

Key Steps to the Financial Aid Process

Determine the cost of attending the college(s) of your choice; this is the total amount of your college expenses. Some are already set (tuition, room & board, and fees) while others will have to be estimated (books and supplies, personal miscellaneous expenses and transportation). Your financial aid administrator will have a handle on all these expense, so it's a good idea to ask for help.

Complete the free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) that is available in paper form from your high school. Or a better option is to complete the FAFSA online and submit it electronically to the U.S. Department of Education. The internet address for FAFSA on the Web is www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA is used to determine the key element in any financial aid application: **financial aid**.

Submit the completed FAFSA for processing as soon as possible after January 1. These factors will help determine the kind and amounts of aid for which you may qualify:

- Parent's Income and Assets
- Medical Expenses
- Family Size
- Age and Number of Working Parents
- Number of Children in College
- Extraordinary Expenses or Special Circumstances
- Student's Income and Expenses

Note: Remember that you must re-apply for financial aid every year, either by completing a "New" or "Renewal" FAFSA. Also, be sure to check with your school see what steps you should take to continue receiving aid.

Your college may require that you fill out additional financial aid forms for campus-based aid.

Federal, state, local, and school education funds for which you qualify are gathered by the financial aid administrator and awarded to you as a financial aid package. Check out local scholarships opportunities and other sources of "gift" aid.

Apply for one or more of the education loans that are available to help you. Applications for these loans can be obtained online.