



The Financial Aid Process

- Apply for admission to college, but do not wait to be accepted to apply for financial aid.
- Check with colleges to determine which forms should be complete.
 - The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) should be completed by everyone.
 - College Scholarship Service Financial Aid (CSS Profile) should be completed for those colleges that request it. Usually only private schools require the CSS Profile.
www.collegeboard.com
 - Any other institutional form requested by the college.
- All aid applicants should complete the FAFSA-1 FAFSA per student/per year.
- Some should complete both the FAFSA and CSS Profile.
- Read the directions carefully. Accuracy and clarity are of great importance.

On the Internet

One-stop site for all financial aid questions	www.studentaid.ed.gov
CSS Profile	https://profileonline.colleboard.com/index.jsp
FAFSA	www.fafsa.ed.gov
PIN Application	http://www.pin.ed.gov

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Step 1: Before Beginning a FAFSA

- Print out the 2011-2012 FAFSA on the Web Worksheet.
- Apply for a PIN now for both student and parent.

Step 2: After January 1: Filling Out a FAFSA

- Submit online as soon as possible after January 1st. The deadline for many colleges is February 15th.
- Do not wait for final income figures. Use estimated figures if necessary to ensure on-time application status.
- The colleges you listed on the FAFSA will receive your financial information.
- Before you submit your online FAFSA, print a copy of your summary page and check for accuracy. After you submit your FAFSA, print a copy of your confirmation page.
- The FAFSA does not provide any space to explain extenuating circumstances. If it is important, write to the financial aid office at all your colleges.
- If your financial situation changes, immediately inform the college financial aid office in writing.
- The financial aid office at each college will send you an award letter that will indicate the cost of attendance, type and amount of financial aid (grants, scholarships, work study, or loans) and your family contribution. If you have any questions call the college financial aid office.





- The college financial aid office may request verification of income (copies of tax returns) or other information. Quickly respond to all requests for information or you may jeopardize your award.

Step 3: FAFSA Follow-up

- The SAR (Student Aid Report) verifies the information you provided and gives your estimated family contribution (EFC). Print a copy of your SAR for your records.
- If you did not sign your FAFSA with a PIN, print the signature page, sign it, and mail it.

Avoid These Common Mistakes

- Do not leave blanks. Fill in a zero if it does not apply.
- Do not forget to sign the form. Both student and parent must sign. If you file online, both student and parent can sign with a PIN. If not, send in the signature page.
- Do not use your W-2 form for income reporting. Use the Adjusted Gross Income from the last 1040 federal tax form.
- Do not use the taxes withheld amount on the W-2 form. Use the actual taxes paid as shown on the 1040 federal tax form.
- Do not forget to report all required sources of untaxed income. Be sure to include Social Security, child support, AFDC, etc.
- Divorced parents: do not report ex-spouse's income. Only list your own income and that of your current spouse.

Free Help

- Federal Student Aid Info Center: 1-800-4-FEDAID (1-800-433-3243)
 - 7 days a week, 8:00a.m. to midnight
- Call the financial aid office at your college(s) you are applying to.
- www.hesaa.org
- www.meritaid.com
- www.finaid.org
- College Goal Sunday: February 26, 2012 from 1:00-4:00 p.m.
 - This is an opportunity to complete your FAFSA with the help of financial aid professionals for FREE. Check for locations and register for the event online at <http://njcollegegoalsunday.org/>. Be sure to bring all required materials.

