

The Financial Aid Process

A guide for senior students and parents

Step 1

Submit college applications. Usually the month of November is the traditional month for the Universities. October and November are the months to apply to State Colleges. Applications to two-year colleges can be filled in the spring. However, you should check with your particular colleges to find out their application dates.

Step 2

It all starts with the FAFSA!!!!!! All seniors seeking aid must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Schools use the information you provide on the FAFSA to figure out if you are eligible to receive money from federal grant, loan, and work-study programs. **Along with the FAFSA, be sure to fill out a GPA verification form. (You will not be considered for specific grants and scholarships if you do not submit this form along with the FAFSA.) Please have your student see their counselor for information regarding the GPA Verification Form. It is not available online.**

More than likely (unless you applied at a college under early decision, or a private college) you will be applying for financial aid **after** you have submitted college applications but before you have made a commitment to your intended college. In most cases, you will be submitting the FAFSA before you have received any letters of acceptance from colleges.

Beginning January 1, 2011, you can go to the web site at; www.fafsa.ed.gov to apply online. **Please note: you can do the FAFSA Application online but not the GPA Verification Form. The GPA Verification Form must be completed through PGHS.** The FAFSA is the application you need for state and federal aid. **Be sure to fill out the 11/12 School Year Form. This form will not be available online until January 1, 2011.** If you are applying online, you should register for a PIN. You can do this online before January 1, 2011. It is best to apply for a PIN early in order to be able to electronically sign the FAFSA once it's completed. Apply for a PIN online at: www.pin.ed.gov

For more information on eligibility requirements and the U.S. Department of Education's student aid programs, look on the Internet at www.studentaid.ed.gov. You can also call 1-800-433-3243

In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges will require that students complete the **CSS Financial Aid Profile** to be considered for institutional aid (aid available from the college). Check with the colleges to which you are applying to see if they require the **PROFILE**. For a list of colleges requiring the profile, visit: <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp>

Also, some colleges offer scholarships specifically from their institutions. There are deadlines to apply for these scholarships. Be sure to check with the colleges to which you are applying. **You may need to apply for these scholarships with the college before you receive an acceptance.**

Step 3

Get all your tax information together; W-2 forms, records of untaxed benefits received, current bank statements, and records of other savings and investments. You will need this information at your fingertips when filling out the **FAFSA** or the **PROFILE**.

Step 4

Complete the FAFSA and a GPA Verification Form. Make copies for yourself, and submit between January 1st and March 2nd. Earlier dates are best but do not submit before January 1st.

If you are also required to fill out the PROFILE, complete and submit the PROFILE as soon as you get it. You will then receive what is called your PROFILE Data Confirmation Report.

Make copies of all forms you submit online or send through the mail. If mailing forms, get a certificate of mailing.

Step 5

Approximately 4 weeks after you submit your FAFSA, you will receive the Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR will tell you your expected Family Contribution (EFC), how much your family is expected to pay towards the cost of college.

So how much will you have to pay? Check out this web site to get an idea on what your costs might be.

Mini site guide – follow these steps;

1. Go to www.collegeboard.com
2. 1st screen – Click on “For Students”.
3. 2nd screen – Click on the green “Pay for College”.
4. 3rd screen –Click on the left hand side “Calculators”.
5. 4th screen –Click on “Expected Family Contribution Calculator”.
6. 5th screen – Scroll down, click “Start”.
7. Proceed to answer the questions. You will get instant feedback once you have completed the questionnaire.