



# Opportunities

2008-09 | Preparing for Higher Education Guide and Workbook



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## Tips for Using This Book

### Work from front to back.

In this book, the college prep process is organized into four sections – chronologically, so start at the beginning of the book and work your way to the end, page by page.

### Have a pencil/pen and highlighter handy.

It's OK to write in this book! Look for the YOUR TURN symbol – it indicates that the page includes either a checklist or a worksheet for you to complete. But, don't limit yourself to only writing on these pages ... make notes on pages about any questions you have or things you want to do related to the topic on that page, and use a highlighter to tag information that is particularly important to you.



## Updates to This Book

While every effort is made to keep this book up-to-date, program requirements are subject to change. For complete information regarding specific programs, contact the organization responsible for administering that individual program.

As this book goes to press, the United States Congress is considering legislation that will change some of the provisions of the federal student financial assistance programs. If changes are made, a description of these changes will be posted on [www.ecmc.org](http://www.ecmc.org).

## Availability in Other Languages

This book is available in Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese at [www.ecmc.org](http://www.ecmc.org).

Este libro está disponible en español, ruso y vietnamita en [www.ecmc.org](http://www.ecmc.org).

Вы можете найти эту книгу на испанском, русском и вьетнамском языках на [www.ecmc.org](http://www.ecmc.org).

Cuốn sách này có bản tiếng Tây Ban Nha, tiếng Nga, và tiếng Việt Nam tại trang [www.ecmc.org](http://www.ecmc.org).

# Choosing the Right College for You

Your college selection is an important decision, but where do you start?  
Use the tools and resources in this chapter to help you choose where to apply.



## CHECKLIST: JUNIOR YEAR

### Finding the Right College

Every person is different. Your background, interests, personality, and temperament are just a few things that make you original.

When considering your future career and higher education, it's easy to fall prey to the influence of others. Don't think of certain schools as good or bad. Think of which ones are best for you. Use the checklist and tools in this chapter to do some self-discovery.

Depending on many factors, you may find preparing for higher education a simple or very time-consuming process. Let your personal interests, goals, and situation influence your decisions throughout the process.

### Deadlines

Deadlines are just that, so plan carefully and pay attention to the various deadlines throughout the process. You'll find guidance throughout this book on the timing of events and when you need to complete tasks.

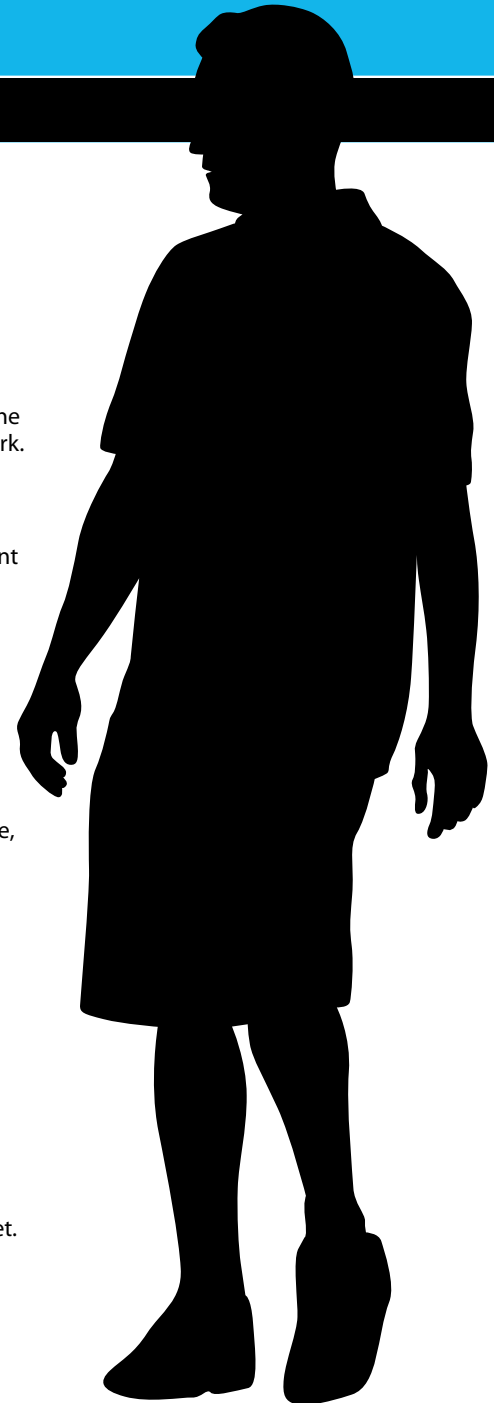
### Higher Education

Higher education encompasses a great many kinds of schools: universities, four-year colleges, community colleges, trade schools, professional schools, and more.

To reduce confusion, in this book we refer to the schools to which you will be applying as "colleges."

### Summer

- Investigate careers of interest.**  
Consider subjects you do well in and enjoy. Talk to your parents, guidance counselor, and other adults about the careers that interest you. The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook ([www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/)) can also help you identify careers of interest.
- Approach professionals and tradespeople with questions.**  
Find some family friends, friends of friends, friends of teachers, and leaders in the community who work in the careers that interest you. Ask them about their work. You will learn a lot about the careers that would best suit you.
- Make a list of important factors.**  
Using the worksheet on page 5, think about what factors are the most important to you when considering your future college. Some examples are programs of study offered, school size, class size, city and neighborhood, campus culture, distance from home, extracurricular activities, religious affiliation, and cost of attendance.
- Research colleges.**  
Based on what you've learned about careers and your own interests, look for colleges with programs that can help you achieve your goals. Search for your program interests using online resources. Take note of which colleges offer the kinds of programs you want. Also, your high school's guidance counseling office, teachers, library, and the public library will have materials to help you.
- Make a list of prospective colleges.**  
Use the worksheet on page 5 to help identify prospective colleges.
- Request materials.**  
Go online or call the colleges to request catalogs and financial aid materials.
- Attend college and/or career fairs.**  
Seek out the colleges that interest you and ask about the programs you've identified to determine if the college will help you achieve your goals.
- Narrow your list.**  
Based on what you've learned, narrow your list of schools on page 5's worksheet. If possible, rank your colleges in order of preference.



## COLLEGE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

### Advanced Placement (AP) Classes

These courses prepare students to take rigorous exams that can lead to college credit. Students choose among 37 individual courses in 22 subject areas they will pursue for AP credit. After the coursework is completed, the students take nationally administered AP exams in their chosen subject areas.

If the resulting scores are acceptable to the college, it might award college credit for the course.

### Dual-Enrollment Programs

High school students might be able to start their college education before graduation with dual-enrollment programs. In these programs, students take college-level classes for college credit while continuing to participate in regular high school activities. These classes are often offered at high schools or nearby community colleges.

Not every high school participates in a dual-enrollment program. Contact your high school guidance counselor for more information.

Participation in a dual-enrollment program could affect your eligibility to receive an Academic Competitiveness Grant. Be sure to check with your high school guidance counselor or the college's financial aid office to see if you will be affected.

### International Baccalaureate Organization's Diploma Programme

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB) is a two-year curriculum offered by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) that combines requirements of a mixture of different national education systems. Programs are offered in English, French, and Spanish, and allow students moving around the country or from one country to another to transfer between IB schools.

Students must be highly motivated and between the ages of 16 and 19. Exams are given, and grades are based on one standard across all IB schools. Colleges from around the world accept students who participate in IB.

Not every high school offers the program. A list of participating schools from around the world is posted on the IBO Web site. For more information, visit [www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org).

### Technical Preparation Programs (Tech Prep)

Tech Prep is a multi-year program (two or more years in high school and two in an occupational/technical program at a community or technical college) designed to prepare students for technical occupations. These programs can expand education and employment opportunities by preparing students for careers in health care, business, industry, labor, government, and the community. There is a strong emphasis on math, science, and English. A complete Tech Prep program includes the following:

- ▶ A comprehensive career development plan
- ▶ Courses designed for a specific career that integrate academic and occupational preparation
- ▶ A learning environment that emphasizes math, communications, science, and technology
- ▶ A smooth transition from high school to college or employment



## ALTERNATIVES TO A FOUR-YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE

It can be easy to forget that when people say “college” there are more options than the four-year bachelor’s degree. Don’t forget to consider the following options when choosing a college.

### Community Colleges

Community colleges are designed to meet the vocational and educational needs of the community. Individual colleges vary widely and can offer programs ranging from classes in continuing education and certificate programs to vocational programs and associate’s degrees.

### Trade and Vocational Schools

Trade and vocational programs focus on developing practical career skills. These programs are offered at community colleges and at schools that focus on developing a specific skill. When researching your career interests, look for information online and inquire from others as to whether your career goals might benefit from a trade or vocational school.

### Community College Transfer Programs

Many students start their college studies at a community college and later get credit for the courses when they enroll in a four-year college. Transfer programs allow students to complete courses at a community college and later use the credits to meet the graduation requirements at a four-year college. You should work closely with the academic advisors at the colleges to ensure that the correct “transferable” classes are taken.

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER

### Program

This is the cornerstone of your decision. Consider if the college offers programs that will help you achieve your career goals. Your options could include universities, two- or four-year colleges, trade schools, vocational schools, or community colleges.

### School Size

Would you prefer a structured large school or a personalized small school?

### Class Size

How large do you like your classes to be?

### City and Neighborhood

Do you prefer a city or a small town?

### Campus Culture

When visiting each college, get a feel for its “personality.” Does it match yours?

### Distance from Home

How close would you like to live to your family?

### Extracurricular Activities

Do you have activities in your life that you can’t live without?

### Religious Affiliation

Depending on your religious beliefs, you may be interested in looking at a college affiliated with your religious background.

### Cost of Attendance

While one school may appear to be less expensive, what will your final cost be after receiving financial aid? You’ll learn more about this in the Financial Aid Process chapter.



# The College Application Process

Depending on your interests and goals, the application process to your colleges could be as simple as filling out one page for the community college near you, or as complicated as writing dozens of essays, taking multiple standardized tests, and preparing portfolios. This chapter will help you organize the process and stay on track.

YOUR  
TURN

## CHECKLIST: JUNIOR YEAR

### August

- Ensure that you will graduate.**  
Look at your high school's graduation requirements and compare your credits. Make sure you will graduate on time.

### October

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT.**  
Take these tests to practice taking admissions tests and to establish your eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Program, the National Hispanic Recognition Program, and additional scholarship programs.
- Make a list of entrance requirements.**  
Look up the minimum acceptance requirements for entering freshmen at your top colleges, such as grade point average, high school subject credits, and standardized test scores.
- Meet with your guidance counselor.**  
After your PSAT/NMSQT scores come in, schedule a meeting. Bring your list of entrance requirements. Determine with the counselor if your list of colleges is reasonable or needs to be adjusted, and if your current and future high school classes are appropriate.

### January - June

- As you learn more, narrow your list.**  
Continue to attend college fairs and, if possible, schedule individual sessions with representatives from your top colleges to learn more about their programs.
- Take the SAT and/or ACT.**  
If these tests are required for your list of colleges, register and take them.
- Take achievement tests.**  
Take these in May or June if the colleges that you are considering require them. At this point, the material is fresh in your mind.
- Start preparing portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent.**  
If these are required for admission to your programs or scholarships, begin working on these now.

### July - August

- Request information.**  
Contact the colleges that interest you and request admissions procedures and financial aid information.
- Visit colleges.**  
Planning travel during summer vacation? Many families visit college campuses on their vacation trips. Call the admissions office in advance to learn what times they conduct regular tours. Then, use these visits to compare campuses and help narrow your selection.

## CHECKLIST: SENIOR YEAR

### September

- Review your plans with your guidance counselor.**  
Discuss your grades and test results from junior year.
- Register to retake the SAT and/or ACT, if necessary.**  
You can take these tests as many times as you want through the April national testing date in the year you will graduate from high school. You should take these exams at least six weeks before your earliest college admissions or financial aid deadline.
- Make a final list of the colleges that interest you.**  
Request complete admissions, housing, and financial aid information from each of these colleges.

### October

- Visit the colleges that most interest you.**  
Arrange, in advance, for a personal interview with an admissions counselor, financial aid officer, and a professor in the academic department representing your intended major. If possible, stay overnight and talk with current students. If you cannot visit the campus, the college's Web site may contain an online tour or a link to request an informational CD.
- Start drafts of your college essays.**
- Request high school transcripts.**  
You will need a high school transcript for each application you plan to submit.

### November

- Identify references.**  
Ask if they will provide letters of recommendation for you.
- Finalize portfolios, audition tapes, or writing samples.**  
Complete these if they are required for admissions or scholarships.
- Schedule admissions interviews.**  
If your colleges recommend them, schedule these now.

### December

- Follow up with your references.**  
Make sure they remembered to send in the forms if they are sent separately from your application.
- Complete revisions of all applications and essays.**  
Review them with a parent or guidance counselor.
- Submit all revised, complete admissions and college academic scholarship applications before holiday break.**  
Keep copies for your file. If you submit your applications online, verify that they were received.

### May

- Take Advanced Placement (AP) exams.**  
If you'd like to take AP exams or they're required for your colleges, take them in May.

## COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

### The PSAT/NMSQT

PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test and the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Taking the PSAT/NMSQT is an important step in preparing to apply to college. It is a standardized test that helps you “rehearse” for the SAT Reasoning Test. It also gives you an opportunity to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation’s scholarship programs as well as other scholarship and recognition programs. Additionally, you will receive pamphlets, catalogs, and brochures from colleges interested in students testing within your range. The PSAT/NMSQT measures the following skills:

- ▶ **Critical reading**
- ▶ **Math problem solving**
- ▶ **Writing**

You have developed these skills over many years, both in and out of school. Taking this test will give you feedback about your strengths and weaknesses in skills necessary for successful college study. You can then focus your preparation on those areas that could most benefit from additional study or practice.

The PSAT/NMSQT should be taken during your junior year because the National Merit Scholarship Corporation uses these scores to determine eligibility for their scholarship programs. If you take the test earlier in your high school career, do not be discouraged by a low score because the PSAT/NMSQT is a junior-level test. For more information on the PSAT/NMSQT, visit the College Board Web site at: [www.collegeboard.com/testing](http://www.collegeboard.com/testing).

### The SAT Reasoning Test

The SAT includes three sections: math, critical reading, and writing. The questions are geared toward measuring conceptual thinking, rather than memorizing facts.

The writing section includes multiple-choice questions dealing with grammar, usage, and word choice. Each student will write a short, timed essay that requires him or her to take a position on an issue and use examples to support the position. The critical reading section includes short and long reading passages. The math section includes questions on exponential growth, absolute value, functional notation, linear functions, manipulations with exponents, and properties of tangent lines.

Students taking the SAT will receive three scores: one each for writing, math, and critical reading, each on a scale of 200-800.

Students can prepare for the SAT by reviewing practice questions and taking an official SAT practice test for free at: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

For a fee, the College Board also offers an online course and study guide.

### The SAT Subject Tests

The SAT Subject Tests are one-hour subject tests with mostly multiple-choice questions. These tests measure how much you know about a particular academic subject and how well you can apply that knowledge. Many colleges require or recommend one or more of the SAT Subject Tests for admission or placement. These tests provide a dependable measure of your academic achievement and are a good predictor of future performance. There are over 20 subject tests that fall into the following five general subject areas:

- ▶ **English**
- ▶ **Math**
- ▶ **History**
- ▶ **Science**
- ▶ **Languages (includes English Language Proficiency Test)**

For more information on the SAT Subject Tests, visit the College Board Web site at: [www.collegeboard.com/testing](http://www.collegeboard.com/testing).

### The ACT

The ACT is a 215-question, multiple-choice test that measures academic achievement in English, math, reading, and science. It measures what you have learned in high school and your ability to perform tasks that are frequently required in college coursework. In addition to the test areas, the ACT includes an interest inventory to help you choose a college major and identify jobs you might wish to explore.

The ACT is not an aptitude or an IQ test. Instead, the questions are directly related to what you have learned in your high school English, math, and science courses.

The ACT test score is based on the number of correct answers, has no penalty for guessing, and is measured as an average of the four test areas in a composite score ranging from 1-36.

An optional Writing Test is available. Check with the college you plan to attend to determine if this is one of its testing requirements. This test measures your writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses. It is a 30-minute essay asking you to state your position on an issue from a writing prompt that is provided. For more information and practice tests, visit the ACT Web site at: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

For a fee, ACT also offers an online test preparation program.

## TESTING DATES, FEES, AND REGISTRATION

### PSAT

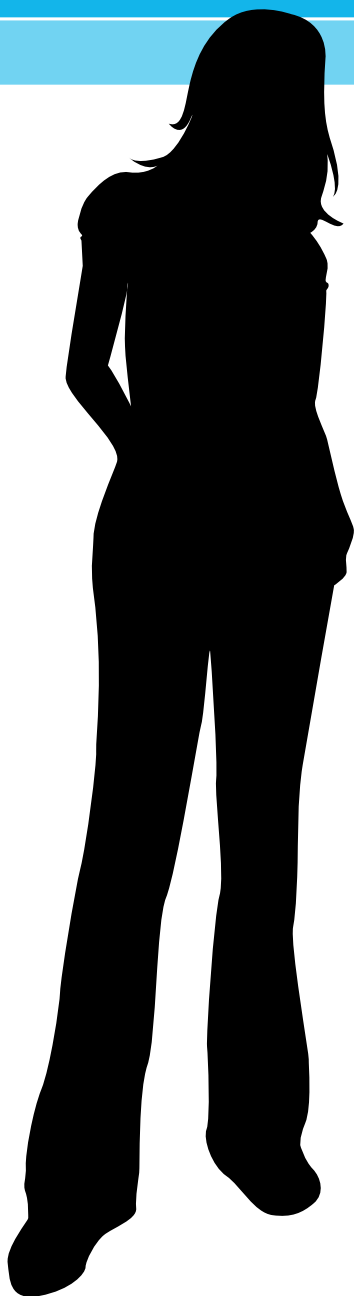
2008-2009 Test Dates	Tests Administered	Regular Registration Deadlines	Late Registration Deadlines	Notes	Fees	Registration
October 15, 2008	PSAT/NMSQT	Check with your guidance counselor	Check with your guidance counselor	This test is administered by high schools, not through test centers.	\$13 <b>Note:</b> Schools sometimes charge an additional fee to cover administrative costs. The College Board makes fee waivers available to schools for students in 11th grade from low-income families that can't afford the test fee. See your counselor for more information about fee waivers.	Online registration is not available. You must sign up for the PSAT/NMSQT at your high school or at another high school in your community.
October 18, 2008	PSAT/NMSQT	Check with your guidance counselor	Check with your guidance counselor	Please note that each high school chooses only ONE October test date.		

### SAT

2008-2009 Test Dates	Tests Administered	Regular Registration Deadlines	Late Registration Deadlines	Notes	Fees	Registration
October 4, 2008	SAT and Subject Tests	September 9, 2008	September 16, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sunday administrations will occur the day after each Saturday test date for students who cannot test on Saturday for religious reasons.</li> <li>The Language Tests with Listening are offered in November only.</li> </ul>	<b>SAT Reasoning Test:</b> \$45 <b>SAT Subject Tests basic registration fee:</b> \$20 <b>Language Tests with Listening:</b> \$20 + basic fee <b>All other Subject Tests:</b> \$9 + basic fee <b>Late registration fee:</b> \$23 Fee waivers are available for certain low-income students. See your counselor for details.	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">www.collegeboard.com</a>
November 1, 2008	SAT and Subject Tests	September 26, 2008	October 10, 2008			
December 6, 2008	SAT and Subject Tests	November 5, 2008	November 18, 2008			
January 24, 2009	SAT and Subject Tests	December 26, 2008	January 6, 2009			
March 14, 2009	SAT only	February 10, 2009	February 24, 2009			
May 2, 2009	SAT and Subject Tests	March 31, 2009	April 9, 2009			
June 6, 2009	SAT and Subject Tests	May 5, 2009	May 15, 2009			

### ACT

2008-2009 Test Dates	Tests Administered	Regular Registration Deadlines	Late Registration Deadlines	Notes	Fees	Registration
September 13, 2008*	ACT	August 12, 2008	August 22, 2008	* The September 13, 2008, test date is available only in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia. ** The February 2009 test is not scheduled in New York.	<b>ACT (no Writing Test):</b> \$31 <b>ACT with Writing Test:</b> \$46 <b>Late registration fee:</b> \$20 Fee waivers are available for certain low-income students. See your counselor for details.	<a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a>
October 25, 2008	ACT	September 19, 2008	October 3, 2008			
December 13, 2008	ACT	November 7, 2008	November 20, 2008			
February 7, 2009**	ACT	January 6, 2009	January 16, 2009			
April 4, 2009	ACT	February 27, 2009	March 13, 2009			
June 13, 2009	ACT	May 8, 2009	May 22, 2009			



## YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Every college has a different application process with different directions to follow. Read them carefully and use the worksheet on the next page to organize the information for your colleges. Use a photocopier to make one copy for each college, and keep them with your application materials.

### Deadlines

Colleges have different deadlines for their applications to be submitted. Pay attention to these deadlines and whether they are arrival or postmark deadlines. If they are arrival deadlines, make sure to build in at least three to five days for postal delivery in the United States.

### The Internet

Many colleges allow you to complete your application online. Find the college's Web site, go to the admissions page, and look for more information.

### Transcripts

Request an official copy of your high school transcript for each college where you plan to apply. You will need to submit this with the admissions application to the college.

Because students apply to colleges while still attending high school, acceptances from colleges are often contingent upon your final high school grades. You will need to send a final transcript to the college you will be attending after you graduate.

### Recommendations

If your colleges require recommendations, you will need to ask your teachers and/or other adults to be references. Some colleges even ask for peer recommendations. When identifying who you should ask, consider your relationship with the person and how well you've done in your activities with him or her. Don't ask someone to write you a recommendation if you don't think they will have anything good to say.

Your colleges will probably have forms within the application to give to your references, so make sure to request the application materials in plenty of time. Follow the checklist at the beginning of the chapter to keep you on schedule.

Writing recommendations can be time-consuming for the people writing them. They might also be writing them for other students. Give your references plenty of time with the forms, and make sure they are aware of recommendation deadlines. Two to four weeks with the forms should be sufficient, but inquire as to his or her schedule when asking.

A recommendation is a favor. No one is required to recommend you to a college. Here are some commonly accepted rules of etiquette to follow:

- ▶ When giving your references the forms, include a pre-addressed envelope to the appropriate address with the correct amount of postage on the envelope if they are meant to mail it directly to the college.
- ▶ Write thank-you notes to your references.

### Essays

If your colleges require essays, they will usually ask you to consider specific questions or topics. If this is the case, don't stray from the question. Focus on the issue being presented. Here are some tips to follow:

- ▶ Check for spelling and grammar mistakes. Most word processors offer this feature but don't rely entirely on the computer.
- ▶ Have someone proofread your essay.
- ▶ Don't exceed the word limit, if any is given.
- ▶ Be yourself. Don't second-guess what the college would like you to think or say in your essay.

Everyone goes about the writing process differently. Here are two methods that might help you:

### Brainstorming

Brainstorm your thoughts on the topic. Write quickly without worrying how coherent or organized your thoughts are. When you're finished, look at your thoughts and begin organizing them from there.

### Outlining

Make an outline to organize the essay. Then write in portions, section-by-section, according to your outline topics.

### Other Evidence of Talent

Depending on your area of interest, your colleges might ask for a portfolio, audition tapes, or other evidence of your talents. Contact the specific program for more information on what to include.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE** →

- Postmark date
- Arrive-by date

	Requested	Received
Catalog	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High school transcript	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**COLLEGE INFORMATION**

College name \_\_\_\_\_ Admissions office phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address for application \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Web site \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations required?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Requested	Received	Thank-you sent
Reference 1 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reference 2 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reference 3 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**OTHER**

Essays required?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Other components required?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
First topic _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____ Complete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Second topic _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____ Complete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Third topic _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____ Complete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**INTERVIEW**

Interview required? Yes  No  Thank-you card sent? Yes

Name of interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**VISIT**

Will you be visiting campus? Yes  No  Date(s) of visit \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person you are meeting or event \_\_\_\_\_ Date and time \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACTS**

	Phone	E-mail	Notes
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

# The Financial Aid Process

Navigating the financial aid process from start to finish can seem overwhelming. Not sure how or when to begin? The tools, checklists, and timelines in this chapter will help you understand the FAFSA completion process, what types of financial aid are available, and how to stay on course to receiving your financial aid.

YOUR  
TURN

## CHECKLIST: JUNIOR YEAR    CHECKLIST: SENIOR YEAR

### August - December

- Research private scholarship and grant opportunities.**  
This information is available at your high school guidance office, local public library, and civic and professional organizations. Also, look online for scholarships that might apply to your career goals, skills, or demographics.
- Talk with your parents about your college plans and finances.**  
Become more specific about how you and your parents can finance your plans.

### January - June

- Complete the FAFSA4caster.**  
(See page 13 for details.)
- Ask about scholarships when attending college fairs.**  
Talk to representatives about scholarship programs for which you might qualify.

### July - August

- Talk to coaches.**  
If you are interested in an athletic scholarship, contact the appropriate coaches at your colleges and send a resume of your accomplishments. Let your high school coach know about your interests.
- Request private scholarship applications.**  
Request application information from any private scholarship sources you have identified.

### September

- Investigate financial aid.**  
Start investigating federal, state, college, and local financial aid opportunities.
- Males – register with the U.S. Selective Service.**  
If you are a male, age 18-25, register with the U.S. Selective Service so you will be eligible for federal student aid. You can register online at: [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov), at your high school, or at your post office.

### October

- Register for a Personal Identification Number (PIN).**  
Go to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) to register for a PIN. Your PIN serves as your e-Signature for the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If you are a dependent student, a parent should also register for a PIN at this time.
- Plan to attend financial aid meetings in your community.**  
There are meetings in many communities to help you understand the financial aid process and provide assistance with filing the FAFSA. Find out when these events are held by checking with your counselor or a local college.

### November

- Begin to prepare for the FAFSA.**  
If you do not plan to file the FAFSA online, download the PDF FAFSA at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) or call 1.800.4.FED.AID to obtain a paper FAFSA. You cannot submit your FAFSA until after January 1 of your senior year in high school.
- Apply for private scholarship and grant programs.**

### January

- File your FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov), or complete and mail your PDF FAFSA or paper FAFSA.**  
Do this as soon as possible after January 1. Submit the FAFSA in time to meet each college's financial aid deadline. (These can vary and can be different than admissions deadlines.) Contact the financial aid offices at your colleges for more information.
- Continue researching scholarships that might be available to you.**
- Send your mid-year grades to the colleges of your choice.**

### February

- Confirm receipt of your information.**  
Check with your colleges to be sure they have received the information from your FAFSA and any revised SAT and/or ACT test scores.

### March

- Look for your Student Aid Report (SAR) in the mail.**  
You should receive it within four to six weeks after filing the paper FAFSA, or two to four weeks after filing the online FAFSA. Each college that you included on your FAFSA will receive a copy of your SAR.
- Review the SAR.**  
Make any necessary changes and return the corrected form to the Department of Education. If you filed electronically, make corrections online. Contact your college for more directions if necessary.
- Look for admissions responses.**  
These will start coming in the mail from your colleges.
- Tie up loose ends.**  
If required, send any additional information to the colleges to complete the admissions and/or financial aid process.

### April

- Look for summer jobs to help with college costs.**

## YOUR COLLEGE COSTS

### College Costs

The cost to attend college, which is often referred to as the “total student budget” or “cost of attendance,” includes direct and indirect expenses. The direct expenses are those fixed costs that are billed by the college, such as tuition, fees, and room and board. The indirect costs do not show up on the college bill but are taken into consideration when looking at the overall cost to attend college. They include books and supplies, travel expenses, and personal expenses, such as laundry, telephone, and even pizza. If you live off campus, room and board costs will become indirect costs.

The cost of attendance is used in the calculation to determine your eligibility for financial aid and consists of the following five parts:

1. Tuition and fees
2. Room and board
3. Books and supplies
4. Personal expenses
5. Transportation

Colleges can also consider the following allowable costs when determining the total cost of attendance:

- ▶ Allowance for dependent care
- ▶ Loan fees
- ▶ Costs related to a disability
- ▶ Allowance for rental or purchase of a personal computer
- ▶ Reasonable cost for eligible study abroad programs

### Tuition and Fees

The cost of tuition and fees charged by a college depends on many factors, but the most significant factor is what kind of college it is.

Tuition and fees at **public** colleges are generally the lowest because they receive funds from state taxes. Most four-year and two-year public colleges charge higher tuition for nonresidents than for legal residents of the state in which the college is located. This out-of-state tuition can often make the cost of attending a public college as high as the cost of attending many private colleges.

Tuition at **private** colleges is usually higher than at public colleges. Private colleges do not receive public funding for their operations and need to charge more of the real costs to students. However, private colleges often have more financial aid resources that can help you make up the difference between costs and financial aid. The greater your overall expenses, the greater the possibility you will demonstrate need for financial aid. Private career or for-profit colleges (such as trade and technical colleges) usually set tuition at levels that ensure they recover all of their operating costs and make a profit.

Whether you are looking at public or private colleges, fees might be charged for services, such as the library, student activities, and the health center.

### Room and Board

Room and board means basic living expenses for food and housing. Regardless of the kind of college you choose, you will have to consider these expenses.

Colleges with their own housing typically charge you on a nine-month basis for your room and most meals, excluding holiday and vacation periods. The room and board charge is built into your student expense budget. Colleges also expect that students living in privately owned, off-campus housing have a similar level of expense.

If you plan to live at home, you are generally assumed to have somewhat lower expenses than on-campus students because you do not have to pay for housing. However, you or your parents will still need to factor in the cost of your food and other normal living expenses. These are usually built into commuter student expense budgets for financial aid purposes. Take these costs into consideration in your planning.

### Books and Supplies

Every college student must purchase textbooks, writing utensils, paper, and other supplies. The amount you spend for books and supplies will vary only slightly by the type of college, but is generally related to the curriculum or courses you select. In some academic fields, such as nursing and other medical fields, you will spend more on books than in other fields, such as business or communications. Some fields will require specific uniforms and equipment that must be purchased, such as art supplies, a stethoscope, or lab supplies.

### Personal Expenses

Regardless of the type of college you choose to attend, you will have some personal expenses, such as clothing, laundry, toiletries, recreation, medical insurance and medical costs, and perhaps incidental furnishings for your room.

### Transportation

All students spend some money for travel. If you live on or near campus, you have to travel to get there at the start of the academic year and to return home at the end. Most students also go home at least once during the year. For financial aid purposes, colleges often budget students for two round-trips home per year by the least expensive means of travel possible.

Commuter students will also have travel expenses, whether you use public transportation or a private car to get to and from college several days a week. These costs are built into student expense budgets by colleges for financial aid purposes.

### Determining Your Own Costs

To determine your own cost estimates, remember to consider any additional costs that might result from medical bills or extraordinary personal expenses.

## Reduce the amount of time it takes to complete the FAFSA by *first* completing the FAFSA4caster at [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov).

FAFSA4caster is an online financial aid estimator that provides students and families an early estimate of the student's federal student aid eligibility. FAFSA4caster provides an estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) – the index colleges use to determine what types of financial aid a student may be eligible to receive. Using this estimated EFC, FAFSA4caster determines what types of federal grants, loans, and work-study a student may qualify for along with estimated award amounts. Students and families may use this tool during the student's junior year in high school – or earlier – to help in college planning.

## ABOUT THE FAFSA

Students are required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine their eligibility for all federal and many state financial aid programs. Colleges might require additional forms as part of the application process. Contact each college's financial aid office to find out which forms it requires.

Your eligibility for federal financial aid is calculated using the Federal Methodology Needs Analysis, a formula mandated by Congress. In order to determine eligibility, you must complete and file the FAFSA. Some colleges require supplemental forms from other need analysis processors. Contact financial aid administrators at your colleges to find out what forms they require.

To complete the FAFSA, you (and your parents if you are considered dependent) must provide certain information regarding your financial assets, liabilities, and income for the year directly preceding the year you apply for aid. You might need to refer to the following documents:

- ▶ Income tax returns (student, parent, and spouse)
- ▶ W-2 forms and other income records
- ▶ Current bank statements
- ▶ Mortgage information
- ▶ Records of benefits from federal and state agencies

It is essential that you provide correct information and follow all instructions for filing the FAFSA. Mistakes and incomplete information can lead to delays in receiving aid.

There are three ways to complete and file a FAFSA:

- ▶ Online at Federal Student Aid's Web site, [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

- ▶ PDF FAFSA which you download from FSA's Web site and mail
- ▶ Paper FAFSA which can be requested by calling 1.800.4.FED.AID

Online filing is up to 7-14 days faster than using a PDF or paper FAFSA if you electronically sign your application with your Federal Student Aid PIN. These are issued by Federal Student Aid at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).

Filing the FAFSA online eliminates delays that can occur from mailing. Also, your application is edited for errors to ensure complete and accurate information is transmitted. You, and at least one parent if you are a dependent student, will need to have a PIN to electronically sign the FAFSA.

If you file a FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) from Federal Student Aid. The SAR contains information provided on your FAFSA and your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Your EFC is not the amount of money that your family is expected to pay. Rather, you should think of the EFC as an index that colleges use to calculate the amount of financial aid you may qualify to receive. Your family is expected to contribute toward your cost of education; however, the amount of that contribution will be determined by the financial aid office at your college.

A financial aid award letter will be sent to you from each college that accepts you for admission. The letter outlines the total financial aid package: grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans for which you are eligible. Financial aid officers at the colleges can answer questions regarding the SAR and award letters. See page 24 for more information about award letters.

### Special Considerations

Special considerations that might affect your eligibility for aid include your dependency status and state of domicile.

#### Independent vs. Dependent Status

In determining financial need, one of the most important factors is whether you are classified as a dependent or independent student. Dependent students must include parental information on the financial aid application and FAFSA. Independent students should include information only on themselves and their spouse (when applicable). You are automatically classified as independent if you:

- ▶ Will be 24 by December 31 of the award year
- ▶ Are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces
- ▶ Are on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces
- ▶ Are an orphan or ward of the court
- ▶ Have legal dependents other than a spouse
- ▶ Are married
- ▶ Are a graduate or professional student

Effective Wednesday, July 1, 2009, the definition of independent is expanding to include individuals who are:

- ▶ Orphans, wards of the court or in foster care at any time the individual is 13 or older
- ▶ Emancipated minors or in legal guardianship
- ▶ Unaccompanied youths who are homeless
- ▶ Unaccompanied self-supporting youths at risk of homelessness

You may complete a "Dependency Status Worksheet" at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to determine your dependency status before completing the FAFSA.

In addition, the financial aid office at the college can determine that you should be considered independent if exceptional circumstances exist, but this occurs only in rare circumstances.

#### Domicile

On the FAFSA, domicile is referred to as your "State of Legal Residence." A person's domicile is their present, fixed home to which they return following temporary absences and at which they intend to stay indefinitely. To be eligible for in-state tuition benefits and most state-supported financial aid, you must have established domicile for at least one year prior to the first day of class. Minors are presumed to have the domicile of their parent or legal guardian.

Domiciliary intent is determined using many factors. These could include paying state income tax as a resident, registering to vote in the state, owning property, permanent employment, sources of financial support, and economic ties with the state. The burden is on the applicant to provide sufficient information to establish domiciliary intent.

Contact the domicile offices at your colleges for more information.

**Preparing for the FAFSA**

Check as you prepare to file the FAFSA:

- If filing the FAFSA online, you, and at least one parent if you are a dependent student, must sign the application. Both of you will need a Personal Identification Number (PIN). You may each apply for a PIN at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).
- If using the PDF FAFSA, go to [www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov](http://www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov). If using the paper FAFSA, request one by calling 1.800.4.FED.AID.
- Find the federal school codes for your colleges at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

**Filing the FAFSA**

Check as you complete the FAFSA:

- You and the appropriate family members have signed the forms.
- You have listed all the schools to which you are applying for admission.
- You have printed a copy or made a copy of your completed FAFSA for your records.

**Note:** Do not send information about special circumstances to the schools listed on the FAFSA until you contact the financial aid offices about your application information. The financial aid offices will tell you what is needed.

**Meet all financial aid deadlines.**

Each college has a different Priority Filing Date. File your FAFSA in time to meet the deadlines set by your colleges. Contact the financial aid offices to determine individual application deadlines as well as details on which financial aid applications and forms you might be required to submit.

**Sign the FAFSA appropriately.**

If the appropriate family member(s) fail to sign the FAFSA, it cannot be processed, and you might lose out on financial assistance you are otherwise qualified to receive. If you complete your FAFSA online, you might still need to supplement your electronic form with an actual copy of your signature if you and at least one parent have not secured a Federal Student Aid PIN from [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). A PIN allows you to electronically sign the application. Your parents should also obtain a PIN. Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) for more information.

**List all the colleges to which you are applying for admission.**

If you want to be considered for financial aid from a specific college, you must list that college on the FAFSA. The paper application allows you to list up to four colleges while the online FAFSA allows you to list up to 10 colleges. Information from the FAFSA will only be sent to those colleges listed on your application. You must include each college's six-digit federal school code as well as the name and address of each of your colleges.

Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to search for federal school codes.

**Send information about special financial circumstances to your colleges' financial aid offices.**

The FAFSA does not include space for you to explain special financial circumstances unique to you and your family. If you need to communicate special circumstances (unusual medical bills, an impending divorce, expected unemployment), write a letter to each of the colleges to which you are applying. Include your name and Social Security Number on any correspondence. Do not mail this letter or any other correspondence with your FAFSA because this could slow down the processing of your financial aid application.

**If completing the PDF FAFSA or paper FAFSA, use a black ink pen or No. 2 pencil.**

Do not mark the FAFSA with a colored pencil or felt tip pen. Make any necessary corrections with a pencil eraser. Do not use Wite-Out® or any other correction fluid.

**Consider completing your FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).**

If you file online, you will receive your application results 7-14 days faster than if you mail a PDF FAFSA or paper FAFSA. When FAFSA information is transmitted over the Internet, it is completely secure. FAFSA on the Web is easy to navigate and offers extensive online help. Applicants who have questions while filling out their FAFSA can click on the "Live Help" link to get online assistance from a knowledgeable customer service representative. In addition, application entries are thoroughly edited, reducing the number of errors made by students and their families.

**Do not delay completing the FAFSA because you or your family have not filed your federal income tax forms.**

You will find the FAFSA easier to complete if you have completed your federal income tax forms. However, it is more important that you submit your financial aid application on time using estimated tax information rather than miss a financial aid deadline. Your colleges will verify the final income information later when your tax returns are completed.

**Do not delay completing the FAFSA because you are waiting to hear if you have been accepted to a college.**

You should file your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 of the year you plan to enroll regardless of whether or not you have been accepted to a college. Waiting until you have been accepted could result in missing important financial aid deadlines making you ineligible for financial aid you might otherwise have been able to receive.

**Retain a copy of your completed FAFSA.**

Keep copies of your completed FAFSA and any other materials required by your colleges.

**Questions?**

- ▶ Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800.4.FED.AID (800.433.3243)
- ▶ Go to [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)
- ▶ While filling out your FAFSA, click on the "Live Help" link for assistance
- ▶ Contact your colleges' financial aid office

## COMPLETING THE FAFSA (CONTINUED)

### FAQs on Completing the FAFSA

**Why does Federal Student Aid ask for income information from the year before I go to college?**

Studies have consistently shown that verifiable income tax information from the base year (2008 for the 2009-10 award year) is more accurate than projected (2009) information when estimating how much the family will be able to contribute during the coming school year.

**I will file a tax return this year, but I probably won't get around to it until April. How should I answer the financial questions? Should I wait to fill out this form until after I've filed my tax return?**

Ideally, you should complete the FAFSA after you have done your tax return, but don't wait until April. Many colleges award aid on a first-come, first-served basis. Also, you might not be eligible for state aid if you wait until April to submit your FAFSA. If you have not submitted your tax return, you should calculate your Adjusted Gross Income and taxes paid using the instructions for an IRS Form such as the 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ. You can get the instructions and the form at a public library or download them from [www.irs.ustreas.gov](http://www.irs.ustreas.gov).

**If I am separated but filed a joint tax return, how is the information reported?**

You should give only your portion of the exemptions, income, and taxes paid.

**I'm going to get married this summer. How do I answer the question that asks if I am married?**

The FAFSA is a snapshot of your status on the day it is signed; it does not forecast changes such as marriage. Answer "YES" only if you are married on the day you sign the FAFSA. If you are not married on the day you sign the FAFSA but get married later, DO NOT change your marital status on the FAFSA.

**What if I live with a girlfriend or boyfriend who pays the rent?**

You should not report any information for a friend or roommate unless the two of you are married, or are considered to have a common-law marriage under state law. You must report any cash support from a friend as untaxed income but should not report in-kind support (such as food). You would have to report, as income, the rent the roommate paid if your name were on the lease and if the roommate were paying the rent on your behalf.

**If I am a dependent student who lives with an aunt, uncle, grandparent, or other legal guardian, should that relative's income be reported instead of parental information?**

Report the relative's income only if the relative is your adoptive parent. You must report any cash support from relatives but not in-kind support (such as food and housing) from them.

**My biological parents are deceased. Whose income should I report on the FAFSA?**

If both biological parents are deceased, you will be considered an independent student, and only your financial information is required.

**What if I have a living biological parent or parents, but do not live with either of them and cannot obtain their financial information?**

Contact the financial aid administrator to request a dependency override before you submit the FAFSA.

**What if my parent(s) refuse to provide financial assistance or the required FAFSA financial data?**

Parents' refusal to supply information is not a valid justification for a dependency override. However, the college's financial aid office might be able to offer other suggestions.

**If my parents are divorced, whose information do I need?**

The financial information from the parent that you lived with the most during the past year must be reported on the FAFSA. It does not make a difference which parent claims you as a dependent for tax purposes. If you did not live with either parent or lived equally with each parent, the parental information must be provided for the parent from whom you received the most financial support or the parent from whom you received the most support the last time support was given.

**What's the difference between cash support and in-kind support?**

Cash support is support given either in the form of money or money that is paid on your behalf. You must report cash support as untaxed income. Thus, if a friend or relative gives you grocery money, it must be reported as untaxed income on Worksheet B. If a friend or relative pays your electric bill or part of your rent, you also must report these payments.

Examples of in-kind support are free food or housing that you or your family receives, usually in exchange for work or services. You usually don't report this kind of support.

However, the application does require you to report, on Worksheet B, the value of housing you or your family receives as compensation for a job. The most common example is free housing or a housing allowance provided to military personnel or clergy.

**I am entering financial information for my mother and stepfather on the form. Should I give my father's Social Security Number (SSN) and last name, or my stepfather's?**

You should provide the SSN and last name of the same person or people for whom you are reporting financial information. In this case, provide the SSN and names of your mother and stepfather.

*Continued on next page*

## COMPLETING THE FAFSA (CONTINUED)

### FAQS on Completing the FAFSA (continued)

**What should I do if the parent with whom I live is remarried and my stepparent refuses to supply the financial information?**

If you are a dependent student and your parent is remarried, the stepparent's financial information must be included or you will not be considered for federal student aid.

**If I'm an emancipated minor, am I now independent?**

The status of emancipated minor is not currently recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for financial aid purposes. However, effective Wednesday, July 1, 2009 emancipated minors will be considered to be independent students for financial aid purposes.

**According to the FAFSA, I don't meet the requirements to be classified as an independent student, but my parents don't support me in any way. How do I complete the FAFSA?**

If you have a job, are totally self-supporting, and have extensive documentation to prove it, contact the financial aid offices at your colleges for further guidance. A parent's refusal to provide financial assistance or the required FAFSA financial data is not a valid justification for a dependency override. However, the college's financial aid office might be able to offer other suggestions.

**What should I do if my family has special circumstances that are not mentioned in the application?**

Talk to the college's financial aid administrator. If your family's circumstances have changed from the previous tax year due to loss of employment, loss of benefits, death, or divorce, the financial aid administrator might decide to adjust data elements used to calculate the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The adjustment might increase your eligibility for financial aid.

**I am now a U.S. citizen, but I have an Alien Registration Number (A-Number). Which oval do I fill in?**

Fill in the U.S. citizen oval. Do not fill in the eligible noncitizen oval, and do not provide an A-Number.



## FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID: GRANTS

### Federal PELL Grant

#### To qualify, you must:

- ▶ Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- ▶ Demonstrate financial need
- ▶ Be an undergraduate student enrolled at a qualifying college

#### To apply:

Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible

#### Award amount:

- ▶ Depends on program funding
- ▶ Depends on cost of attendance
- ▶ Depends on Expected Family Contribution
- ▶ The maximum Pell Grant for the 2008-2009 award year is \$4,731

#### Getting the money:

The college will do one of the following:

- ▶ Credit your account
- ▶ Provide you with a check
- ▶ Transfer the funds to you via electronic funds transfer

#### Repayment:

Not required

### Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

#### To qualify, you must:

- ▶ Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- ▶ Demonstrate exceptional financial need
- ▶ Be an undergraduate student enrolled at least half-time at a qualifying college
- ▶ Be a recipient of a Federal Pell Grant

#### To apply:

Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible

#### Award amount:

- ▶ Depends on college funding level
- ▶ Funds are limited – early filers get priority
- ▶ The award is usually between \$100 and \$4,000

#### Getting the money:

The college will do one of the following:

- ▶ Credit your account
- ▶ Pay the funds directly to you
- ▶ Allocate the funds using a combination of these two methods

#### Repayment:

Not required

### Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) Program

#### To qualify, you must:

- ▶ Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- ▶ Be a Federal Pell Grant recipient
- ▶ Be a first- or second-year undergraduate enrolled at least half-time at a two- or four-year degree-granting college, including enrollment in a certificate program at least one-year in length
- ▶ Have completed a rigorous high school program
- ▶ Other requirements of eligibility vary by college year

#### To apply:

Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible

#### Award amount:

- ▶ In general:
  - \$750 for the first year
  - \$1,300 for the second year
- ▶ Awards could be lower if more students are eligible than Congress anticipated when funding this program

#### Getting the money:

Contact your college's financial aid office for more information

#### Repayment:

Not required

### National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grant Program

#### To qualify, you must:

- ▶ Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- ▶ Be a Federal Pell Grant recipient
- ▶ Be enrolled at least half-time in a bachelor's or graduate degree program that includes at least three years of undergraduate study in a four-year degree-granting college
- ▶ Have a major in the physical, life, or computer sciences, engineering, math, technology, or a critical foreign language
- ▶ Have at least a cumulative 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale in the coursework required for your major

#### To apply:

Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible

#### Award amount:

- ▶ The award can be up to \$4,000 for each of the third and fourth academic years of study
- ▶ Awards could be lower if more students are eligible than Congress anticipated when funding this program
- ▶ An additional \$4,000 is available in the fifth-year of certain undergraduate programs designed to be five years in length

#### Getting the money:

Contact your college's financial aid office for more information

#### Repayment:

Not required

### TEACH Grants (New for 2008)

The first TEACH Grants will be awarded in the 2008-2009 award year. These grants are designed to encourage highly-qualified teachers to serve in low-income schools and in high-need fields. Grants can be as much as \$4,000 annually. Students receiving these grants must agree to perform at least four years of qualified teaching service. Failure to complete the service obligation will cause the grant to be converted to a Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan.

Not all colleges participate in this program. Check with your colleges' financial aid offices for additional information.

## FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID: WORK-STUDY AND LOAN PROGRAMS

### WORK-STUDY

Federal Work-Study (FWS) provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. When assigning work hours, your employer or financial aid administrator will consider your award amount, your class schedule, and your academic progress. If you work on campus, you'll usually work for your college. If you work off campus, your employer will usually be a private, nonprofit organization or a public agency, and the work performed must be in the public interest. Your college may also offer nonfederal work-study.

#### To qualify, you must:

- ▶ Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- ▶ Demonstrate sufficient financial need
- ▶ Be an undergraduate or graduate student enrolled at least half-time at a qualifying college

#### To apply:

Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible

#### Award amount:

- ▶ Depends on financial need
- ▶ Depends on college funding level
- ▶ Funds are limited – early filers get priority

#### Getting the money:

You work for an employer at an hourly rate earning at least the minimum wage

#### Repayment:

Not required

### LOAN PROGRAMS

Many students and families have to borrow money to pay for college. While there are several federal student loan programs, the primary loans used to pay for college are Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Stafford Loans, and Federal PLUS Loans.

Federal Perkins Loans are made through participating colleges to undergraduate students, graduate students, and professional students who demonstrate the greatest financial need. The loans come from government funds with a part contributed by the college, and are repaid to the college.

Federal Stafford and Federal PLUS Loans are available through two different, but similar, loan programs: the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program and the William D. Ford Direct Loan (DL) Program. The main difference between the two programs is that the FFEL Program funds come from a private lender of your choice (such as banks, credit unions, savings institutions, or other lenders that participate in the FFEL Program), while the DL Program funds come directly from the federal government. Your college might participate in one or both of the loan programs. You might receive both FFEL Program and DL Program loans, but not from both loan programs for the same period of enrollment at the same college.

### Federal Stafford Loan

There are two types of Federal Stafford Loans: subsidized and unsubsidized.

#### Subsidized Stafford Loan

These loans are awarded on the basis of financial need. The borrower is not charged interest during periods of enrollment, the grace period, or during authorized deferments. Instead, the federal government “subsidizes” the interest during these periods. Your college will calculate your need for the Subsidized Stafford Loan.

#### Unsubsidized Stafford Loan

These loans are not awarded on the basis of financial need. They are awarded to students who do not qualify for a Subsidized Stafford Loan or who need additional assistance. You are responsible for the interest charged from the time the loan is disbursed until it is paid in full. You can pay the interest as it accrues or allow the interest to be “capitalized,” which means the interest will be added to the principal amount of the loan. If your interest is capitalized, it will increase the amount you have to repay. Your college will determine your eligibility for an Unsubsidized Stafford loan, including the loan amount for which you are eligible.

### Federal PLUS Loan

PLUS Loans are made to parents (natural or adoptive) of a dependent undergraduate student enrolled at least half-time at a postsecondary college, to graduate students, and to professional students. Applicants must pass a credit check to be eligible for a PLUS Loan. If they don't pass, they might still be able to receive a loan if they can demonstrate that extenuating circumstances exist, or if they secure a creditworthy endorser. The yearly limit on a PLUS Loan is equal to the cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received. A PLUS Loan is an unsubsidized loan; therefore, the borrower is responsible for all interest that accrues on the loan.

*Continued on next page*

## FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID: WORK-STUDY AND LOAN PROGRAMS (CONTINUED)

### Federal Perkins Loan

#### To qualify, you must:

- ▶ Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- ▶ Be an undergraduate or graduate student enrolled at least half-time at a qualifying college
- ▶ Demonstrate sufficient financial need

#### To apply:

- ▶ Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible
- ▶ A Master Promissory Note (MPN\*) is required

#### Award amounts:

- ▶ Undergraduate students: \$5,500 per year, up to a maximum of \$27,500
- ▶ Graduate/professional students: \$8,000 per year, up to a maximum of \$60,000, including undergraduate loans

#### Getting the money:

- ▶ After you sign a promissory note, the Perkins Loan is credited to your college account
- ▶ Funds in excess of college charges are delivered directly to you

#### Repayment:

- ▶ Repayment begins six to nine months after you graduate, withdraw from school, or drop below half-time enrollment
- ▶ Maximum repayment term is 10 years
- ▶ The interest rate is a fixed rate of 5.0 percent.

### Federal Stafford Loan

#### To qualify, you must:

- ▶ Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- ▶ Be an undergraduate or graduate student enrolled at least half-time at a qualifying college
- ▶ To receive a subsidized loan, demonstrate sufficient financial need

#### To apply:

- ▶ Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible
- ▶ A Master Promissory Note (MPN\*) is required

#### Award amounts:

- ▶ Dependent students, up to:
  - ▶ \$5,500 – Freshman
  - ▶ \$6,500 – Sophomore
  - ▶ \$7,500 – Each remaining year of undergraduate study
- ▶ Students may qualify for all subsidized, all unsubsidized or a combination depending upon demonstration of need
- ▶ Aggregate undergraduate borrowing limit is \$31,000 with a maximum of \$23,000 in subsidized loans

#### Independent students, up to:

- ▶ \$9,500 – Freshman
- ▶ \$10,500 – Sophomore
- ▶ \$12,500 – Each remaining year of undergraduate study
- ▶ Students may qualify for all unsubsidized or a combination of subsidized and unsubsidized depending upon demonstration of need
- ▶ Aggregate undergraduate borrowing limit is \$57,500 with a maximum of \$23,000 in subsidized loans

#### Graduate/professional students, up to:

- ▶ \$20,500 per academic year
- ▶ Loans may be all unsubsidized or a combination of subsidized and unsubsidized depending upon demonstration of need

#### Getting the money:

- ▶ The lender sends the loan proceeds directly to the college
- ▶ Loan proceeds are typically made payable to both you and the college, and are generally sent in two or more disbursements – one near the beginning and one near the midpoint of the loan period, or one near the start of each academic term

#### Repayment:

- ▶ Repayment begins six months after you graduate, withdraw from school, or drop below half-time enrollment
- ▶ Maximum repayment term depends upon total principal balance but might extend from 10-25 years
- ▶ The interest rate for the 2008-2009 award year for undergraduate students is a fixed rate of 6.0 percent for subsidized loans and 6.8 percent for unsubsidized loans. For the 2009-2010 award year, subsidized loans for undergraduate students will be made at a fixed rate of 5.6 percent, and unsubsidized loans will remain at 6.8 percent. Loans to graduate and professional students, both subsidized and unsubsidized, will remain at 6.8 percent in both award years.

### Federal PLUS Loan

#### To qualify, you must:

- ▶ Be a natural or adoptive parent of a dependent undergraduate student who is enrolled at least half-time at a qualifying college, be a graduate student, or be a professional student
- ▶ Not have an adverse credit history

#### To apply:

- ▶ Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible
- ▶ A Master Promissory Note (MPN) is required\*

#### Award amounts:

Up to the cost of attendance, minus any financial aid you are eligible to receive

#### Getting the money:

A PLUS Loan is made co-payable to the borrower and the college, and is generally made in two disbursements — one at the beginning and one near the midpoint of the loan period, or one near the start of each academic term

#### Repayment:

- ▶ Repayment begins 60 days after the final PLUS Loan disbursement
- ▶ The interest rate for the 2008-09 award year is a fixed 8.5 percent for FFEL Loans and a fixed 7.9 percent for DL Loans
- ▶ For loans made on or after Tuesday, July 1, 2008 parent borrowers may choose to begin repayment 6 months after the student is no longer enrolled at least half-time.

\* Contact the college you will be attending for more information on the process for signing a MPN.

## SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

Securing money to pay for a college education can cause a great deal of stress in a family. Some unscrupulous companies prey upon the stress the financial aid search can cause. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) warns students and their parents to watch for these six warning signs of a scholarship scam. Legitimate services offering federal or state financial aid information should be free of charge. For more information about scholarship scams, visit: [www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams](http://www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams).

### Warning Signs

**“The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.”**

No service can guarantee that it will get you a grant or scholarship. Refund guarantees often have impossible conditions attached. Review a service’s refund policies in writing before you pay a fee. Typically, fraudulent scholarship search services require that applicants show rejection letters from each of the sponsors on the lists they provide to request a refund of any fees paid. If a sponsor no longer exists, if it really does not provide scholarships, or if it has a rolling application deadline, letters of rejection are almost impossible to obtain.

**“The scholarship service will do all the work.”**

Unfortunately, nobody else can fill out the personal information forms, write the essays, and supply the references that many scholarships require.

**“The scholarship will cost some money.”**

Be wary of any charges related to scholarship information services or individual scholarship applications, especially in significant amounts. Some legitimate scholarship sponsors charge fees to defray their processing expenses. Before you send money to apply for a scholarship, investigate the sponsor. “Free” money shouldn’t cost you a thing.

**“You can’t get this information anywhere else.”**

Scholarship directories are available in any large bookstore, public library, or high school guidance office. Additional information on private scholarship programs, including scams, can be found at [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org).

**“You are a ‘finalist’ in a contest you never entered, or you have been selected by a ‘national foundation’ to receive a scholarship.”**

Most legitimate scholarship programs never seek particular applicants. Most scholarship sponsors only will contact you in response to an inquiry. If you think there is a real possibility that you might have been selected to receive a scholarship, investigate before you send money to be sure the sponsor or program is legitimate.

**“The scholarship service needs your credit card or checking account number in advance.”**

Never provide your credit card or checking account number on the telephone to the representative of an organization that you do not know. A legitimate need-based scholarship will not ask for your checking account number. Get information in writing first. An unscrupulous operation does not need your signature on a check. It schemes to set up situations that allow it to drain a victim’s account with unauthorized withdrawals.

## SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS (CONTINUED)

### Tips to Remember

In addition to the FTC's six signs, following are some other points to keep in mind when considering a scholarship program:

- ▶ **Fraudulent scholarship operations often use official-sounding names containing words, such as federal, national, administration, division, federation, and foundation.**  
Their names are often a slight variant of the name of a legitimate government or private organization. Do not be fooled by a name that seems reputable or official, an official-looking seal, or a Washington, D.C. address.
- ▶ **If you win a scholarship, you will receive written official notification by mail, not by telephone.**  
If the sponsor calls to inform you, they will follow up with a letter in the mail. If a request for money is made by phone, the operation is probably fraudulent.
- ▶ **Beware of telephone numbers with a 900 area code.**  
These might charge you a fee of several dollars a minute for a call that could be a long recording, and provides only a list of addresses or names.

- ▶ **A dishonest operation might put pressure on an applicant by saying that awards are on a first-come, first-served basis.**  
Some scholarship programs give preference to the earlier qualified applications. However, if you are told, especially on the telephone, that you must respond quickly, but you will not hear about the results for several months, there might be a problem.

- ▶ **Be wary of endorsements.**  
Fraudulent operations claim endorsements by groups with names similar to well-known private or government organizations. The Better Business Bureau and government agencies do not endorse businesses.
- ▶ **Be careful of "free" seminars offered by financial aid "consultants."**  
Sometimes these consultants offer good tips on preparing for college, but often they are trying to get you to sign up for a long-term contract for services you don't need. Often these "consultants" are trying to sell you other financial products, such as annuities, life insurance, or other financial services that have little to do with college financial aid.

### Avoiding Student Loan Scams

It is also important to recognize and avoid deceptive and questionable practices involving student loans. To help, the Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Department of Education have produced a new guide "Student Loans: Avoiding Deceptive Offers." This guide provides tips on recognizing deceptive lending practices, and provides information on how and where to file a complaint. This guide is available on the Web at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) by entering "student loans" in the search box.





## YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Your Rights

You have a right to receive the following information from your college:

- ▶ What financial aid is available, including information about federal, state, and college programs
- ▶ Deadlines for applying for each kind of aid
- ▶ The cost of attendance and the refund policies if you withdraw
- ▶ Criteria used to select aid recipients
- ▶ How your financial need is determined, including how student expenses are calculated in your budget
- ▶ What resources are considered in determining your need, such as parents' contribution, other financial aid and benefits, assets, and so on
- ▶ How much of your financial need has been met
- ▶ What aid resources make up your financial aid package
- ▶ What part of the aid is a loan and must be repaid and what part is grant aid
- ▶ The interest rate on your student loan, the total amount that must be repaid, the procedures for paying back the loan, how long you have to repay, and when repayment begins
- ▶ Procedures for appealing a financial aid decision if you think you have been treated unfairly or if your aid package is inadequate
- ▶ How the college determines whether or not you are making satisfactory academic progress, and what happens if you are not

### Your Responsibilities

You have a responsibility to:

- ▶ Review and consider all information about a college's program before you enroll
- ▶ Complete your application for student financial aid accurately and submit it on time to the right place (errors can delay your getting aid, and intentional misreporting of information is a violation of law subject to penalties under the U.S. Criminal Code)
- ▶ Return all additional documentation, verification, corrections, and/or new information requested either by the financial aid administrator or the agency to which you submitted your application
- ▶ Read and understand all forms that you are asked to sign, keep copies of them, and accept responsibility for all agreements you sign
- ▶ Notify the lender of your loans about any changes in your name, address, or school status
- ▶ Satisfactorily perform the work associated with aid in the form of student employment
- ▶ Know and comply with the deadlines for applying and reapplying for aid
- ▶ Know and comply with your college's refund policies and procedures

# The Final Decision

Your financial aid award letters have arrived. Now is the time to carefully consider your options, and select the types of aid and school that are the best fit for you. This section will help you choose the right school, guide you through the final steps in receiving your financial aid, and help you financially prepare yourself for college.

YOUR  
TURN

## CHECKLIST: SENIOR YEAR

### April

- Review your award letters.**  
You should receive financial aid award letters from the colleges that have accepted you for admission. Review them with your parents or a trusted advisor. Be sure that you understand the terms and conditions that accompany each type of aid.
- Weigh your options and make your decision.**  
Using the worksheet on page 26, compare and weigh your options.
- Notify the colleges of your final decision.**  
Each college that accepted you for enrollment needs to know whether you plan to accept or decline its offer. Follow the colleges' instructions to let them know your final decision.

### May

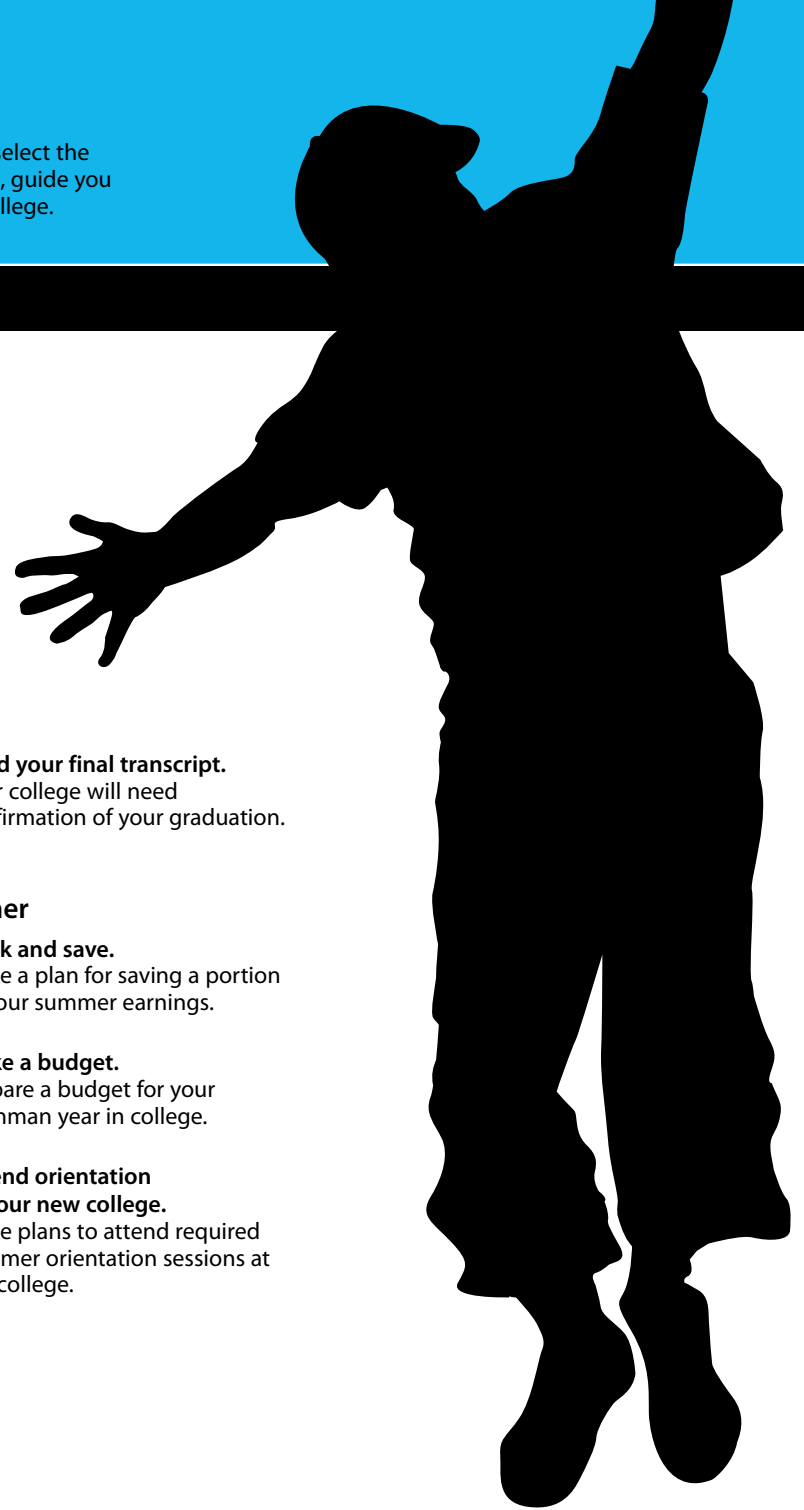
- Send in your financial aid forms.**  
Sign your financial aid award letter and any other items requiring your signature, and return them. If you have questions, schedule an appointment with a financial aid officer. If you have decided to accept a loan, understand all your rights and responsibilities before you and/or your parents sign.
- Update the college on your financial aid situation.**  
Notify the financial aid office of any outside scholarships, grants, or other kinds of student aid from private sources that you have received since you submitted your aid application.
- Send letters of decline to financial aid offices.**  
If you have received financial aid award letters from colleges whose offers you have decided to decline, notify the financial aid office in writing because other students will need the aid you declined.
- Arrange for housing and meals at the college you will attend.**  
If necessary, arrange for housing and a meal plan for the fall.

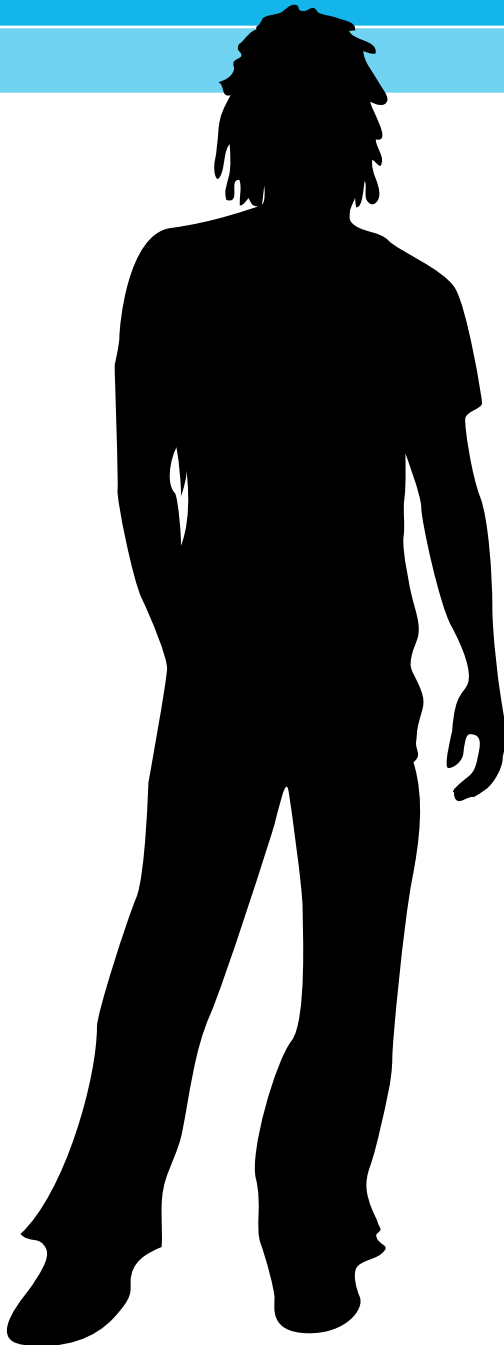
### June

- Send your final transcript.**  
Your college will need confirmation of your graduation.

### Summer

- Work and save.**  
Make a plan for saving a portion of your summer earnings.
- Make a budget.**  
Prepare a budget for your freshman year in college.
- Attend orientation at your new college.**  
Make plans to attend required summer orientation sessions at the college.





## UNDERSTANDING YOUR AWARD LETTER

Once you have been accepted for enrollment at any college, and have applied for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and any other financial aid forms required by the college, you and your family will receive a financial aid award letter. This letter will detail the amount of financial support the college is able to provide for the upcoming year. You might receive the award letter along with your notice of acceptance. Some colleges make the award letters available online. Check with your colleges to see how they distribute the award letters.

### Read the fine print.

- ▶ Read your award letter carefully to ensure you understand all terms and conditions so you can decide if you want to accept any, or all, of the aid offered.
- ▶ Look for instructions for your next steps. You might need to complete additional paperwork, i.e., loan applications.
- ▶ Determine if grants or scholarships are available for more than one year. If so, what are the applicable conditions?
- ▶ When comparing financial aid awards, consider your final out-of-pocket cost. An award containing loans may have a higher ultimate out-of-pocket cost than an equivalent award that contains mostly grants.

### Keep your college aware of changing situations.

Has your family situation changed since you filed the FAFSA? Has a parent become unemployed or ill? Have you been awarded additional private scholarships? You must report any changes to the college. Even name and address changes must be reported. Any of these changes can affect your award.

### Meet deadlines.

The clock is ticking! Once you've chosen your college, you might need to inform the college, in writing, about how much of the award you plan to accept. If you don't respond by the date indicated, your award could be in jeopardy.

### What if it's not enough?

If after reading the award letter, you believe that the award and your family savings are not enough to cover all of your expenses, don't panic! There are other options for getting the money you need to attend the college of your choice.

- ▶ Research other sources for private scholarships. It might not be too late to apply. See if there is a national association affiliated with your major that might offer a scholarship. Review your college catalog, contact the head of the department of your major, talk to your guidance counselor, or take another look at the free college scholarship search services available online.
- ▶ Consider any potential benefits from your parents' place of employment. Look beyond just tuition and scholarships. Programs might exist to lower the cost of computers, insurance, or travel.
- ▶ See if your college offers a payment plan that allows tuition expenses to be spread out over the year.
- ▶ Make sure your college is aware of any special situations or circumstances that might affect the college's award decision. Is another sibling in college? Has a baby been born or adopted? Is a parent facing possible layoff? Do any of your family members have a chronic medical condition resulting in unusually high medical expenses? Make sure your financial aid office is aware of any unique situations.

**SAMPLE AWARD LETTER**  
FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY

**SAMPLE UNIVERSITY**  
**OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID**

<b>Academic Year</b> 2008-2009
<b>Budget Assumptions</b> Resident Dependent Single
<b>Identification Number</b> 000-11-2222
<b>Award Date</b> April 15, 2008

Jason D. Smith  
123 Main Street  
Collegetown, USA 23232-1111

DECLINED	AWARD	FALL 2008	SPRING 2009
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sample School Merit Scholarship	\$5,400.00	\$5,400.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal PELL Grant	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal SEOG	\$ 530.00	\$ 530.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	State Award	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Work-Study	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan	\$1,750.00	\$1,750.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban League Scholarship	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,080.00</b>	<b>\$11,080.00</b>

**FAMILY RESOURCES**

Parent's Contribution	\$1,840.00
Student's Contribution	\$1,000.00
Other Resources	\$ 0.00
<b>Total Family Contribution</b>	<b>\$2,840.00</b>

**SUMMARY**

Total Estimated Budget	\$25,000.00
Less Family Contribution	\$ 2,840.00
Financial Need	\$22,160.00
<b>Total Financial Aid</b>	<b>\$22,160.00</b>

Elizabeth Doe, Director

**NOTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL AID AWARD**

After careful consideration and review of your financial aid application, the Office of Financial Aid of Sample University has authorized this offer of financial assistance for the 2008-09 award period.

To accept this award, you must complete, sign and return the white copy of this form within four (4) weeks of receipt. This award is subject to cancellation if you do not respond by the specified date.

If you choose to decline any part of the package, please place a check mark in the "DECLINED" box for the corresponding part of the package.

Be sure to review the terms and conditions of the award as described in the Sample University Financial Aid Guide Book. Contact the Office of Financial Aid at 1-800-555-6789 for additional assistance.

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR AWARD LETTER (CONTINUED)**

The award letter provides a summary of the financial aid the college is offering to you. The most common sources of aid include the following:

**Scholarships (do not have to be repaid)**

Any scholarships you informed the college about as well as those the college has to offer will be included on the award letter.

**Grant Aid (does not have to be repaid)**

- ▶ Federal Pell Grant
- ▶ Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
- ▶ Academic Competitiveness Grant
- ▶ National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant
- ▶ College grants
- ▶ State-sponsored grants

**Work-Study**

On-campus or college-affiliated employment. (This does not guarantee a position. It makes you eligible.)

**Loans (must be repaid)**

- ▶ Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan
- ▶ Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan
- ▶ Federal PLUS Loan
- ▶ Federal Perkins Loan
- ▶ State loan programs
- ▶ Private loan programs



# WORKSHEET: MAKE YOUR DECISION

After receiving your admissions and financial aid responses, use this chart to compare colleges and decide which one to attend.

Costs	<b>COLLEGE</b>			
	Pros			
	Cons			
	Tuition and fees			
	Room and board			
	Books and supplies			
	Transportation			
	Other expenses			
	<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>			
Financial Aid	Grants and scholarships			
	Work-study			
	Loans			
	<b>TOTAL FINANCIAL AID</b>			
	<b>FAMILY CONTRIBUTION</b>			
	<b>UNMET NEED</b> Costs minus financial aid and family contribution			

If you will be taking loans, determine how much your monthly payments will be to repay them.

There are several student loan repayment calculators available online to help you estimate your monthly payment amount, including [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org).

Loan repayment period			
Estimated monthly payment			

# Glossary

Learn the lingo – familiarize yourself with the college and financial aid terms in this section to better equip yourself for the admissions and financial aid processes.

## COLLEGE AND FINANCIAL AID DEFINITIONS

- Academic Year**  
A period of time schools use to measure a quantity of study. An academic year typically consists of two semesters, three quarters, or a defined number of hours of study.
- Accelerated Program**  
A college program of study completed in less time than is usually required, most often by attending classes in summer or by taking extra courses during the regular academic terms. Completion of a Bachelor's degree in three years is an example of an accelerated program.
- Advanced Placement**  
Admission or assignment of a freshman to an advanced course in a certain subject on the basis of evidence that the student has already completed the equivalent of the college's freshman course in that subject.
- Application Deadline**  
The final or priority date for students applying for financial aid. The deadline will vary by college for most financial aid programs. Students should be careful to understand whether or not the Free Application for Federal Student Aid deadline indicated by the college is for submission to the federal processor or receipt by the financial aid office.
- Associate's Degree**  
A degree granted by a college after the satisfactory completion of a two-year, full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent.
- Bachelor's or Baccalaureate Degree**  
A degree granted by a college after the satisfactory completion of a four- or five-year, full-time program of study, or its part-time equivalent.
- Books/Supplies (Costs)**  
Average estimated books/supplies cost, determined by the colleges, used to calculate student's Cost of Attendance (COA). COA is part of the formula that determines student financial need and, ultimately, student eligibility for financial aid.
- Campus-Based Program**  
The three federally-funded student financial aid programs directly administered by colleges are: Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program, Federal Perkins Loan Program, and Federal Work-study Program.
- College Grant Aid**  
Financial aid from the school, such as tuition waivers, grants, and scholarships, which does not need to be repaid.
- College Loans**  
Student loans provided by the school.
- Consolidation Loan**  
A loan that combines several student loans into one new loan from a single lender.
- Cooperative Education**  
A program that provides for alternative class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government. Students typically are paid for their work. Under a cooperative plan, five years are normally required to complete a bachelor's degree, but graduates have the advantage of about a year's practical work experience in addition to their studies.
- Cost of Attendance (COA)**  
The calculated cost of attending the college, which includes transportation, room and board, tuition and fees, and the estimated cost of books, supplies, and other expenses. COA is used to determine eligibility for financial aid.
- Default**  
Occurs when the borrower fails to make an installment payment or meet the terms and conditions of the loan, provided the failure persists for 270 days.
- Deferment**  
When the borrower is allowed to postpone repayment of the loan for a specified period of time.
- Dependent Student**  
For federal student aid purposes, any student who is not an independent student is considered to be dependent. See the definition of "independent student" for a list of qualifying conditions.
- Early Decision**  
Students who apply under early decision commit to enroll at the college if admitted and offered a satisfactory financial aid package. Application deadlines usually are in November or December with a mid- to late-December notification date.
- Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**  
The index used to determine how much a family is expected to contribute toward the Cost of Attendance. Your EFC is calculated based upon the information you provided when filing the FAFSA.
- Federal Direct Student Loan Program (FDSLPL)**  
The federal student loan program where the U.S. government, not private entities, serves as the lender. The FDSLPL includes the Federal Direct Stafford Loan (subsidized and unsubsidized) and the Federal Direct PLUS Loan. This program is also known as the William D. Ford Direct Loan (DL) Program.
- Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP)**  
The federal student loan program where funds are provided by private lenders, such as banks, credit unions, and savings and loan associations. The FFELP includes the Federal Stafford Loan (subsidized and unsubsidized) and the Federal PLUS Loan.
- Federal Grant Aid**  
The Pell Grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Academic Competitiveness Grant, National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant, and other federal grants and scholarships that do not need to be repaid to the government.
- Federal Methodology Need Analysis Formula**  
A formula used to calculate your family's expected financial contribution for college. This formula, established by Congress, is used nationwide for all students. The most important factors in the formula are: parent income, assets, and net worth; student income and assets; and family size.
- Federal Pell Grant**  
Federal grant that provides funds based on the student's financial need and does not need to be repaid.
- Federal Perkins Loan**  
The Perkins Loan allows students to borrow up to \$4,000/year up to a maximum of \$20,000 for undergraduate school and \$6,000/year up to a maximum of \$40,000 for graduate school. The Perkins Loan has one of the lowest interest rates and is awarded by the college's financial aid office to students with exceptional financial need. The student must have applied for a Pell Grant to be eligible. The interest on the Perkins Loan is subsidized while the student is in school.
- Federal PLUS Loan**  
Federal loans available to parents of dependent undergraduate students, or directly to graduate and professional students as a way to help finance education. The borrower may borrow up to the full cost of the education, less the amount of any other financial aid received. A PLUS Loan may be used to pay the Expected Family Contribution.
- Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan**  
A loan where the government pays the interest on the loan while the student is in school, during the grace period, and during any deferment periods. Subsidized loans are awarded based on financial need.

*Continued on next page*

**Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)**

A federal grant program for undergraduate students with exceptional need. These grants are awarded by the college's financial aid office and provide up to \$4,000 annually. To qualify, a student also must be a recipient of a Federal Pell Grant.

**Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan**

A loan for which the government does not pay the interest. The borrower is responsible for the interest on an unsubsidized loan from the date the loan is disbursed, even while the student is still in school.

**Financial Aid Package**

The total amount of financial aid a student is eligible to receive. It might include grants, work-study, and loan funds from a variety of sources, and is assembled by the college's financial aid office.

**Financial Need**

The amount by which your family contribution falls short of covering the cost of attendance.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

A free application that must be completed by all students and parents who apply for federal student aid.

**Full-Time Student**

An undergraduate student who is enrolled for at least 12 credit hours per semester or equivalent. For a graduate student, the enrollment requirements can vary among colleges. Does not include audited courses.

**Graduate Student**

A student who is enrolled in a master's or doctoral program at a college.

**Grant**

A type of financial aid usually based on financial need, which the student does not have to repay.

**Grant Aid**

Financial aid, such as grants and scholarships, that does not have to be repaid.

**Independent Student**

A student is considered independent for federal student aid if the student meets one of the following criteria: is age 24 or older, is working toward a master's or doctor's degree, is married, has legal dependents other than a spouse, is an orphan or ward of the court, or is on active duty, or is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Effective Wednesday, July 1, 2009, the definition of independent is expanding to include individuals who are:

- ▶ Orphans, wards of the court or in foster care at any time the individual is 13 or older
- ▶ Emancipated minors or in legal guardianship
- ▶ Unaccompanied youths who are homeless
- ▶ Unaccompanied self-supporting youths at risk of homelessness

**Interest**

The periodic fee charged to borrow money. Interest charges are repaid in addition to the principal of the loan.

**Loan**

A type of financial aid that must be repaid, with interest.

**Master Promissory Note (MPN)**

To borrow under the federal loan programs, a student or parent must sign this common form. The MPN allows borrowers to receive loans for a single academic year, or for multiple academic years without having to sign a new note.

**Open Admission**

The college admission policy of admitting high school graduates and other adults generally without regard to conventional academic qualifications, such as high school subjects taken, high school grades, and admission test scores. Virtually all applicants with high school diplomas or their equivalent are accepted.

**Part-Time Student**

An undergraduate student who is enrolled for fewer than 12 credit hours per semester or equivalent. A graduate student who is enrolled for fewer hours than the college's standard to be considered a full-time student. Does not include audited courses.

**Personal Expenses**

Part of the calculated student Cost of Attendance (COA) that includes the estimated student cost of personal items, such as laundry, toothpaste, etc.

**PIN**

A four-digit number that is used in combination with a student's Social Security Number, name, and date of birth to identify someone who has the right to access the student's personal information on federal student aid Web sites, such as FAFSA on the Web. Parents of dependent students will also electronically sign a FAFSA and need their own PIN.

**Principal**

The dollar amount borrowed on which interest is calculated.

**Priority Filing Date**

The date established by the college by which students are encouraged to submit their FAFSA and have the results forwarded to the college to increase their chances of being awarded certain campus-based financial aid. Financial aid funds are limited for students who fail to meet their college's priority filing date.

**Private Grant Aid**

Non-college grant aid, such as scholarships from community groups and organizations, that does not require repayment.

**Private Loans**

Educational loan programs provided by private lenders to supplement the student and parent educational loan programs available from the federal government.

**Promissory Note**

The legal document signed by the borrower prior to receiving a loan. States a promise to repay the loan, and lists the conditions of the loan and terms for repayment. The Master Promissory Note (MPN) is one type of promissory note.

**Remaining Need**

The amount of need remaining after the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and grant aid is subtracted from Cost of Attendance (COA).

**Room/Board**

The actual on-campus room/board charges or estimated off-campus room/board charges, determined by the colleges, used to calculate a student's Cost of Attendance (COA).

**State Grant Aid**

State financial aid, such as grants and scholarships, that does not have to be repaid.

**Student Aid Report (SAR)**

The SAR summarizes the information included on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The SAR provides the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is used to determine whether a student is eligible for a Federal Pell Grant and other federal aid.

**Title IV School Code**

The Title IV school code is a six-character college identifier used for federal student aid programs. This code may have a two-digit suffix that identifies a particular division, campus or branch of the college.

**Transportation (Costs)**

The estimated transportation costs, determined by the college, that are used to calculate a student's Cost of Attendance (COA).

**Tuition/Fees**

Amount of money charged to students for instructional or other services. Tuition might be charged per term, per course, or per credit.

**Undergraduate Student**

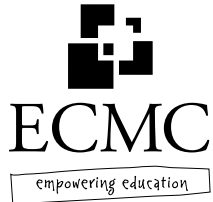
A student who is enrolled in an undergraduate course of study that usually does not exceed four years and that typically leads to a bachelor's degree or certificate.

**Unmet Need**

The amount of need remaining after Expected Family Contribution (EFC), grant aid, and self-help are subtracted from Cost of Attendance.

**Work-Study**

A federal program providing undergraduate and graduate students with part-time employment during the school year.



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