

Wondering how to pay for college? Here we have a link to the federal government's financial aid website and a quick overview of filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Start here for an overview of financial aid: <http://studentaid.ed.gov>

1. **Apply for admission as well as financial aid** - During your senior year, you'll want to apply to colleges early - in the fall - for the next school year. At the same time, begin figuring out your financial aid situation. Since important application deadlines vary, you may want to develop a calendar of important dates. It's a good idea to apply early. A college cannot offer financial aid unless the student has applied for admission and has been accepted.
2. **Submit required financial aid forms** - This may be one of the most difficult steps but if you don't apply, you don't have a chance of getting any money! So make sure you file all required forms for financial aid at the college(s) you are considering. This includes the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#).

Note:

- Students should file only one FAFSA regardless of how many colleges they are considering.
- The FAFSA includes a section for the student to list the colleges to which they want their information sent.
- The FAFSA cannot be submitted until January 1st of the calendar year in which you are applying for aid.

3. The FAFSA application should be completed on line via the website: www.fafsa.ed.gov. It will take approximately 2 weeks to process and then send to all schools listed on your application. The FAFSA paper application is no longer being shipped to schools, but you can download and print a paper version from www.fafsa.ed.gov. If you chose to use a downloaded paper version of the FAFSA, it will take approximately 4 - 6 weeks for all schools listed on your application to receive your information. If you have questions about completing the application, call the Federal Student Aid information center (800-433-3243). During your senior year, complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1st as possible.
4. The FAFSA collects financial and other information from students and parents to determine an [Expected Family Contribution \(EFC\)](#). The [EFC](#) figure is used to determine a student's eligibility for [Federal Pell Grant](#), other federal financial

aid programs, and many state programs. The [EFC](#) is determined according to formulas set periodically by the U.S. Congress. Students should also check with each college to determine if there are additional forms the college requires them to file. Be sure to file all forms in time to meet the colleges' financial aid application deadlines. Note: Admissions and financial aid deadlines are often different; be sure to meet each requirement.

5. **Use the [FAFSA on the Web Worksheet](#)** to collect information and complete the questions before entering your information online. The questions on the [FAFSA on the Web Worksheet](#) are listed in the same order that they appear on the online FAFSA Application. Be sure to download the correct worksheet for the coming financial aid year. The current year's worksheet will also be available in the School Counseling Office in the middle of December each year.
6. **Apply for scholarships and grants** - Be sure to explore the [KEYS local scholarships](#), grants, and loan programs.
7. **Keep track of progress** - In other words: stay organized! You don't want to miss out on a campus tour, admission deadline or a major scholarship because you lost the information.
8. **Use your School Counselor as a resource.** School Counselors are not necessarily Financial Aid experts, but they can answer many questions.