

2024



# GAP YEAR

## PROGRAMS

### GAP PROGRAMS IN 2024

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How To Find and  
Fund Your Gap Year  
Experience





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## Presenting the 2024 Guide to **GAP YEAR PROGRAMS**



**GOT QUESTIONS  
OR SUGGESTIONS?**



Email me at  
[mschwartz@teenlife.com](mailto:mschwartz@teenlife.com)

**E**ach year, the new graduating class of high school seniors face a growing world that is full of possibilities and uncertainties. After spending +10 years of your life in a rigid academic institution, college-bound students may wonder if something more could be gained before they enter higher learning.

If you are willing, there is a life-changing gap experience out there waiting to be found. Maybe it's across the country, on the other side of the world, or in the middle of the ocean. Maybe it is with old friends, new friends, or strangers that you will remember for the rest of your life.

We want to help you feel empowered to find that gap program. Included in this guide are some of the most unique and exciting programs, along with articles that offer guidance, key things to look for, and scholarship information.

It takes a lot of courage to take the unbeaten path, but the benefits can be unlimited. All you have to do is take the first step.

Marie Schwartz  
CEO & Founder  
TeenLife Media, LLC

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# 2024 GUIDE TO GAP YEAR PROGRAMS

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# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING A GAP YEAR?



**T**aking a gap year will have a profound impact on your life, from your college experience to your career and beyond. There are several benefits that will come from your program, but these are the three biggest gap year benefits.

## **GAP YEAR BENEFIT #1: TAKING A GAP YEAR WILL BETTER PREPARE YOU FOR COLLEGE.**

Being successful in college requires a set of skills that are unique from the ones needed to thrive in the high school environment. In addition to discipline, social skills, and drive, students who are more independent and confident than their peers will have an advantage.

Most students leave high school without the skills needed to succeed in the college environment, and often — they graduate feeling unprepared for what's next.

Taking a gap year will equip you with the skills you need to succeed in the college environment and will prepare you for whatever comes next. Gap year programs teach students how to manage their time, take care of themselves, and navigate cultures and environments that are different from their own. In this setting, you will undoubtedly gain confidence and learn how to interact with all types of individuals.



Additionally, taking a gap program allows you to step out of the classroom and explore interests and passions. By leaving the confines of a classroom behind, you'll reignite your love of learning through cooking classes, language practice, historic walking tours, cultural exchange, and more. Many students fear they won't return to school after their gap program, but this is a common misconception!

You'll return from your gap program feeling more motivated to return to the classroom. And, with a renewed sense of clarity surrounding your desired area of study or career aspirations.

A recent study conducted by UNC Chapel Hill found that students who took a gap year earned GPAs that were .1 to .4 points higher than their peers. Gap year alumni are also more likely to graduate within four years, compared to the national average of six years. Gap year benefits are college benefits.

### **GAP YEAR BENEFIT #2: TAKING A GAP YEAR WILL HELP YOU FIND YOUR DIRECTION.**

You probably grew up your whole life with the expectation of finishing high school, going straight to a 4-year college, graduating, and starting a full-time job. During this time, you're expected to figure out your major, your passions in life, your career path, your interests, your working style, and so much more. Hello stress!

A gap year will help you learn more about yourself and yourself in the world. Whether you volunteer with elephants in Thailand or intern in a global city like Stockholm, you'll expose yourself to different kinds of people, places, and ways of life that will ultimately teach you more about

yourself. In a recent study conducted by the Gap Year Association, 60% of gap year alumni say their gap year helped define their career path, and 77% said it helped them find a purpose in life.

### **GAP YEAR BENEFIT #3: TAKING A GAP YEAR WILL SET YOU UP FOR SUCCESS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.**

Taking a gap year can help you cultivate a growth mindset and see every challenge as a growth opportunity. Having a growth mindset means you have a passion for learning and is a key quality that will undoubtedly take you far in life.

Another quality you will develop during your gap program is adaptability. Taking a gap program will take you far outside your comfort zone and teach you how to adapt in new environments. You will be immersed in a multitude of cultures and places during your gap program, so by the time you return home, transitioning through change will be more comfortable for you. This will translate into an easier time handling big changes in career, family, love, and more.

These two qualities, along with the dozens of soft skills you will undoubtedly gain during your gap program, will make you an attractive candidate for a future job or continued education. Plus, you'll feel more confident in social situations!

As you can see, there are countless benefits that come from taking a gap year. By signing up for a program like EF Gap Year, you'll build real-world skills, make lifelong memories, and return home a better you.

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*EF Gap Year is not an alternative to college—we're about preparing you to make the most of college, your career, and the rest of your life. Our innovative experiential learning model helps students discover their goals while equipping them with the confidence and skills to get there, all over the world. With Year, Semester, Short-Term, and Study Abroad experiences focused on guided exploration and cultural immersion, there's an EF Gap program for everyone.*

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[seamester.com](https://seamester.com)



# READY FOR AN EPIC GAP YEAR?

## Discover the Top 5 Considerations to Make Your Educational Journey Unforgettable

BY SHOSHANA ESPEUT

Embarking on a gap year is a big decision, but with careful planning, it can be a transformative experience. Here are the top 5 considerations to guide you in mapping out your gap year journey.

### 1. CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROGRAM - TAILOR YOUR EXPERIENCE

Choosing the ideal gap year program is essential for a rewarding experience. Reflect on your interests and aspirations. Institutions with specialised programs provide a unique mix of cultural immersion and academic enrichment so explore programs that align with your passions and your chosen field of study.

### 2. FINANCIAL PLANNING - SET A REALISTIC BUDGET

Finances are a critical aspect of planning a successful gap year. Create a realistic budget by considering program costs, accommodation, travel, and daily expenses. Look for scholarships and financial aid options to ease the financial burden, either offered by the program or through third-parties. (For example, Sotheby's Institute of Art is committed to accessibility, offering various financial support avenues.)

### 3. CULTURAL IMMERSION - ENRICH YOUR JOURNEY

A gap year is not just a break, it's a golden opportunity for cultural exploration. Immerse yourself in diverse environments and vibrant hubs like London, New York and further afield. A new location presents a unique opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives and foster a deeper understanding of the world.

### 4. SKILL DEVELOPMENT - INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE

Use your gap year to acquire skills that will set you apart. Throughout your gap year experience, you will gain distinctive skills like leadership. Explore the range of programs on offer that are tailored to your needs and future aspirations, ultimately contributing to your personal and professional growth.

### 5. NETWORK BUILDING - CULTIVATE OPPORTUNITIES

Building a network during your gap year can be a game-changer. Engaging in workshops, lectures, and events to broaden connections will create global networks for potential opportunities and collaborations.

Embark on your gap year journey with these considerations in mind and unlock a world of possibilities, where each experience shapes a personal journey filled with enriching encounters and valuable insights. Look for programs that are focused around your passions and interests, whether it's for a career or personal growth.

Interested in the art world? Sotheby's Institute of Art is a beacon for those passionate about art and cultural studies. The Institute offers a Gap Year Program for curious students aged 18-21 who wish to explore London and the art world.

For more information on Sotheby's Institute of Art Gap Year Program, [click here](#).

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*Shoshana Espeut, London-based Marketing Manager at Sotheby's Institute of Art, combines creativity and strategy to promote art education globally.*



Scan this QR code to connect  
with these programs!

# GAP YEAR PROGRAMS



## AFRICAN IMPACT: THE AFRICAN GAP YEAR EXPERIENCE | [africanimpact.com](https://africanimpact.com)

Since 2004, we've been providing life changing experiences in Africa. From a large range of Community and Conservation programs across 6 destinations, we can tailor make the perfect Gap Year experience. With a dedicated team to help you every step of the way, you'll soon be immersed in amazing new cultures, witnessing incredible landscapes as well as learning new skills and giving back to the local communities. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Tuition:** \$1,955
- ▶ **Destinations:** South Africa, Zambia, Zanzibar, Kenya, Mozambique, Zimbabwe
- ▶ **Interests:** Adventure/Travel, Career Exploration, Community Service, Environment/Conservation, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions
- ▶ **Session Length:** 2 weeks to 12 weeks
- ▶ **Session Start:** January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December
- ▶ **College Credit:** No
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Payment Terms





## AMDA GAP PROGRAMS IN ACTING AND MUSICAL THEATRE | [amda.edu/gap-program](http://amda.edu/gap-program)

Explore your passion. Experience life. The AMDA Gap Programs offer world-class training in the dynamic performing arts focus of your choice: acting for stage and screen or musical theatre. Join AMDA's community of performing artists for 8-weeks in the Summer or Fall, or 3-weeks in the Winter to experience the very best in performance education. Passionate performers who are high school graduates aged 18 to 25 are encouraged to apply. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Session Length:** 3 Weeks or 8 Weeks
- ▶ **Destination:** New York, NY
- ▶ **Tuition:** \$7,355 (3 Weeks) or \$19,737 (8 Weeks)
- ▶ **Interests:** Academic, Arts, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Session Start:** January, April, June, October
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions



- ▶ **College Credit:** No
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Grants/Scholarships

## ARCC GAP | [arccprograms.com/gap-overview/gap-programs](http://arccprograms.com/gap-overview/gap-programs)

ARCC Gap Programs offer an educational and cultural bridge between high school and college. These small, group-based semesters are an opportunity to live, work, learn, and explore in some of the greatest classrooms on earth. Designed with a rich academic fabric complementing each and every location, they highlight regional issues that are directly linked to global challenges. ARCC semesters are a unique blend of education, adventure, project-based learning, cultural immersion, and outdoor adventure. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Tuition:** \$14,000 to \$16,000
- ▶ **Destinations:** Central America, South America, Africa, Asia, Oceania, United States, Europe
- ▶ **Session Length:** 70 Days
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions
- ▶ **Interests:** Adventure/Travel, Community Service, Environment Conservation, Leadership, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Session Start:** February, September



- ▶ **College Credit:** Yes
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Grants/Scholarships, Payment Terms



## CMC NASHVILLE | [cmcnashville.com](http://cmcnashville.com)

A fully immersive entertainment industry training ground for college age students with a faith-based worldview. Includes: live events training ground; pre-professional training; hands on & immersive education; industry job connections; 24/7 access to world-class gear; business, artist, technical tracks faculty who are working music industry professionals; 20+ Year History; 1200+ Alumni; and 16 College Credits! **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Session Length:** One Semester
- ▶ **Destination:** Nashville, TN
- ▶ **Tuition:** \$17,600
- ▶ **Interests:** Arts, Business & Entrepreneurship, Career Exploration
- ▶ **Session Start:** January, August
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions



- ▶ **College Credit:** Yes
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Grants/Scholarships, Payment Terms

# GAP YEAR PROGRAMS



## EF GAP YEAR | [efgapyear.com](http://efgapyear.com)

An EF Gap Year program is not an alternative to college—it's about preparing you to make the most of college, your career, and the rest of your life. Our innovative experiential learning model helps students discover their goals while equipping them with the confidence and skills to get there, all over the world. With Year, Semester, Short-Term, and Study Abroad programs focused on guided exploration and cultural immersion, there's an EF Gap experience for everyone. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Session Length:** 4 Weeks, 10 Weeks, & 23 Weeks
- ▶ **Interests:** Adventure/Travel, Business & Entrepreneurship, Environment/Conservation, Language, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **College Credit:** Yes
- ▶ **Destinations:** Across Europe, Asia, Oceania, Latin America
- ▶ **Session Start:** February, July, September, October
- ▶ **Tuition:** \$7,900 to \$39,750
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions



## INGENUITY YEAR | [ingenuityyear.org](http://ingenuityyear.org)

Ingenuity Year is a gap year program for non-conventional thinkers aged 17-21 to explore global problems on a local level while working on a set of skills for problem-solving that will lay a firm foundation for success in college. Some of our biggest growth occurs outside of the classroom, engaging with the world. At Ingenuity Year, students in our gap year program engage with real challenges and learn with real communities. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Session Length:** +2 Months
- ▶ **Interests:** Adventure/Travel, Community Service, Environment/Conservation, Learning Differences, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **College Credit:** No
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Not Available
- ▶ **Destination:** Maine
- ▶ **Session Start:** September
- ▶ **Tuition:** \$16,500
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions



## RALEIGH YOUTH LEADER PROGRAMMES IN COSTA RICA & SOUTH AFRICA | [raleighinternational.org](http://raleighinternational.org)

Raleigh is a youth leadership organization that aims to inspire, empower, and equip the next generation of global leaders through international volunteering projects in South Africa and Costa Rica. To date we have sent over 55,000 young people on expeditions, this includes the likes of Prince Williams and his wife Kate, and the British astronaut Tim Peake. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Tuition:** \$3,520 (4 Weeks); \$4,975 (7 Weeks); and \$5,300 (10 Weeks)
- ▶ **Destinations:** South Africa & Costa Rica
- ▶ **Interests:** Adventure/Travel, Career Exploration, Environment/Conservation, Leadership, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions
- ▶ **Session Length:** 4 Weeks, 7 Weeks, or 10 Weeks
- ▶ **Session Start:** February, March, June, July, October, November
- ▶ **College Credit:** No
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Payment Terms



## SEA|MESTER - ADVENTURE & ACADEMIC GAP YEAR AT SEA | [seamester.com](http://seamester.com)

We offer exceptional educational adventures where students live full-time aboard a sailing schooner while spending a semester of their gap year voyaging between islands, countries, and continents in any number of global locations. Sailing and scuba certifications are included, in addition to up to 12 college credits in leadership, ocean, marine, and nautical sciences from the University of South Florida. At Sea|Mester, you'll learn, see and experience those things that most students only read about in books. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Tuition:** Varies, \$7,000 (21 days) to \$27,000 (90 days)
- ▶ **Destinations:** Global - Multiple Countries Per Voyage
- ▶ **Session Length:** 20 to 90 days
- ▶ **Interests:** Academic, Adventure/Travel, Environment/Conservation, Leadership, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions
- ▶ **Session Start:** January, February, June, July, September
- ▶ **College Credit:** Yes
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Grants/Scholarships, Payment Terms

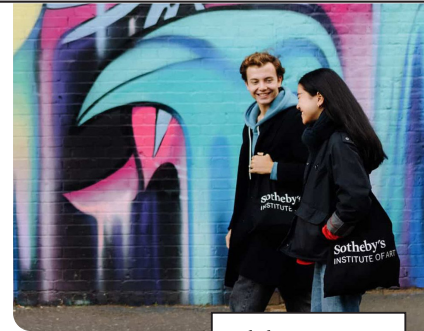


## SOTHEBY'S INSTITUTE OF ART: GAP YEAR LONDON

[sothebysinstitute.com](http://sothebysinstitute.com)

Built around the unrivaled access of Sotheby's Institute of Art, the Gap program invites curious students to explore London and the art world. Offered as 6-week and 12-week terms, the program is ideal for students who are passionate about the wider arts and want to embark on a journey of self-discovery and cultural immersion. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Tuition:** £11,000 - £22,500
- ▶ **Destination:** London, UK
- ▶ **Session Length:** 6 Weeks or 12 Weeks
- ▶ **Interests:** Academic, Adventure/Travel, Arts, Career Exploration, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions
- ▶ **Session Start:** September, October
- ▶ **College Credit:** No
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Grants/Scholarships



Sotheby's INSTITUTE OF ART



## THE BLACKBIRD ACADEMY | [theblackbirdacademy.com](http://theblackbirdacademy.com)

The Blackbird Academy has quickly risen to a top-tier school for professional audio (consistently ranked in the top 5 audio/engineering schools) and has a world-renowned reputation for outstanding graduates in both our, Live Sound & Studio Engineering Programs. Unlike other nationally ranked schools, The Blackbird Academy places unparalleled emphasis on mentor-based, hands-on education. Our students graduate not only with the technical skills needed to work in audio, but learn the art of production from the top creative names in the industry. The Blackbird Academy students have +700 hours of hands-on training. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Session Length:** Academic Year
- ▶ **Interests:** Arts, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Session Start:** January, April, July, October
- ▶ **College Credit:** No
- ▶ **Destination:** Nashville, TN
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions
- ▶ **Tuition:** \$23,100
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Payment Terms



the  
blackbird  
academy





## The School of The New York Times

- ▶ **College Credit:** No
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Grants/Scholarships

## THE SCHOOL OF NEW YORK TIMES: GAP YEAR NEW YORK CITY

[nytedu.com/gap-year](https://nytedu.com/gap-year)

Gap Year New York City is designed to foster these moments of reflection, self-discovery and exploration. This program allows you to study in NYC with New York Times journalists and other industry experts who will deepen your understanding of the world, widen your horizons and help you plan for the future. **Learn More »**

- ▶ **Session Length:** 6 weeks or 12 weeks
- ▶ **Session Start:** January, March, September, November
- ▶ **Tuition:** \$9,975 (6 Weeks) & \$17,950 (12 Weeks)
- ▶ **Interests:** Academic, Adventure/Travel, Career Exploration, Leadership, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Destination:** New York, NY
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions



## WHERE THERE BE DRAGONS GAP SEMESTERS

[wheretherebedragons.com](https://wheretherebedragons.com)

Founded in 1993, Dragons runs immersive & responsible travel programs in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and North America. Dragons 3-month Gap Semesters allow students to immerse themselves in new cultures, learn how to travel with intention, and gain skills through language study, hands-on apprenticeships, and local homestays. Gap Year students go behind-the-scenes, and genuinely connect to a different way of life. We offer programs for students ages 17-22, and all programs have optional college credit available. **Learn More »**



GAP YEAR  
ASSOCIATION  
MEMBER

- ▶ **College Credit:** Yes
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Grants/Scholarships, Payment Terms

- ▶ **Session Length:** 3 Months
- ▶ **Session Start:** February, March, June, September
- ▶ **Tuition:** \$16,550 to \$18,950
- ▶ **Interests:** Adventure/Travel, Environment/Conservation, Language, Leadership, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Destination:** Nepal, Bolivia/Peru, Guatemala/Mexico, Indonesia, Senegal, Morocco/Spain, Thailand/Cambodia/Laos, India, Bhutan, China/Taiwan, Colorado
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions



## YMCA OF THE ROCKIES GAP PROGRAMS

[jobs.ymcarockies.org/gap-program](https://jobs.ymcarockies.org/gap-program)

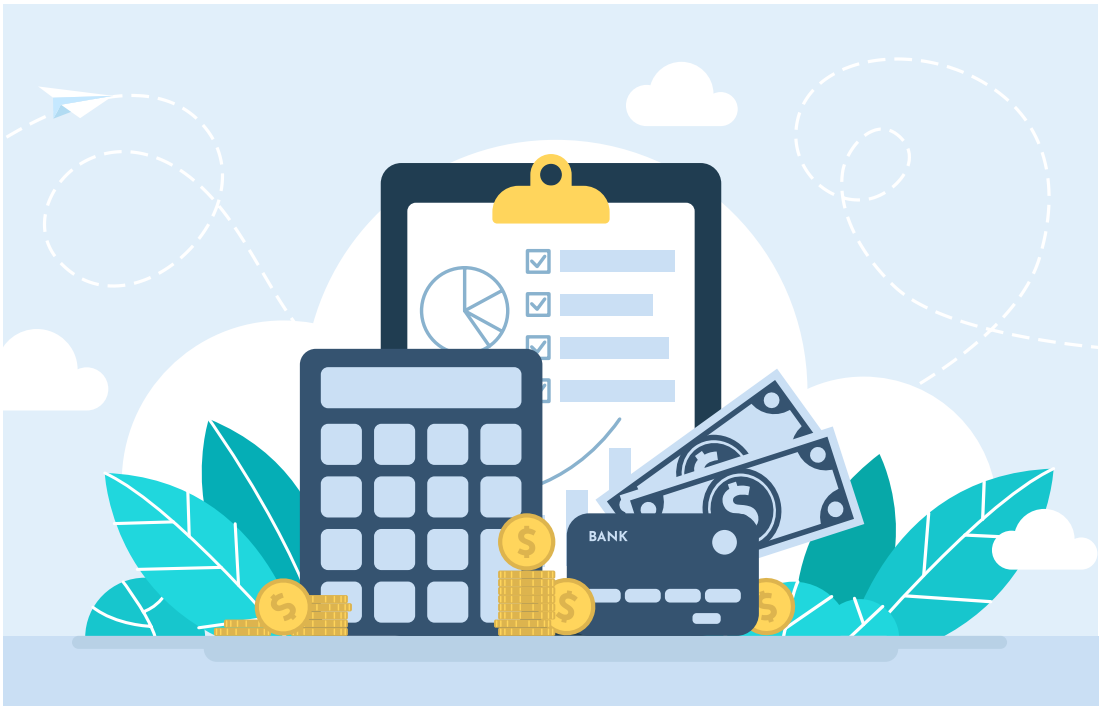
Located in the gateway towns to Rocky Mountain National Park, YMCA of the Rockies operates two family resorts and conference centers serving over 250,000 guests each year. The Gap Programs at YMCA of the Rockies are designed to help young adults grow in their personal and professional lives while creating memories that will last a lifetime. The programs are divided into two tracks: the Discover Program at Snow Mountain Ranch and the Elevate Program at Estes Park Center. **Learn More »**



GAP YEAR  
ASSOCIATION  
MEMBER

- ▶ **College Credit:** No
- ▶ **Financial Aid Options:** Grants/Scholarships
- ▶ **Tuition:** \$250 for Elevate Gap, Free for Discover Gap
- ▶ **Destinations:** Rocky Mountains, Colorado
- ▶ **Session Length:** February, August
- ▶ **Interests:** Adventure/Travel, Career Exploration, Environment/Conservation, Leadership, Self-Discovery
- ▶ **Application Deadline:** Rolling Admissions
- ▶ **Session Start:** One Semester, Academic Year





# FOUR STRATEGIES TO FUND THE GAP YEAR OF YOUR DREAMS

BY KAY KEOUGH

**W**hether you want to see the world, test out an interest or learn a new skill, taking a gap year after high school can send you in an exciting new direction. But is it possible to have an affordable life-changing experience and still have enough money to return to the even-more expensive world of academia?

Absolutely, say the experts, and they are keenly aware of your budgetary concerns.

"But first," says Jane Goldstone Sarouhan, Co-Founder & Gap Year Consultant at J2Guides, "students need to begin the process with brainstorming their goals and needs. Once they have a sense of those goals, then we take a closer

look at the budget and start exploring strategies, scholarships, and resources."

## 1. START AND SAVE EARLY.

The first step is talking with your parents. Julia Rogers, Founding Director of EnRoute Consulting, adds "Either way, it's important to begin with some transparent talks about the family budget in the context of gap year experiences. Will parents or extended family contribute to a gap year? If so, how much? Are there opportunities they are willing to support or not? Knowing this from the outset helps students to determine how much they need to fund in other ways to design the best possible year for themselves."

"The advice I give students" says Katherine Stievater, Founder of Gap Year Solutions, "is to fund a portion of their Gap Year by having a part-time job. This could be bussing tables in a restaurant, lifeguarding, working at a retail store, or other local jobs. This has the added benefit of giving students experience with a supervisor and having to show up on time."

Sarouhan tells students that they will very likely divide their year up into a few parts. "Consider living at home and working for a few months as a way to save money. If traveling is one of your goals, there are quite a few ways to do so low-cost, including countless work exchange opportunities where you will receive housing and meals in exchange for your labor."

## 2. CONSIDER USING YOUR 529 OR GRANTS.

This option is only available for gap programs that offer college credit. There are many gap programs that partner with colleges in the United States, offering college credit for those who enroll (you do not have to be enrolled in the college). If you follow this route, then you can use your 529 college savings plan or Pell grant to pay for your gap experience.

Keep in mind that while Pell grants do not need to be repaid, they are a needs-based grant and it is geared towards expenses like room and board, textbooks, and other educational related expenses. Therefore a Pell grant could go towards paying for housing during your gap program.

## 3. APPLY TO RELEVANT SCHOLARSHIPS.

There are scholarships available for gap programs, however they are limited in their amount and you are competing against a much larger audience. They also have more narrow requirements, like requiring that the trip be service oriented or must complete a specific goal before the end of the program (like bringing clean water to a community).

For example, Hostelling International offers a scholarship (\$2,000) for up to 25 young Americans with "demonstrated financial need" to take an international trip that is focused on education or community service. They also offer up to five scholarships (\$3,000) to young Americans who never had a passport to help pay for their first trip abroad.

The Rotary Foundation offers scholarships for secondary school, undergraduate, or graduate students who want to study locally or abroad. However, the scholarships are awarded by district so the first step for potential applicants is to find their district chapter of the Rotary Club and see their requirements for scholarships.

There is also the Fund for Education Abroad (FEA) which allows applicants to submit a single application which allows them to see if they are awarded a wide number of scholarships.

However it is open to historically underrepresented study-abroad populations, like students of color, first-generation college students, and community college students.



The Pollination Project offers grants to individuals who are focused on sustainability, community driven, and a plan of action on how to make their world and community a better place. This grant would fit a specific type of gap year, but may be a better fit for individuals who have a self-structured and driven gap year planned.

#### 4. CHOOSE AN EXPERIENCE THAT IS SELF-SUPPORTING.

The more structured the gap program, the higher the cost is likely to be to cover things like staffing, says Rogers.

But there are alternatives, like programs that will pay you as part of the experience. For example, YMCA of the Rockies has gap programs for individuals interested in hospitality. Participants are paid an hourly wage with deductions made for room and board. However, food, internet, and access to their facilities are all included.

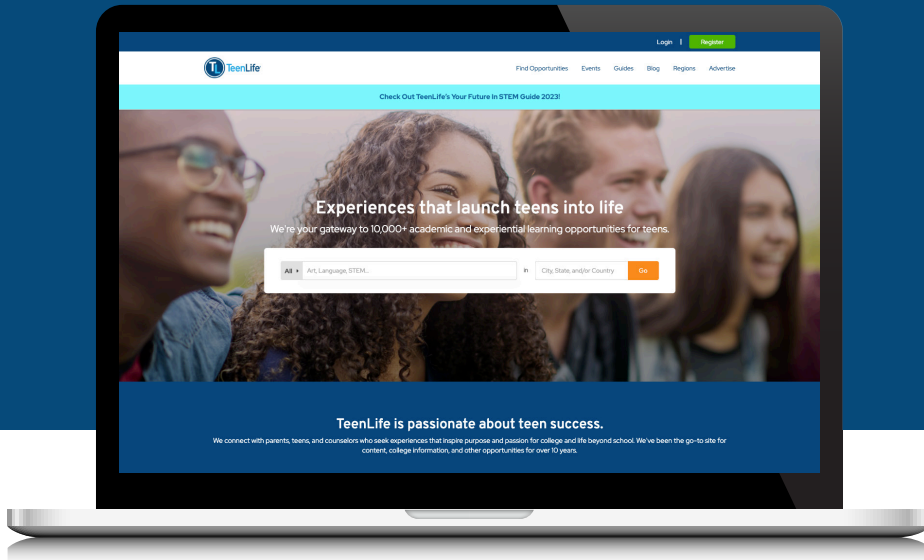
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*More options can be found by checking out the "Paid Work Experience" category at [teenlife.com/category/gap](https://teenlife.com/category/gap).*

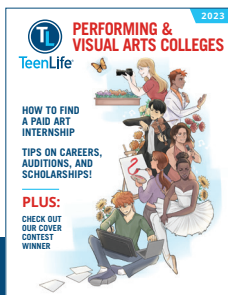


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