

General Student Aid Information

Tips to Getting Aid Without Delay!

Financial aid administrators and guidance counselors from around the country agree that the following tips speed up the application process:

Important: Read the instructions!

Many questions on the FAFSA are straightforward, like your Social Security Number. But many questions are asked specifically for purposes of student financial aid. Common words like "household," "investments," and even "parent" may have special meaning. Read all instructions carefully.

Apply early

State and school deadlines will vary and tend to be early. Check with them to find out their exact deadline dates.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) will process your FAFSA if received on or before the deadline. However, to actually receive aid, your school must have correct, complete FAFSA information before your last day of enrollment.

Complete your tax return

We recommend that you (and your parents if you are a dependent student) complete your tax return before filling out your FAFSA. This will make completing the FAFSA easier. If you have not filed your tax return yet, you can still submit your FAFSA but you must provide income and tax data. Once you (and your parents if you are a dependent student) file your tax return, you must correct any income or tax information that changed.

Save time: File Electronically!

Complete and submit your FAFSA online. It is the fastest and most accurate way to apply for student aid.

Ask: Do I need additional forms?

Many schools and states rely on the FAFSA as the single application for student aid. However, your school or state may require additional forms. Check with your state agency and the financial aid office at the school you plan to attend to find out if they require additional forms.

Why fill out a FAFSA?

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the first step in the financial aid process. Use it to apply for federal student financial aid, such as Pell grant, student loans, and college work-study. In addition, most states and schools use FAFSA information to award their financial aid. For introductory instructions on how to complete the FAFSA online or on paper go to Completing the FAFSA, 2006-2007 at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/completefafsa>

Why all the questions?

Your FAFSA responses are put into a formula (known as the Federal Methodology), which is required by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. The result is your Expected Family Contribution, or EFC. The EFC is a number that measures your family's financial strength. It is subtracted from the Cost of Attendance at the school(s) you plan to attend which determines your eligibility for federal student aid.

Your state, and the school(s) you list, may use all or some of your responses. They will determine if you are also eligible for school or state aid.

How do I find out what my EFC is?

You will be sent a report, called a ***Student Aid Report*** (SAR) by email or by postal mail. The SAR lists the information you reported on your FAFSA, and will tell you your EFC. Reviewing your SAR is important to ensure all of your information is correct. If needed, you can make any necessary changes or provide additional information so that it is true and correct.

How much aid do I get?

The schools use your EFC to prepare a financial aid package (grants, loans, and/or work study) to help you meet your financial need. Financial need is the difference between your EFC and your school's cost of attendance (which can include living expenses), as determined by the school. If you or your family have special circumstances that impact your financial situation, contact your school's financial aid office. Some examples include: unusual medical or dental expenses, or a large change in income from last year to this year.

When do I get the aid?

Your financial aid will be paid to you through your school. Typically, your school will first use the aid to pay tuition, fees, and room and board (if provided by the school). Any remaining aid is returned to you for your other expenses.

Where can I get more information on student aid?

The financial aid office at the school you plan to attend is best place to get information about federal, state, school and other sources of student financial aid.

You can also check out these resources:

- * www.studentaid.ed.gov
- * www.students.gov
- * Your high school counselor's office
- * Your local library's reference section

There may be information available from foundations, religious organizations, community organizations, and civic groups, as well as organizations related to your field of interest, such as the American Medical Association or American Bar Association. Check with your parents' employers or unions to see if they award scholarships or have tuition payment plans.

Warning! *Be wary of organizations that charge a fee to submit your application, or to find you money for school. Some are legitimate and some are scams. Generally, any help that you pay for can be received free from your school or the U.S. Department of Education.*

Federal Student Financial Aid Deadlines

The 2005-2006 School Year (July 1st, 2005 - June 30th, 2006):

- FAFSA on the Web, Renewal FAFSA on the Web, and applications must be submitted by midnight Central Daylight time, June 30, 2006.
- Corrections on the Web forms must be submitted by midnight Central Daylight time, September 15, 2006.

The 2006-2007 School Year (July 1st, 2006 - June 30th, 2007):

- FAFSA on the Web, Renewal FAFSA on the Web, and applications must be submitted by midnight Central Daylight time, July 2, 2007.
- Corrections on the Web forms must be submitted by midnight Central Daylight time, September 17, 2007.

It is important to note the type of deadline you are up against. Ask your school about their definition of an application deadline, whether it is the receipt date and time or the process date and time of the application.

The Department of Education considers an application's receipt date and time to be when the application/correction has been successfully submitted. The last page of the online application/correction submission process is therefore called the "Confirmation Page". It contains a 22 (if an application) or 30 (if a correction) character long "Confirmation Number". This number contains the exact date and time (Central Standard Time) the form was received. It is recommended you print this for your records.

Note: Transactions must be completed and accepted by midnight to meet the deadline. If transmissions are started before midnight but are not completed until after midnight, those transmissions will not meet the deadline. In addition, any transmission picked up on the deadline date that gets rejected may not be able to be reprocessed because the deadline will have passed by the time the user gets the information notifying him/her of the reject.

State Student Financial Aid Deadlines

State deadlines may be earlier than the federal deadline. If a link has been provided to a state online form, you can select the state name to be directed to that form.

Note: State forms do not replace filling out the FAFSA. You must fill out the FAFSA to receive federal student aid.

Note: Date received means received by the U.S. Department of Education unless otherwise indicated.

California: For initial awards - March 2, 2006

For additional community college awards - September 2, 2006 - date postmarked

School Student Financial Aid Deadlines

Schools may have their own deadlines and applications for awarding student aid. Check with the school's financial aid office for information. Most schools offer different types of one-time or renewable scholarships and grants. Some of these may be academically based (GPA performance), need-based, athletic, or music and arts. Prospective students can ask about institution specific scholarships at their college of choice.

Federal Student Aid Programs

Your financial aid package is likely to include funds from the federal student aid programs. These programs, described below, are administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

Important Note: Not all schools participate in all federal student aid programs. Check with your school's financial aid office to make sure your school participates in the federal program(s) you are interested in.

Federal Pell Grants
Federal Stafford Loans
Federal PLUS Loans
Campus-Based Programs
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants
Federal Work Study
Perkins Loans

With a few exceptions ***Federal Pell Grants*** are available only to undergraduate students. Grants

usually do not have to be repaid.

- **Award Amount:** The maximum Pell Grant for the 2004–2005 award year is \$4,050. While the maximum amount can change each year depending on program funding, it has remained at \$4,050 since 2002. The amount of the grant depends on both the student's EFC and several other factors. These factors are the student's cost of attendance (tuition and fees, room and board, books, supplies, and so on) and the amount of time the student attends school (whether the student goes to school for a full academic year or less and whether the student is full-time or part-time). An eligible part-time student can receive a Pell Grant. The amount awarded, however, will be less than for a full-time student. An applicant may receive only one Pell Grant in an award year and may not receive Pell Grant funds from more than one school at a time.
- **Disbursement:** A school may credit Pell Grant funds to a student's school account, pay the student directly (usually by check), or use a combination of these two methods. The school must notify the student in writing of the amount of the Pell Grant and of how and when payments will be made. Schools must pay at least once per term, whether that is a semester, trimester, or quarter. Schools that don't use formally defined, traditional terms must pay the student at least twice per academic year.
- **Time Limit:** Current regulations pose no limit on the number of years a student can receive a Pell Grant as long as the student remains in a degree program as an undergraduate and does not have a bachelor's degree. However, President George W. Bush recently proposed a limit on Pell Grant funding of eight years for students pursuing a four-year degree and four years for students pursuing a two-year degree.

Federal Stafford Loans are student loans that must be repaid and are available to both undergraduate and graduate students.

- ◆ If your school participates in the Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program, the federal government provides the funds for your Stafford Loan.
- ◆ If your school participates in the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program, a private lender provides the funds for your Stafford Loan, although the federal government guarantees the loan funds.

First-year undergraduates are eligible for loans up to \$2,625. Amounts increase for subsequent years of study, with higher amounts for graduate students. The interest rate is variable, but never exceeds 8.25 percent. If you qualify (based on need) for a subsidized Stafford loan, the government will pay the interest on your loan while you are in school, during grace periods, and during any deferment periods. You are responsible for paying all of the interest that accrues on an unsubsidized Stafford Loan.

Federal PLUS Loans are unsubsidized loans made to parents. If you are independent or your parents cannot get a PLUS loan, you are eligible to borrow additional Stafford Loan funds. The interest rate is variable, but never exceeds 9 percent.

Campus-Based Programs are administered by participating schools. There are three of these programs.

- ◆ **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants** are grants available for undergraduates only; awards range from \$100-\$4,000.
- ◆ **Federal Work Study** provides jobs to undergraduate and graduate students, allowing them to earn money to pay education expenses.
- ◆ **Perkins Loans** are low-interest (5 percent) loans that must be repaid; the maximum annual loan amount is \$4,000 for undergraduate students and \$6,000 for graduate students.

State Student Aid Programs

Cal Grants A, B Competitive Awards

The California Student Commission (CSAC) administers grant programs exclusively for California residents.

- ◆ Cal Grant A is a California State Grant that is applied toward registration and educational fees. It is renewable for a maximum of four years. New and continuing students who demonstrate academic achievement and financial aid eligibility may apply. Cal Grant A awards for 2005-2006 at CSU are a maximum of \$2,520 for undergraduates and \$2,922 for the fifth year teaching credential program.
- ◆ Cal Grant B is college opportunities grant for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and low-income families. Awards range from \$1,551 to \$4,473 per year at CSUSB and are renewable up to four years if students are eligible. Cal Grant B pays an access grant of \$1,551 in the first year and pays tuition and subsistence in subsequent years. Selection for this grant is based on financial aid eligibility, parent's income/size, parent's education level, and household status, and the students' grades.

To apply CAL GRANT A and B, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Cal Grant GPA Verification form by March 2. FAFSA and Cal Grant GPA Verification forms are available at your school's financial aid office. Students may also complete the FAFSA application online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. New Cal Grant applicants must also have a GPA Verification form completed and mailed to CSAC no later than March 2.

California State University Grant (SUG)

Both undergraduates and graduates are eligible for a SUG. The maximum award in 2005-2006 is \$2,400. Any state resident who applies for financial aid will automatically be considered for this program. This grant is only available to California residents. More info is available at: <http://finaid.csusb.edu/grants.htm>

Community and Private Industry Student Aid Programs

You have probably heard the numbers: There are hundreds of thousands of scholarships out there, worth more than \$1 billion, just waiting for you to claim them. It's not always as easy as that, but there are a staggering number of companies, professional associations, unions, religious and ethnic groups, and other private organizations that award scholarships to students based on a wide range of qualifications, including need, talent, and heritage. As a group, these awards make up one of the smallest pieces of the financial aid pie. Still, they can make a dent in your college bill, so it's worth putting in the effort to find out if any are right for you. For a fee, scholarship search services will seek out awards that match your qualifications. But start your search with free scholarship guides.

The following are examples of two students who were able to fund their education through scholarships, grants and other financially creative ideas. Hopefully this will encourage prospective students and parents of college-bound kids!

Example #1 - Having grown up in the small town of Hubbard, Ohio, **Brittney Murphy** is excited about attending Capital University, a Lutheran college just outside of Columbus. "Capital is 10 minutes from anything I'd want to do," says the 19-Year-old sophomore. With plans to study English, communications, and secondary education Murphy is happy with her choice and appreciates the college's generous aid award of \$7,500. Her advice to the class of 2006 is: "Don't limit yourself. Apply for every available scholarship, even if it means staying home on a Friday night to type out essays. It will be worth it if you get that scholarship."

- ◆ College Scholarships: \$7,500, Murphy won two scholarships from Capital totaling \$6,000. She also won a \$1,500 Lutheran Heritage scholarship from the school. All her awards are renewable.
- ◆ Ohio Student Choice Grant: \$1,062 (This grant from the Ohio state government is awarded to students who attend school in-state. It is much like our CSU Grant)
- ◆ Federal Pell Grant: \$3,750 (She demonstrated significant need.)
- ◆ Federal Perkins Loan: \$2,000 (Because of need, Murphy qualified for a low-interest Perkins loan. The school acts as the lender.)
- ◆ Federal Stafford Loan: \$2,625 (Murphy also qualified for this need-based loan.)
- ◆ Federal Work-Study: \$1,700 (Murphy earns a weekly paycheck at a campus job to help cover expenses.)

TOTAL: \$18,637

Example #2 - **Libby Rearick**, 21, didn't qualify for any aid based on her FAFSA. But as a sophomore at the University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana, she brought in enough scholarships to earn her

a \$3 credit on her tuition bill. “I will be able to get a four-year education without having to take out loans,” she says.

How did she do it? Research and hard work. Rearick, a nursing major, used scholarship resources such as FastWeb.com and Peterson's Scholarships, Grants and Prizes book to pinpoint scholarships for which she might qualify.

- ◆ Private Scholarships: \$5,750 (Rearick won a \$2,500 renewable scholarship from the Peoples Foundation, which awards funds to Indiana students studying nursing and other similar fields. By joining the National Student Nurse Association, other scholarships targeting nursing students became available to Rearick.)
- ◆ College Scholarship: \$7,000 (Based on her GPA and several application essays, Rearick won USF's President's Scholarship, which pays half of her tuition. The scholarship is renewable as long as she maintains a 3.8 GPA.)
- ◆ Resident Adviser: \$6,000 (By working as an RA, Rearick's room and board is free, a \$6,000 value.)

TOTAL: \$18,750