

PERSONALIZED BLUEPRINT

Maya's college blueprint.

WHERE YOU STAND

Competitive

You're squarely in the mix at a strong list of selective schools. Sharpen one extracurricular into a clear 'spike' and your essays will do the rest.

A NOTE FROM YOUR ADVISOR

Maya, your profile places you in a strong position for these programs. This list provides a pragmatic balance between rigorous policy departments on the East Coast and stable, high-value public options closer to home. To differentiate your application, focus on deepening your engagement with one specific policy issue rather than spreading your time across multiple clubs. This targeted clarity will give your essays the necessary weight.

<p>SCHOOLS MATCHED</p> <p>20</p> <p>5 reach · 11 match · 4 safety</p>	<p>EST. NET COST</p> <p>\$27.2k</p> <p>weighted avg / yr after typical aid</p>	<p>MERIT SIGNALS</p> <p>15</p> <p>schools likely to offer aid</p>
---	--	---

<p>STUDENT Maya</p>	<p>CLASS OF 2028</p>	<p>UNWEIGHTED GPA 3.85</p>	<p>SAT 1300</p>
<p>INTENDED MAJOR Public Policy and Political Science</p>	<p>HOME STATE CA</p>	<p>FAMILY BUDGET Open / no limit</p>	<p>VIBE Urban · Large</p>

Educational planning tool. Estimates only, never a guarantee of admission. Highly selective schools (Ivies and similar) remain unpredictable for every applicant.

CURATED MATCH

Top 5 Best Fits

The strongest balance of academic match, environment, and your stated preferences.

Syracuse University

NY · Large · \$85k/yr

Strong Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Selective private university in NY. Approximately 45.9% admit rate; enrollment around 15,477.
- Environment fit: large student body matches your stated size preference; urban setting fits the campus environment you wanted.

SCHOOL FIT

98

46% admit

University of Massachusetts-Amherst

MA · Large · \$35k/yr

Strong Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Moderately Selective public university in MA. Approximately 59.7% admit rate; enrollment around 23,671.
- Large urban campus with strong honors-college pathway.

WHY THIS SCHOOL APPEARS

→ Accessible honors-college pathway with smaller classes and research access.

SCHOOL FIT

98

60% admit

CUNY Hunter College

NY · Large · \$14k/yr

Strong Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Moderately Selective public university in NY. Approximately 53.8% admit rate; enrollment around 16,289.
- Large urban campus with city access for internships and culture.

WHY THIS SCHOOL APPEARS

→ Accessible honors-college pathway with smaller classes, priority registration, and research access.

SCHOOL FIT

96

54% admit

American University

DC · Medium · \$78k/yr

Strong Match **YOU NAMED THIS SCHOOL**

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Selective private university in DC. Approximately 41% admit rate; enrollment around 8,500.
- Medium urban campus in the heart of DC — direct access to government, think tanks, and Capitol Hill internships.

SCHOOL FIT

90

41% admit

University of Pittsburgh

PA · Large · \$44k/yr

Strong Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Moderately Selective public university in PA. Approximately 63% admit rate; enrollment around 19,300.
- Large urban campus with strong undergraduate research and policy programs.

SCHOOL FIT

92

63% admit

REACH TIER

5 Aspirational Schools

Stretch targets where a great essay and a clear spike could break through.

UVA

VA · Large · \$38k/yr

Growth Match **YOU NAMED THIS SCHOOL**

Aspirational Reach

WHY THIS FITS

- Highly Selective public university in VA. ~16% admit rate; enrollment around 17,000.
- Spirited, social culture with deep policy and political-science strength.

WHY THIS SCHOOL APPEARS

→ Aspirational anchor, University of Virginia signals ambition and unlocks strong narrative options for your essays.

SCHOOL FIT

88

16% admit

Brown University

RI · Medium · \$88k/yr

Future Fit **YOU NAMED THIS SCHOOL**

Aspirational Reach

WHY THIS FITS

- Most Selective private university in RI. ~5.2% admit rate; medium undergraduate enrollment.
- Medium urban campus in RI with open curriculum.

WHY THIS SCHOOL APPEARS

→ Aspirational anchor, Brown University on the list signals ambition and unlocks strong narrative options for your essays.

SCHOOL FIT

72

5% admit

Boston University

MA · Large · \$85k/yr

Growth Match

Aspirational Reach

WHY THIS FITS

- Highly Selective private university in MA. ~14% admit rate; enrollment around 18,000.
- Large urban campus with strong internship pipeline.

SCHOOL FIT

84

14% admit

NYU
NY · Large · \$88k/yr
Growth Match

SCHOOL FIT
83
12% admit

Aspirational Reach

WHY THIS FITS

- Highly Selective private university in NY. ~12% admit rate; enrollment around 27,000.
- Large urban campus with policy connections through Wagner.

Northeastern University
MA · Large · \$82k/yr
Future Fit

SCHOOL FIT
79
7% admit

Aspirational Reach

WHY THIS FITS

- Most Selective private university in MA. ~7% admit rate; co-op program with built-in internships.

OFTEN OVERLOOKED

5 Hidden Gems

Strong-fit programs you may not have on your radar yet.

Dickinson College

PA · Small · \$83k/yr

Strong Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Selective private liberal arts college in PA. ~42% admit rate.
- Small-college intimacy with strong policy and global affairs programs.

SCHOOL FIT

78

42% admit

Gettysburg College

PA · Small · \$82k/yr

Competitive Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Selective private liberal arts college in PA. ~39% admit rate.
- Public policy program with DC-area internship reach.

SCHOOL FIT

78

39% admit

Franklin & Marshall College

PA · Small · \$86k/yr

Competitive Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Selective private liberal arts college in PA. ~28% admit rate.
- Small urban campus with strong internship pipeline and tight peer cohorts.

SCHOOL FIT

78

28% admit

Clark University

MA · Small · \$68k/yr

Competitive Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Selective private university in MA. ~40% admit rate.
- Small urban campus with policy-aligned programs and direct faculty access.

SCHOOL FIT

77

40% admit

Lehigh University

PA · Medium · \$81k/yr

Competitive Match

Competitive Position

WHY THIS FITS

- Selective private university in PA. ~26% admit rate.
- Medium urban campus with strong internship pipeline and undergraduate research.

SCHOOL FIT

78

26% admit

FINANCIAL FLOOR

5 Strong Value Schools

Excellent academic fit with in-state pricing or generous merit aid.

<p>Cal State San Bernardino</p> <p>CA · Large · \$8k/yr</p> <p>Exploratory Fit</p> <p>Strongly Competitive</p> <p>WHY THIS FITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible public university in CA. ~91.3% admit rate; enrollment around 19,562. • Strong in-state value at ~\$8k/yr keeps your reach options financially viable. 	<p>SCHOOL FIT</p> <p>63</p> <p>94% admit</p>
<p>Cal State Fullerton</p> <p>CA · Large · \$8k/yr</p> <p>Exploratory Fit</p> <p>Strongly Competitive</p> <p>WHY THIS FITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible public university in CA. ~91% admit rate. • Strong in-state value, accessible honors-college pathway with smaller classes. 	<p>SCHOOL FIT</p> <p>63</p> <p>91% admit</p>
<p>Cal State Long Beach</p> <p>CA · Large · \$9k/yr</p> <p>Exploratory Fit</p> <p>Strongly Competitive</p> <p>WHY THIS FITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective public university in CA. ~39% admit rate. • In-state pricing keeps cost of attendance manageable. 	<p>SCHOOL FIT</p> <p>65</p> <p>39% admit</p>
<p>San Diego State University</p> <p>CA · Large · \$10k/yr</p> <p>Exploratory Fit</p> <p>Strongly Competitive</p> <p>WHY THIS FITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective public university in CA. ~37% admit rate. • Honors-college pathway with research access; in-state value. 	<p>SCHOOL FIT</p> <p>67</p> <p>37% admit</p>

Sonoma State University

CA · Medium · \$9k/yr

Exploratory Fit

Strongly Competitive

WHY THIS FITS

- Moderately Selective public university in CA. ~82% admit rate.
- Generous merit-aid and small-college feel inside the CSU system.

SCHOOL FIT

62

82% admit

HONEST TAKE

Schools You Mentioned

Honest takes on the schools you named that didn't land in your Top 5, Aspirational, or Hidden Gems above.

Georgetown University

NOT IN YOUR HIGHLIGHTED PICKS

Global affairs and government powerhouse in DC; Jesuit, pre-professional culture. For you, your 1300 SAT is below their typical 1410–1530 range and your 3.85 GPA is in their 3.80–4.00 band. It reads as a reach against your current academics. An Early Action / ED swing plus a "spike" essay tied to one of their signature programs is what keeps it realistic.

Tufts University

NOT IN YOUR HIGHLIGHTED PICKS

Boston-area research university with a quirky, internationally minded student body. For you, your interest in Public Policy and Political Science lines up with their strength in their interdisciplinary social-science programs, and your 1300 SAT is below their typical 1480–1550 range and your 3.85 GPA is in their 3.85–4.00 band. It reads as a reach against your current academics. An Early Action / ED swing plus a "spike" essay is what keeps it realistic.

REAL NUMBERS

Net cost, not sticker price

Sticker prices range from \$8k to \$90k. After typical aid for your situation, your real expected cost looks like this:

School	Sticker	Avg Aid	Est. Net	4-yr Est.
Syracuse University	\$85,072	\$32,800	\$52,272	\$209,088
UMass Amherst	\$34,810	\$8,400	\$26,410	\$105,640
CUNY Hunter College	\$14,200	\$5,800	\$8,400	\$33,600
American University	\$78,400	\$28,600	\$49,800	\$199,200
University of Pittsburgh	\$44,300	\$16,200	\$28,100	\$112,400
Brown University	\$88,500	\$48,000	\$40,500	\$162,000
UVA (out-of-state)	\$74,200	\$28,500	\$45,700	\$182,800
Cal State San Bernardino	\$8,200	\$2,400	\$5,800	\$23,200
Cal State Fullerton	\$8,400	\$2,200	\$6,200	\$24,800
Dickinson College	\$83,500	\$33,800	\$49,700	\$198,800

Estimates based on selectivity, public/private status, and your stated budget band as a proxy for need-based aid. Run each school's Net Price Calculator for a precise number.

MERIT WATCH

Scholarship signals worth chasing

Major formula-based merit awards you qualify for, based on your stats.

<p>University of Mississippi — Academic Excellence</p> <p>GPA 3.50+ · SAT 1280+ · Deadline Jan 5</p> <p>✓ Maya qualifies on the published criteria.</p>	<p>Tuition + housing waiver</p>
<p>Drexel University — Liberty Scholarship</p> <p>GPA 3.50+ · SAT 1290+ · Deadline Feb 1</p> <p>✓ Maya qualifies on the published criteria.</p>	<p>\$25k/yr</p>

<p>University of Arizona — Wildcat Excellence GPA 3.40+ · SAT 1240+ · Deadline May 1 ✓ Maya qualifies on the published criteria.</p>	<p>\$30k over 4 yrs</p>
<p>Michigan State University — Spartan Distinguished GPA 3.70+ · SAT 1300+ · Deadline Nov 1 ✓ Maya qualifies on the published criteria.</p>	<p>\$5k/yr</p>
<p>University of Iowa — Old Gold Scholarship GPA 3.60+ · SAT 1280+ · Deadline Feb 1 ✓ Maya qualifies on the published criteria.</p>	<p>\$9k/yr</p>

ACTION PLAN

Biggest Opportunity Areas

The few highest-leverage moves that would most improve your positioning this cycle.

<p>1 Add 1–2 advanced courses</p> <p>Course rigor is one of the top admissions factors. Add an AP, IB, or Dual-Enrollment in your strongest subject for the next term.</p>	<p>2 Diagnose SAT vs ACT</p> <p>Take a free practice of each, submit only the stronger. Even at test-optional schools, a strong score helps merit aid.</p>
<p>3 Deepen 1–2 activities</p> <p>Quality > quantity. Aim for 4–5 substantive activities with documented impact (people served, hours, results).</p>	<p>4 Add a Public Policy-aligned project</p> <p>A research project, club role, or internship tied to your major shows focused interest and unlocks department-level recommendations.</p>

BALANCE CHECK

Competitiveness Snapshot

How your overall list balances across tiers.

<p>REACH TIERS</p> <p>12%</p> <p>Stretch schools, outcomes are unpredictable for every applicant.</p>	<p>MATCH TIERS</p> <p>37%</p> <p>The heart of your list, should be the largest group.</p>	<p>LIKELY TIERS</p> <p>51%</p> <p>Build a strong financial and academic safety net here.</p>
---	---	--

SEQUENCED PLAN

Suggested Next Steps

A sequenced game plan, not a checklist of ten things.

Anchor your list with **2–3 strong matches** you'd genuinely attend, then use Early Decision (ED) or Restrictive EA at **one priority reach**. ED can meaningfully raise your admit odds at selective schools, but it's binding — only commit if you'd say yes in April.

In essays, lead with the specifics that differentiate you (Public Policy and Political Science + your top extracurricular). Tie every "Why this school?" answer to a named program, professor, course, or tradition.

Submit FAFSA and CSS Profile in the first two weeks aid is open — institutional aid pools are awarded first-come.

Disclaimer: This report is an educational planning tool. Admissions outcomes are not guaranteed and depend on many factors not captured here, including essays, recommendations, demonstrated interest, demographic context, and institutional priorities. Highly selective schools are unpredictable for every applicant. Consult your school counselor for final decisions.