates on our  
upcoming summer webinars, please visit:  
[CollegeBoard.org/CollegeAppFeeWaivers](http://CollegeBoard.org/CollegeAppFeeWaivers)