

Financial Aid Calendar

Apply Early. Apply Right.

There is no need to be intimidated by the prospect of applying for financial aid. Millions of families apply for aid successfully each year. Use this calendar to stay a step ahead of deadlines—when you are applying for aid, time is money.

Summer Before Senior Year

Request college applications and financial aid information. Organize all college materials into separate files by college.

Keep a college calendar of all admissions and financial aid deadlines.

Start to research scholarships online. Find out if your parents' employers offer scholarships or tuition reimbursement.

September

Meet with your counselor to talk about college applications and financial aid.

If you are not sure if your family will qualify for financial aid you can use the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculator to help you determine your eligibility for both federal and non-federal financial aid programs.

October

Early decision or early action applicants who are applying for financial aid usually have to fill out a supplemental aid application using estimated income figures.

Some colleges require early submission of "regular decision" applications for priority consideration for merit- or need-based scholarships. This means that your admissions and financial aid applications might be due in the winter in order to qualify for some types of scholarships.

Find out if your colleges have institutional scholarship deadlines by visiting their websites or reviewing their literature.

Ask your counselor for information on state and local scholarships. Many of these programs require the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the PROFILE, or both. Make sure these forms are submitted to all scholarship programs that require them.

Male students who will be 18 at the time they complete the FAFSA are required to register with Selective Service to be eligible for federal and state aid. Students can register for Selective Service at the post office or through the FAFSA form. Call Selective Service toll-free at (888) 655-1825 for more information.

November

Apply for scholarships in time to meet application deadlines.

You and your parents should request a Department of Education PIN number. The PIN serves as an electronic signature for FAFSA on the Web and significantly reduces processing time.

If you are applying for regular decision admissions and for financial aid it is not too early to submit the PROFILE application. Visit PROFILE Online to learn more about the PROFILE service and how to submit the application online. Remember, unlike the FAFSA, you do not need to wait until after January 1 to submit PROFILE.

December

Apply for scholarships in time to meet application deadlines.

Get a FAFSA from the guidance office before winter vacation begins.

If you are planning to submit FAFSA online (highly recommended), you should visit FAFSA on the Web and familiarize yourself with the website's content and features.

Start gathering identity and financial documents necessary to complete FAFSA. Visit FAFSA on the Web for a list of required documents.

Early decision and early action responses should arrive this month. If you are admitted to your early decision school and you have applied for financial aid you should also receive a financial aid award. (Note: some early action programs may admit a student but not send a financial aid award notice until later in the spring. Check the college's literature for more information.) Read the award letter carefully. Some awards require you to submit a written acceptance. If you have questions about the financial aid award, contact the financial aid office directly. Make sure you understand the terms and conditions of the award before making a final decision.

January

Income and asset figures from your tax return are needed to complete the FAFSA, so it's a good idea for you and your parents to prepare returns as early as possible this year. However, it is not necessary to submit your tax return to the IRS before submitting the FAFSA.

If a college requires the PROFILE, start filling out the application as soon as possible to meet February priority deadlines. PROFILE filers who complete the application after January 5 can print out a FAFSA worksheet, which provides answers to most of the FAFSA questions.

Sign and submit the FAFSA as soon as possible, but after January 1. Applying early improves the chances of receiving aid from as many sources as possible.

If you are submitting FAFSA online you might find it helpful to complete the preapplication worksheet, available on FAFSA on the Web. This worksheet is designed to help your family organize your financial information for the online version of FAFSA and **should not be submitted** to federal processors.

Don't forget to complete the institutional financial aid application for each college.

February

February is Financial Aid Awareness Month. Participate in activities, such as financial aid information nights, scheduled by your high school or local colleges. These activities will offer you the opportunity to learn more about how financial aid eligibility is determined.

Most priority deadlines for PROFILE fall in early to middle February. Make sure the application is received in time to meet these deadlines.

Priority financial aid deadlines tend to fall in February. Applications received by the priority deadline are given the highest consideration.

The Student Aid Report (SAR) should arrive anywhere from two to four weeks after the FAFSA is submitted. The EFC figure is printed on the front page at the upper right. If the SAR has not been received four weeks after submitting the FAFSA, call (800) 4-FED-AID or (800) 433-3243/ TTY (800) 730-8913. If there are any errors on the SAR, make corrections and mail it back immediately.

If you provided a valid email address on the FAFSA, you will be sent a link to an electronic version of the SAR. Make corrections to the SAR online at FAFSA on the Web.

March

Attend Chief Leschi's Financial Aid Night (FAFSA) March 11th 2008 at 6 pm.

Your FAFSA may be chosen for a routine process known as "verification," in which the information reported on the FAFSA is checked against copies of signed tax returns. An asterisk next to the EFC figure on your SAR means your application has been selected

for verification. If selected for verification, be sure to submit all requested documentation to the financial aid office in a timely fashion.

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Some admissions decisions and financial aid award letters arrive this month.

Start looking for summer jobs or internships.

April

Admissions decisions and financial aid award letters arrive this month. Read aid award letters carefully and be sure to meet deadlines for accepting awards.

Use the Compare Your Aid Awards tool to see a side-by-side comparison of aid awards.

If full need has not been met, or if your family's financial circumstances have changed, consider appealing the aid award.

Make a final decision, mail the enrollment form, and deposit check to your final-choice college before May 1, the reply deadline for most colleges.

May

If it will be difficult for your family to pay the Expected Family Contribution for the semester, it's time to start pursuing alternatives such as parent loans or private loans to close the financial aid gap.

If student loans are part of your financial aid package, the college will send instructions about the loan application process. You will need to complete and sign a form called the Master Promissory Note (MPN) in order to receive Stafford or Direct Loan funds.

Summer Before College

The fall semester bill will arrive over the summer. Be sure to return it with proper payment as quickly as possible.

If all forms have been completed correctly and all deadlines have been met, financial aid funds should be credited to your student account before the beginning of the semester.

Work to help cover your first-year college expenses.

Make travel plans. Book early for the best prices.

Finalize your housing plans.

Set up a bank account near campus and talk to your parents about how to use credit cards responsibly.

September 2009

Federal requirements state that Stafford Loan recipients must complete loan counseling (or an "entrance interview") before loan funds are disbursed. This is to ensure that the recipient understands all loan obligations. The college's financial aid office will provide you with information about the counseling process—in most cases, you must simply complete a brief online questionnaire.

If you have been awarded a Perkins Loan you must sign a promissory note.

If you've been awarded a work-study position, you will be placed in a student job.