



Federal Student Aid (FSA) Students Portal Project – Release 2

Content – ~~Draft~~ |

~~June 26~~ July 18, 2002 |



Students Portal Home page (1)	4
Top Right Navigation	5
Privacy page (2)	5
Security page (3)	8
Notices (4) (#4.1)	9
Audience pages (5)	10
Graduate Student Page (6) (#6.1)	11
Parents (7) (#7.1)	12
The Federal PLUS Loan v. Home Equity Loans (XAP) (8)	13
The Federal PLUS Loan v. Cashing Investments (XAP) (9)	15
The Federal PLUS Loan v. using 401k Funds (XAP) (10)	16
What about Tax Incentives for Education-related Expenses? (XAP) (11)	17
Saving Money for College (FSA) (12) (#12.1)	19
Returning Student(13) (#13.1)	20
International Students (14) (#14.1)	22
Important Questions page (15) (#15.1)	23
Getting Started page (16) (#16.1)	24
Site Resources	25
About Us (17) (#17.1)	25
Contact Us (18) (#18.1)	26
FAQs page(19)	27
Glossary of Terms	29
Publications page (20) (#20.1)	32
Technical Help (21) (#21.1)	34
Site Map Page ** Note: has not yet been updated (22)	35
Preparing (23) (#23.1)	37
Planner Timeline page (XAP) (24)	38
Grade 8 page (XAP) (25)	40
Grade 9/Freshman Year (XAP) (26)	41
Grade 10/Sophomore Year (XAP) (27)	42
Grade 11/Junior Year (XAP) (28)	43
Grade 12/Senior Year (XAP) (29)	46
Testing Information page (30) (#30.1)	49
Graduate and International Testing Information (80) (#80.1)	51
Choosing (31) (#31.1)	53
Things to Consider (32) (#32.1)	54
Types of Schools (33) (#33.1)	56
Understanding the Costs(34) (#34.1)	57
So Many Choices (35) (#35.1)	59
Applying (36) (#36.1)	61
Timeline for Seniors (37) (#37.1)	62
Applying Early (38)	6565
"To Do" page (39)	6666
Funding (40) (#40.1)	6767
Aid Eligibility (41) (#41.1)	6969
Grants Information page (42) (#42.1)	7171
Student Loan Information (43) (#43.1)	7373
Parent Loan Information(44) (#44.1)	7676



Campus-Based Aid Information (45) (#45.1)	7777
Borrowing Responsibly (46) (#46.1)	7979
Scholarships (47) (#47.1)	8080
General Scholarship Information (XAP) (48)	8181
What Does it Take to get a Scholarship? (XAP) (49)	8282
How do I find out about Scholarships? (XAP) (50)	8383
How do I apply for a scholarship? (XAP) (51)	8484
Scholarship Checklist (XAP) (52)	8585
35 Ways to Reduce College Costs (XAP) (53)	8686
How to choose and evaluate Lenders (XAP) (54)	8989
Sample Award Package (XAP) (55)	9090
How do I compare Award Packages? (XAP) (56)	9292
FAFSA Information (58) (#58.1)	9494
Attending (59) (#59.1)	9595
Loan Entrance Counseling (60) (#60.1)	9696
Leaving School Early (61) (#61.1)	9898
Closed School Information (62) (#62.1)	9999
Closed School Contact page (63) (#63.1)	100100
Loan Exit Counseling (64) (#64.1)	101101
Career Information (65) (#65.1)	103103
Repaying (66) (#66.1)	104104
Electronic Payment page (67) (#67.1)	106106
Cancellation/Deferment Options for Teachers page (FSA) (68) (#68.1)	107107
Perkins Loan Cancellation (FSA) (69) (#69.1)	108108
Stafford Loan Cancellation for Teachers (FSA) (70) (#70.1)	110110
Deferments for FFEL and Direct Loans (FSA) (71) (#71.1)	113113
Teaching Reduces Service Requirement for Douglas Scholars (FSA) (72) (#72.1)	114114
Difficulty Paying (73) (#73.1)	115115
Deferments and Forbearances (74) (#74.1)	116116
Loan Consolidation (75) (#75.1)	118118
Consolidation Checklist page (76) (#76.1)	120120
Consolidation Tips (77) (#77.1)	122122
Discharges (78) (#78.1)	124124
XAP Tools (79)	127127
Appendix A: College Savings Calculator	127127
Appendix B: Self Assessment	127127
Appendix C: Student Planner	127127
Appendix D: College Finder	127127
Appendix E: College Matching Wizard	127127
E.1 College Matching Wizard Pop up Windows	127127
Appendix F : Campus Tours	127127
Appendix G: Online Applications	127127
Appendix H: Financial Aid Wizard	127127
Appendix I: Scholarship Search	127127
Appendix J: Career Finder	127127



Students Portal Home page [\(1\)](#)

Sign Wording – when your mouse highlights the street sign on the main home page the following text will display above it.

Preparing

Find out what you need to do to prepare for education beyond high school.

Choosing

Get advice on how to find the right school for you.

Applying

Learn how to navigate the school application process.

Funding

We can help make your education affordable!

Attending

Get the facts on financial aid, how to remain eligible, and what to do when school's over...

Repaying

What you need to know about repaying student loans...

Alt text for the “Education Beyond HS” image

Throughout this website the terms school, college, postsecondary education, higher education, and education beyond high school are used interchangeably. They refer to community colleges, 2- and 4-year institutions, vocational and trade schools.

Top Right Navigation

Privacy page (2)

Privacy Policy (#2.1)

Thank you for visiting the Federal Student Aid's Students Portal and reviewing our privacy policy. Our policy is simple: We collect no personal information about you unless you choose to provide that information to us. We do not give, share, sell, or transfer any personal information to a third party. (#2.1.1)

Some of our web pages (such as the personalization registration form) let you voluntarily submit personal information. In those cases, we will provide a specific notice before you begin submitting any personal information, explaining how your information will be safeguarded. (#2.1.2)

If you want to know more about how we record non-personal information about your visit or how we use information that you voluntarily submit, read on. (#2.1.3)

Otherwise, enjoy your visit! (#2.1.4)

[Non-personal Information We Record](#) (*link to non-personal information section of the privacy page*)
[Information from E-mail You Send to Us](#) (*link to information from emails section of the privacy page*)
[Information Collected from Interactive Forms](#) (*link to information from forms section of the privacy page*)
[Links to Other Sites](#) (*link to other sites section of the privacy page*)
[Personalization](#) (*link to personalization section of the privacy page*)

Non-personal Information We Record (#2.2)

If you do nothing during your visit but browse through the web site, read pages, or download information, our web site's operating system will automatically record some general information about your visit. (#2.2.1)

During your visit, our web operating system will record: (#2.2.2)

- The Internet domain for your Internet service, such as "xcompany.com" or "xcompany.net" if you use a private Internet access account, or "yourschool.edu" if you connect from a college or university domain. (#2.2.3)
- The type of browser (such as "Netscape version X" or "Internet Explorer version X") that you are using. (#2.2.4)
- The type of operating system that you use (such as Macintosh, Unix, or Windows). (#2.2.5)
- The date and time you visit our site, and the web pages that you visit on our site. (#2.2.6)
- The address of the previous web site you were visiting, if you linked to us from another web site. (#2.2.7)

We use this information for statistical analysis, to help us make our site more useful to visitors. This tracking system does not record information about individuals. (#2.2.8)

Information from E-mail You Send to Us (#2.3)



If you decide to send us an electronic mail message (e-mail), the message will usually contain your return e-mail address. If you include personally-identifying information in your e-mail because you want us to address issues specific to your situation, we may use that information in responding to your request. In other limited circumstances, including requests from Congress or limited other parties, we may be required by law to disclose information that you submit. (#2.3.1)

Also, e-mail is not necessarily secure against interception. Please send only information necessary to help us process your request. (#2.3.2)

Information Collected from Interactive Forms (#2.4)

On some of our web pages we offer interactive forms that let you voluntarily submit personal information (such as your name or organization). This occurs when you are registering for personalization which is a process to set up a Student Portal page that saves your personal preference information. In those cases, all submitted information is used only for the expressed purposes for which it is intended and is not made available to any third party. (#2.4.1)

Links to Other Sites (#2.5)

Our policy discloses the privacy practices for the Students Portal. But the Students Portal provides links to other web sites. When you leave the Students Portal(www.studentaid.ed.gov), you will be going to sites that are beyond our control. We try to ensure that links that leave our site are clearly labeled, usually with an icon. These other sites may send their own cookies to users, collect data, or solicit personal information. The privacy policies and procedures described here for the FSA Students Portal do not apply to any external links. We encourage you to read the privacy policies of any site you link to from ours, especially if you share any personal information. Be informed. You are the person best qualified to protect your own privacy. (#2.5.1)

Personalization (#2.6)

The Privacy Act of 1974 requires that each federal agency that asks for information must tell you the following: (#2.6.1)

- What purpose the agency has in asking for it. (#2.6.2)
- How it will be used. (#2.6.3)
- What could happen if you do not give it. (#2.6.4)
- Its legal right to ask for the information and whether the law says you must give it. (#2.6.5)
- How to contact us. (#2.6.6)

We Collect this Information for the Following Purposes (#2.7)

The purpose of the information collected by the Registration Form is to enhance your visits to the Students Portal by focusing on items that match your specified interests and allowing you to bookmark selected pages. (#2.7.1)

The purpose of the information collected by the Survey Form is to help us determine the effectiveness of the Students Portal as a customer service tool and its potential role in improving the delivery of FSA information and services. The Survey Form collects no privacy information. (#2.7.2)

It should take you approximately 5 minutes to complete the Registration Form and approximately 5 minutes to complete the Survey Form, including reading instructions, gathering information, filling out the application, and reviewing it. (#2.7.3)



Completion of the forms is entirely voluntary. If you don't register, you won't be denied access to any information or services. If you register, you aren't required to complete the survey. If you want to, you can submit the survey without registering. (#2.7.4)

How We Will Use the Information We Collect (#2.8)

We will use the information collected when you complete the Registration Form to verify your login and password when you visit the site, provide you a personalized Students Portal home page that features items matching your interest profile and pages you bookmark . (#2.8.1)

We will use the information collected when you complete the Survey Form to analyze overall satisfaction with the Students Portal and various features, assess the Portal's success, and determine how to enhance the service. (#2.8.2)

If You Do Not Provide All or Part of the Requested Information (#2.9)

If you do not provide information for the required fields on the Registration Form, the system will not record your registration and you will not be able to log on to use the Personalization features. Note that it is not necessary to register to access Students Portal content and services. (#2.9.1)

You are not required to provide your real name. (#2.10)

If you submit the Survey Form, we will include your response in our analysis even if you don't answer all of the questions. (#2.10.1)

Our Authority to Collect the Information (#2.11)

OMB approved the collection and form -- the Students Portal Feedback Survey Form -- on 4/16/02 under control number 1845-0045 (Expiration Date: 4/30/2003) (#2.11.1)

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (#2.12)

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, you are not required to complete a government form unless it displays a valid OMB control number. ~~The valid OMB control number for the ED web Personalization Pilot Registration Form is 1800-0011.~~ (#2.12.1)

If you have any questions or comments about the information presented here, please forward them to us: fsa.portals@ed.gov. (#2.13)



Security page (3)

Security Policy (#3.1)

For security purposes and to make sure this service remains available to all users, we use special software programs for monitoring network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information, or otherwise to cause damage to this government computer system. These programs collect no information that would directly identify individuals, but they do collect information that could help us identify someone attempting to tamper with this web site. (#3.2)

If you use this system, you should understand that all activities may be monitored and recorded. Anyone using this system expressly consents to such monitoring. **WARNING** -- If such monitoring reveals possible evidence of criminal activity, monitoring records may be provided to law enforcement officials. (#3.3)

Except for authorized law enforcement investigations, we make no other attempts to identify individual users or their usage habits. We only use raw monitoring data logs for determining trends in usage patterns and in diagnosing system problems. (#3.4)

If you have any questions or comments about the information presented here, please forward them to us: fsa.portals@ed.gov. (#3.5)



Notices (4) (#4.1)

Copyright Status Notice (#4.2)

Unless specifically stated otherwise, all information on the Federal Student Aid (FSA) Students Portal at <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov> is in the public domain, and may be reproduced, published or otherwise used without ED's permission. This statement does not pertain to information at web sites other than www.studentaid.ed.gov, whether funded by the U.S. Department of Education or not. (#4.2.1)

Disclaimer of Endorsement (#4.3)

The documents posted on this server contain hypertext links or pointers to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. These links and pointers are provided for the user's convenience. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. Further, the inclusion of links or pointers to particular items in hypertext is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered, on these outside sites, or the organizations sponsoring the sites. (#4.3.1)



Audience pages (5)

If you attend...

Elementary School (Link to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/thinkcollege/early/tce_home.htm)

Junior/High School
(Link to preparing page)

College
(Link to attending page)

Graduate/Professional School
(Link to graduate page)

If you are a...

Parent (Link to parents page)

Returning Student (Link to returning page)

International Student (Link to [if.you.are.a.international.student.html](#))



Graduate Student Page (6) ~~Graduate Student Page (6)~~ (#6.1)

Attending graduate school opens a new door to learning beyond college. We applaud your efforts! While graduate school can be complicated, getting the funding and information you need shouldn't be. Here are a variety of helpful links for prospective and current graduate students. (#6.1.1)

You're not alone! Check out the thousands of students who are also actively involved in pursuing graduate study while providing advocacy for graduate students rights and needs. (link to <http://www.nagps.org/>) (#6.1.2)

Check out this University of Michigan-assembled listing of graduate student resources on the web. (link to <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~danhorn/graduate.html>) (#6.1.3)

In-depth graduate and professional school profiles with information about programs of study, degree requirements, facilities, expenses, financial aid, faculty research and much more (link to <http://www.gradprofiles.com/>) (#6.1.4)

The U.S. government's largest on-line resource for students! (link to <http://www.students.gov>) (#6.1.5)

The dreaded exams! Check out the Graduate Record Exam and other testing information here. (link to testing page)(#6.1.6)

Note: Information between */ and **/* has been taken directly from Funding Your Education 2002-2003

Parents (7) (#7.1)

PLUS Loans

*/***

~~PLUS Loans to meet students' education costs are available through both the Federal Family Education Loan Program and the Direct Loan Program. Parents who have an acceptable credit history can borrow a PLUS Loan to pay the education expenses of a child who is a dependent student enrolled at least half time in an eligible program at an eligible school. (Link to [parent.loans.html](#).)~~

**/*

~~[The Federal PLUS Loan v. Home Equity Loans \(link to Home equity page\)](#)~~

~~[The Federal PLUS Loan v. Cashing Investments \(link to Cashing Investments page\)](#)~~

~~[The Federal PLUS Loan v. Using 401k Funds \(link to 401k page\)](#)~~

Save (#7.2)

You should begin saving as early as possible. The average tuition for full-time undergraduate students for ~~one academic year 2001~~, before student financial aid was deducted, was \$1,630 for a public two-year community college and \$9,500 for a four-year public university. Private four-year colleges average \$15,000 an academic year and can go up to \$25,000 or more. (#7.2.1)

Many state governments now offer innovative college savings programs. The [College Savings Plans Network](#) (an affiliate of the National Association of State Treasurers) provides information about these plans and links from their web site to the many state plans. (Link to [collegesavings.org](#)) (#7.2.2)

FinAid, an online financial aid resource, has a number of online [savings calculators](#) to help plan your savings and project your financial returns. They can also help you project college costs, student loans, and others. (Link to <http://www.finaid.org/calculators/>) (#7.2.3)

[College Savings Calculator](#). Use this handy calculator to determine how much you could or should be saving to meet college expenses, and how to maximize your savings efforts. (link to [College Savings Calculator tool](#), see Appendix A) ~~**Xap text~~ (#7.2.4)

[What about Tax Incentives for Education-related Expenses Savers?](#) (link to [tax incentives page](#)) (#7.2.5)

[Saving Money for College](#). [Paying for college is easier when you can invest money in an education IRA that will accumulate interest tax free, and when you can withdraw money from an IRA without penalty. Also, you can save money in a state-sponsored tuition plan and not pay taxes on it until you withdraw the money.](#) (link to [Saving Money page](#)) ~~** FSA Text~~ (#7.2.6)

How to help your child prepare for education beyond high school (#7.3)

Parents can begin to prepare their child(ren) for college early by: (#7.3.1)

- helping them take the right junior high and high school courses based on the type of school that they wish to enroll in after high school. (#7.3.2)
- encouraging them to maintain good grades throughout their high school experience. (#7.3.3)
- choosing the right school by researching the school’s curriculum, the size of the school, the type of school, affordability and encouraging campus visits. (#7.3.4)
- helping them obtain and complete admissions applications. (#7.3.5)
- assisting them with essays and preparing for admissions interviews. (#7.3.6)

Home Schooling (#7.4)

If your child is home schooled and hoping to work right out of after completing high school, and if your state does not provide for a secondary school completion credential for home school under state law, he or she may need find it useful to take the GED. If your home-schooled child is looking to go to college, the most important thing to have him or her do is contact the admissions office at their college(s) of interest. (#7.4.1)

The admissions office counselors can provide the courses that are considered for admission to the college. Most admissions offices will be interested in the level and intensity of the course work your child has completed. Be sure to find out if the college requires a transcript of completed courses. Sometimes, colleges request a list of the books used and any completed course materials. As a home schooled student, your child’s GPA will not matter as much as in a high school where they might have received a class rank. As a result, colleges will weigh more heavily on the college entrance exam scores, like the SAT, personal essays, and interviews. (#7.4.2)

In addition, your child may want to consider enrolling at a local community college. This will help your child fulfill the requirements of college core courses in two years. Then, your child may transfer when he or she is ready to move on to a four-year college. (#7.4.3)

To find out more information about the specific requirements for college admission, check with the college that is of interest to your child. Also, you and your child can learn more through networking with other home schooled students and doing research on the Internet. (#7.4.4)

PLUS Loans (#7.5)

There are many ways to finance your child’s education. One option is through the federally sponsored PLUS loan program. PLUS loans to meet students’ education costs are available through both Federal Family Education Loan Program and the Direct Loan Program. (#7.5.1)

Other options involve leveraging personal investments or your home’s equity. To help you decide which is right for you, we’ve assembled a few fact sheets which outline the pro’s and con’s of each financing approach. (#7.5.2)

- The Federal PLUS Loan v. Home Equity Loans (link to Home equity page) (#7.5.3)
- The Federal PLUS Loan v. Cashing Investments (link to Cashing Investments page) (#7.5.4)
- The Federal PLUS Loan v. Using 401k Funds (link to 401k page) (#7.5.5)



The Federal PLUS Loan v. Home Equity Loans [\(XAP\) \(8\)](#)

Using a home equity loan to help pay college costs has been a popular option, since the interest is tax deductible. However, many families would rather have the peace of mind of not putting their house on the line to pay for college.

If you are considering using your home equity to pay for college instead of a PLUS Loan, be sure to consider these points:

- **Interest Cap**
Many home equity loans have very high interest rate caps, which means that if interest rates were to rise, a home equity loan could become a very expensive option--even with the tax advantage.
- **Liquidity**
Parents who hold on to their equity have the peace of mind of preserving their liquidity; they have the funds available for emergencies as well as opportunities.
- **Insurance**
Unlike most home equity loans, the PLUS Loan is fully insured against death and disability and payments can be deferred during times of financial difficulty.

These questions can further help you evaluate the PLUS Loan vs. a home equity loan:

- **What is the interest cap on my equity line?**
Many home equity loans have very high interest rate caps.
- **Do I have enough equity available to cover all four years and all of my children?**
Many parents don't, and that's why they are taking advantage of the PLUS Loan now while the terms are so favorable.
- **Would my equity loan be fully insured?**
Is it forgiven in the event of death of the parent and/or student or the total disability of the parent? Does it contain a payment deferment or forbearance clause for times of economic difficulty, like the PLUS does?
- **Am I carrying any debt above 9%?**
Most parents in this situation use the PLUS to pay for school, which frees up other monies (equity, for example) to pay off more expensive debts. Nobody wants to be in debt, but taking out a 9% loan is far better than carrying a credit card balance at 17 or 18%.

The Federal PLUS Loan v. Cashing Investments (XAP) (9)

Some parents cash in investments because they'd rather not borrow. Initially, this seems to make sense. However, parents soon realize that this could be one of the most expensive ways to pay--especially if it causes them to underfund a pretax retirement plan or to cash in an investment that is earning a solid return.

Parents considering using investments instead of a PLUS Loan for education costs should consider the following:

- **Retirement**
Underfunding tax-deferred retirement plans to fund education is the most costly alternative, due to the loss of significant tax benefits. For most parents, the tax savings of a retirement plan far outweigh the interest expense of the PLUS Loan. For example, a parent in a 25% tax bracket that invests \$4,000 in a pretax retirement plan will save \$1,000 in taxes plus gain the returns on that money.
- **Liquidity**
If investments are used to pay for college, the liquidity is no longer available for emergencies--or opportunities--as they arise.
- **Return on Investment**
By cashing in investments, parents lose any future returns on that money.

It is important for parents to ask themselves the following questions when comparing the PLUS Loan with cashing in their investments:

- **What kind of return am I getting on my investment?**
If the return on investment is higher than the current PLUS interest rate, then it makes sense to keep your money invested. For example, if the current interest rate is 7.72%, you are earning 15% off your investments, and you keep that money invested and take out a PLUS Loan to pay for the college instead, then you are gaining 15% while paying 7.72%. That's a net profit of over 7%!
- **Do I have enough money in the stock market to cover all four years and each of my children?**
Many parents don't--and that's why they are taking advantage of PLUS Loans now while the terms are so favorable.
- **If I sell my investments, what kind of tax exposure (capital gains or regular income taxes) will I have?**
- **Am I carrying any debt above 9%?**
Most parents in this situation use the PLUS to pay for school, which frees up money to pay off more expensive debts.



The Federal PLUS Loan v. using 401k Funds (XAP) (10)

Real-Life Example

Let's say you had a 401K account of \$100,000. If you keep that money in your 401K and it earns 12%, over three years your account would gain \$40,492.

If you withdrew \$20,000 for education expenses, your gain over three years would be just \$12,394--a difference of \$28,098.

This equates to a 28% loss in earnings on a tax-deferred basis (compounding the loss). In addition, the \$20,000 must be replaced from income, usually within 5 years at \$4,000 per year, equaling \$333 per month. The PLUS Loan payment on \$20,000 is only \$245 a month, with no prepayment penalty!

What about Tax Incentives for Education-related Expenses Savers? (XAP) (11)

Hope Scholarship Credit (HSC)

- Tax credit up to \$1,500/year for each student
- 100% tax credit for the first \$1,000 paid for qualified expenses. 50% tax credit for the second \$1,000.
- You may claim HSC for two years. Student must be in first or second year and enrolled at least half time for one period of the tax year.
- Covers tuition and fees.
- You qualify by paying tuition and fees for yourself (if independent), your spouse, or your dependent child.
- Student activity fees, athletic fees and other expenses do not count toward your credit.
- Grants and scholarships will reduce the tuition and fees used to determine your credit.
- Eligibility decreases for modified adjusted gross incomes (AGIs) between \$40,000 - \$50,000 (filing single) and \$80,000 - \$100,000 (married, filing jointly). Cannot claim with modified AGIs above these limits.
- You benefit from tax credits only to the extent you owe federal income tax. If you don't owe taxes, you won't receive a tax credit.

Lifetime Learning Credit (LLC)

- May save you up to \$1,000/year in federal taxes.
- 20% tax credit for the first \$5,000 paid for qualified expenses. After 2002, a 20% tax credit on the first \$10,000 paid.
- No limit on number of tax years you may claim LLC.
- Covers tuition and fees.
- Available to college juniors, seniors, graduate and professional students - and to students taking individual classes to improve job skills
- You qualify by paying tuition and fees for yourself (if independent), your spouse, or your dependent child.
- Student activity fees, athletic fees and other expenses do not count toward your credit.
- Grants and scholarships will reduce the tuition and fees used to determine your credit.
- Eligibility decreases for modified adjusted gross incomes between \$40,000 - \$50,000 (filing single) and \$80,000 - \$100,000 (married, filing jointly). Cannot claim with modified AGIs above these limits.
- You benefit from tax credits only to the extent you owe federal income tax. If you don't owe taxes, you won't receive a tax credit.

Education IRAs



- You may deposit up to \$500/year into an IRA for a child under age 18.
- Parents, grandparents, other family members, friends, and the child may contribute to the IRA as long as the total contribution per year does not exceed \$500.
- Eligibility to contribute is reduced with a modified adjusted gross income between \$95,000 - \$110,000 (filing single) and \$150,000 - \$160,000 (married, filing jointly). Cannot contribute if income is above these amounts.
- IRA grows tax-free until distributed. A child will not owe tax on any IRA withdrawal if the child's expenses at the institution equal or exceed the amount withdrawn.
- NOTE: You can only claim one tax credit or contribute to one education IRA per student per tax year.

Student loan interest deduction

- Parents and independent students may deduct interest on loans borrowed to meet college expenses
- Deduction is for interest payments made during the first 60 months (5 years) in which interest payments are required.
- Deduction diminishes for modified gross income between \$40,000 - \$55,000 (single filers) and \$60,000 - \$75,000 (married, filing jointly). Cannot deduct if income is above these amounts.
- Maximum deduction in 1999, \$1,500; in 2000, \$2,000; 2001 and beyond, \$2,500.
- You are not required to itemize to receive the deduction.
- Dependents may not claim the deduction.
- Married couples must file jointly to receive the deduction.

Using IRA withdrawals for college costs

- You may withdraw from an IRA to pay higher education expenses for yourself, your spouse, your child or grandchild.

You will owe federal income tax on the amount withdrawn, but will not be subject to the 10% early withdrawal penalty.



Saving Money for College (FSA) (12) (#12.1)

Parents and grandparents can create education IRAs and make penalty-free withdrawals from other IRAs (#12.2)

Taxpayers may withdraw funds from an IRA, without penalty, for their own higher education expenses or those of their spouse, child, or even grandchild. Usually, if you withdraw funds from an IRA before you're 59-1/2, you must pay an additional 10% tax on the withdrawal amount. This 10% tax is waived for that amount of the withdrawal that is used for the qualified expenses of the student. (#12.2.1)

In addition, for each child under age 18, families may deposit \$500 per year into an education IRA in the child's name. Earnings in the education IRA will accumulate tax-free and no taxes will be due upon withdrawal if the money is used to pay for post-secondary tuition and required fees (less grants, scholarships, and other tax-free educational assistance), books, equipment, and eligible room and board expenses. Once the child reaches age 30, his or her education IRA must be closed or transferred to a younger member of the family. (#12.2.2)

A taxpayer's ability to contribute to an education IRA is phased out when the taxpayer is a joint filer with an adjusted gross income between \$150,000 and \$160,000, or a single filer with an adjusted gross income between \$95,000 and \$110,000. There are a few restrictions. For example, a student who receives a tax-free distribution from an education IRA may not benefit from the Hope or Lifetime Learning education tax credits in the same year. (#12.2.3)

Greater flexibility for families saving in qualified state tuition plans (#12.3)

When a family uses a qualified state-sponsored tuition plan to save for college, no tax is due in connection with the plan until the time of withdrawal. The 1997 change in law allows families to use these plans to save not only for tuition but also for certain room and board expenses for students who attend on at least a half-time basis. Tuition and required fees paid with withdrawals from a qualified State tuition plan are eligible for the Hope tax credit and Lifetime Learning tax credit. These benefits became available on January 1, 1998. (#12.3.1)

For More Information (#12.4)

Call the IRS Help Line at 1-800-829-1040; read IRS publication 970, Tax Benefits for Higher Education (192K PDF, Portable Document Format, requires the Adobe Acrobat Reader. To download this for free, go to the Acrobat Reader download site); visit the U.S. Treasury Department's Web site at <http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/>; or consult your tax advisor. (links to <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf>, <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>, <http://www.irs.ustreas.gov>) (#12.4.1)

Returning Student(13) (#13.1)

Today, education is for everyone. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that 90 million individuals participate in some form of adult education each year, including training and basic education offered outside traditional higher education. To serve this immense market, most colleges have structured programs and services specifically for adult learners. Forty percent of American college students, or almost 6 million people, are 25 years of age or older. (#13.2)

Assess Yourself. The first step to finding the right program and type of school for you is to evaluate your interests. This self-assessment will help you examine your interests and goals, and offers some ideas about fields of study and careers that might be right for you. (*Link to <http://www.ncsu.edu/careerkey/tohttp://www.careerkey.org/english/>*) (#13.3)

General Education Development (GED) Certificate. If you'd like to go to college but you don't have a high school diploma, find out about taking the GED. More than 800,000 adults each year take the GED. For more information on the GED visit the official GED web site. (*Link to <http://www.acenet.edu/calec/ged/home.html>*) (#13.4)

Take the Tests. Once you have assessed your interests and determined what type of program you want to enroll in, you may be required to take one or more standardized tests. Here you will find more information about common standardized tests and what you need to do to prepare for them. (*Link to testing page.*) (#13.5)

Types of Schools. Once you have an idea of what your interests are, it's time to figure out what kinds of schools offer programs that match those interests. Whether you are looking at 2-year, 4-year, or trade schools, make sure that the school is accredited. **If you anticipate receiving federal student aid while in school, you'll want to make sure that the school is Title IV participating.** Otherwise, you may not be eligible for federal student aid. (*Link to types of schools page, [NCES Cool Search.](#)*) (#13.6)

Things to Consider. There are hundreds of points that should be taken into consideration while you are making decisions about what to do when returning to school. Here are a few points to take into account before you commit to a school. (*Link to things to consider page.*) (#13.7)

Understanding College Costs. Most people believe that college is much more expensive than it really is. Although some colleges are expensive, the costs of many colleges are within financial reach. (*Link to understanding the costs page.*) (#13.8)

So Many Choices. With so many schools to choose from, it may be difficult to decide which is the one for you. With help from us, you'll quickly and easily find the school that meets your needs. (*Link to so many choices page*) (#13.9)

Funding Your Education. The Federal Student Aid Programs are the largest source of student aid in America. These programs provide over \$60 billion a year in grants, loans and work-study assistance. If you are interested in financial aid, you've come to the right place. (*Link to funding page.*) (#13.10)

Attending School. If you are enrolled as a full- or part-time student and need to find out more about your educational loans, you'll find all the information you need right here. (*Link to attending page.*) (#13.11)



Entering Repayment. After you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment, you generally have six months before you begin repayment of your student loan. You will receive information about repayment and will be notified by your Loan Provider of the date Loan Repayment begins. (*Link to repaying page.*) (#13.12)

International Students (14) (#14.1)

Study in the United States is a serious undertaking. To decide if it is the best option for you, consider carefully how it will fit into your long-term educational and professional plans. (#14.2)

Define your Goals. Studying in the United States is not an end unto itself. Students pursue higher education, in their home country or abroad, because the experience will help them achieve their professional and personal goals. Those goals may include professional advancement, a higher-paying job, or a greater appreciation and knowledge of the world. Here are some [important questions](#) you should ask yourself before looking to an education in the U.S. (*Link to important questions page*) (#14.3)

Culture Shock. Living in the United States while pursuing your educational goals is much different from visiting the country for a few weeks or months as a tourist. Consider how living in a new country and a new culture might affect you, and the readjustments you may need to make upon your return home. It's also wise to think about how the move will impact you as well as your family. (#14.4)

Money Matters. When considering the cost of U.S. education, include the costs of tuition, living expenses, books, and other items. Tuition varies widely from school to school, but it is usually always the largest single cost an international student faces. A community college may have a yearly tuition of \$2,000; a highly selective private university may have a yearly tuition of \$28,000. Sources of financial aid available to international students at the undergraduate level are limited and highly competitive. [Find out what financial options may be available to you.](#) (*Link to funding page.*) (#14.5)

Financial Aid Eligibility. Most foreign citizens are not eligible for federal student aid. There are, however, some instances in which noncitizens may be eligible for financial aid from the U.S. federal government. Find out if you are eligible [here](#). (*Link to <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/sfahandbooks/attachments/sech2-citizenship.pdf>*) (#14.6)

Getting Started. Attending school in the United States can require a variety of examinations, language requirements and visas. Click here for [more information](#) on requirements you need to meet before embarking on education in the U.S. (*Link to getting started page*)_ (#14.7)

Americans Abroad. For U.S. citizens who are currently living outside the United States but who are interested in attending school in the U.S., the financial aid application process is the same as for resident citizens. (#14.8)

Important Questions page (15) (#15.1)

Important Questions to Consider. Students pursue higher education because the experience will help them achieve their professional and personal goals. Those goals may include professional advancement, a higher-paying job, or a greater appreciation and knowledge of the world. As you define your educational and professional goals, here are some questions to ask yourself: **(#15.2)**

- Am I willing to spend this much time in higher education? **(#15.2.1)**
- Is there a need for my chosen profession in my home country? **(#15.2.2)**
- Will I earn enough in this profession to justify the investment? **(#15.2.3)**
- Will my U.S. educational credentials be recognized at home by institutions of higher education, professional licensing boards, and potential employers when I return? **(#15.2.3)**
- Will spending time abroad cause me to miss important opportunities at home? **(#15.2.4)**
- Is the knowledge I will gain during my study in the United States readily transferable to situations in my home country? **(#15.2.5)**
- Will the technological expertise I acquire in the United States be of use at home? **(#15.2.6)**
- Is the training or education I need available at home? **(#15.2.7)**

Source: <http://www.embark.com> **(#15.3)**

Getting Started page (16) (#16.1)

Be prepared. If you are applying for undergraduate study at a two- or four-year U.S. university, you must have completed at least 12 years of school and obtained the equivalent of a U.S. high school diploma. If you are considering graduate study at the master's or doctoral level, you will need an academic credential equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree. More information about preparing for U.S. Colleges and Universities is available in our [Preparing section](#). (*Link to preparing page.*) (#16.2)

Test Your English. It is an advantage to have a good command of written and spoken English at the beginning of the application process. Whether you are applying to an undergraduate or a graduate program, the majority of colleges and universities in the United States require you to take the **Test of English as a Foreign Language** (TOEFL), which assesses your English language skills. Some colleges do not require the test if you already hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college in the United States. More information, including test dates and preparation tips, is available at <http://www.toefl.org> or from the U.S. consulate. (#16.3)

Taking the tests. Most U.S. schools require the TOEFL exam for non-native English speakers, while many undergraduate institutions also require you to take the SAT or the ACT Assessment. Visit our [testing](#) page for more information on the examinations required for undergraduate and graduate study. (*Link to testing page*) (#16.4)

Get a Student Visa. If you are coming to the U.S. primarily for tourism, but want to take a short course of study of less than 18 hours per week, you may do so on a tourist visa. Otherwise, you will need to obtain a student visa. In most countries, first-time student visa applicants are required to appear for an in-person interview. (#16.5)

Each embassy and consulate sets its own interview policies and procedures regarding student visas. Consult the U.S. Embassy website for your country for specific application instructions. June, July, and August are the busiest months in most consular sections, and interview appointments are the most difficult to get during that period. Plan ahead to avoid repeated visits to the Embassy. (#16.5.1)

For more information on how to apply for a student visa, please visit the U.S. Department of State site on student visas (http://travel.state.gov/foreign_student_visas_handout.html). (#16.5.2)



Site Resources

*****Note: Information between ***** and ***** has been taken directly from The Student Guide 2002-2003**

About Us (17) (#17.1)

The U.S. Department of Education's **Federal Student Aid** (FSA) programs are the largest source of student aid in America, providing nearly 70% of all student **financial** aid. Help is available to make education beyond high school financially possible for you or your child. The information provided here is designed to assist you in your college planning. It provides you with access to and information about the products and services that you will need throughout the financial aid process. **(#17.2)**

FSA is financial help for students enrolled in eligible programs at participating schools to cover school (a four-year or two-year public or private educational institution, a career school or trade school) expenses, including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Most federal aid is need-based. The three most common types of aid are grants, loans, and work-study. **(#17.3)**

- **Grants** are a type of financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Generally, grants are for undergraduate students and the grant amount is based on need, cost of attendance, and enrollment status. Federal Pell Grants for the 2002-2003 school year ranged from \$400 to \$4,000. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants ranged from \$100 to \$4,000 **(#17.3.1)**
- **Loans** are borrowed money that must be repaid with interest. Both undergraduate and graduate students may borrow money. Parents may also borrow to pay education expenses for dependent undergraduate students. Maximum loan amounts depend on the student's year in school. **(#17.3.2)**
 - Federal Stafford Loans are made to students and PLUS Loans are made to parents through two : **(#17.3.3)**

William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program: eligible students and parents borrow directly from the federal government at participating schools. Direct Loans include Direct Stafford Loans, Direct PLUS Loans, and Direct Consolidation Loans. (#17.3.4)

Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program: private lenders provide federally guaranteed funds. FFELs include FFEL Stafford Loans, FFEL PLUS Loans, and FFEL Consolidation Loans. (#17.3.5)

- Federal Perkins Loans are offered by participating schools to provide students that demonstrate the most need with low-interest loans. (#17.3.6)

~~William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program: eligible students and parents borrow directly from the federal government at participating schools. Direct Loans include Direct Stafford Loans, Direct PLUS Loans, and Direct Consolidation Loans. (#17.3.4)~~



~~Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program: private lenders provide federally guaranteed funds. FFELs include FFEL Stafford Loans, FFEL PLUS Loans, and FFEL Consolidation Loans. (#17.3.5)~~

~~Perkins Loans are offered by participating schools to provide students that demonstrate the most need with low interest loans. (#17.3.6)~~

- **Work-study** lets you earn money while enrolled in school to help pay for education expenses. (#17.3.7)

Note: Not all schools participate in all FSA programs. Ask the financial aid administrator at your school about the programs that are available. (#17.4) ***/



Contact Us (18) (#18.1)

If you wish to contact a person, program, or office in Federal Student Aid (FSA), you'll find the information below helpful in finding the right phone number or email address. (#18.2)

If you have a moment, please help us improve this site by filling out our [customer survey](#). (*Link to survey page.*) (#18.3)

Comments or questions about FSA or its programs: (#18.4)

Telephone: 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)

TTY: 1-800-730-8913

Spanish speakers are available (se habla español). (#18.4.1)

[If you are unable to dial the toll-free number from your area, an alternate number is: 1-319-337-8913.](#) (#18.4.2)

To contact U.S. Department of Education (ED) programs: (#18.5)

Use the [Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs](#) to find the name, telephone number, and e-mail and web address for the Department office to contact for more information on each of the programs that the Department administers.

(*Link to <http://web99.ed.gov/GTEP/Program2.nsf>*) (#18.5.1)

[ED Toll-Free Numbers & Hotlines](#) (#18.6)

(*External Link to <http://www.ed.gov/tollfree.html>*)



*****Note: Information between */*** and */*** has been taken directly from http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/FSA/LSA/**

FAQs page(19)

*/***

[Glossary \(link to Glossary page\)](#)

Frequently Asked Questions (#19.1)

- **Should I pay someone to help me find or apply for student financial aid? (#19.2)**

The quick answer is: Free help is generally available at the schools you're applying to, whether you're looking for sources of student aid or completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If there's a fee involved, be sure you know what you're paying for. (#19.2.1)

- **Where can I get free information about student aid? (#19.3)**

The following sources usually have information about aid from the federal government and your state government; most can tell you about funds from your local community and private sources as well. (#19.3.1)

- **A college or career school financial aid office.** Talk to the financial aid administrator at the school you plan to attend. Be sure to ask about "institutional aid" - money the school itself awards students. The school's catalog or website is also a good source of information about aid available at the school. (#19.3.2)
- **A local or college library.** Relevant materials are usually listed under "student aid" or "financial aid." If you need help, ask the reference librarian. (#19.3.3)
- **The Internet.** Search using the key words "student aid" or "financial aid." Remember that many scams operate over the Internet, so if an Internet service charges a fee, research it carefully. Better yet, use one of the many free Internet search services or aid information sites. (#19.3.4)
- **A high school counselor's office.** Many counselors have a large selection of materials, know what recent graduates have received, and can guide you to free online information. (#19.3.5)

- **What if I want more detailed information about student aid? (#19.4)**

Free materials available in the financial aid office at your college or career school or the guidance office at your high school include the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as well as The Student Guide and Funding Your Education (two booklets that provide detailed information about the U.S. Department of Education's programs). You also may request copies of the FAFSA or either of the two booklets by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) toll free at the number shown below. The FSAIC's operators can answer your questions about federal student aid and the application process. (#19.4.1)

Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC):
800-4-FED-AID (800-433-3243)



(TTY 800-730-8913)

8:00 a.m.-midnight Eastern Time, daily (#19.4.2)

You may apply for federal student aid at no cost by filing a paper FAFSA or applying electronically with FAFSA on the Web, the online application for federal student aid. All you need for FAFSA on the Web is a computer that supports a Department-approved browser. To complete an electronic FAFSA click here on the Web is at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The advantage of the online application is that it includes edits that make the process easier and reduces errors that are time consuming to resolve.-(#19.4.3)

- **Who offers free help completing my FAFSA? (#19.5)**

Some private companies charge a fee to help you complete the FAFSA. You can get free help from the FSAIC. You can also get free help from the financial aid administrator at your college, from FAFSA on the Web's online help, or from a U.S. Department of Education online guide called Completing the FAFSA at www.ed.gov/prog_info/FSA/FAFSA (#19.5.1)

~~You may visit the Department of Education's student aid web site to view Department publications online or to learn more about the Department's programs: www.ed.gov/studentaid~~

- What about aid from other government agencies? (#19.6)

Student aid is also available from other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. For links to such information, visit www.students.gov. (#19.6.1)

- **Who can give me detailed information about state student aid? (#19.7)**

Contact your state education agency (usually located in the capital of your state). Call the FSAIC or visit the web site listed below to get the telephone number for your state agency; this site also has links to state agencies' web sites: www.ed.gov/Programs/bastmp/SHEA.htm (#19.7.1)

***/



?-Glossary of Terms

(XAP and Portal Glossary Combined)

Accreditation: An impartial organization or body has made a thorough assessment of a school's ability to provide appropriate faculty, curriculum and facilities for you to pursue a particular field of study. Standards for accreditation may vary significantly among organizations. Generally, an institution must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association to be eligible for federal student aid funds. The U.S. Department of Education periodically publishes a list of recognized accrediting bodies in the Federal Register. To see the most current list, click here: http://www.ifap.ed.gov/aagencies/doc0028_bodyoftext.htm.

Accrued Interest: The interest that accumulates on the unpaid principal balance of a loan.

Annual Percentage Rate (APR): The interest maintained on a loan for a one-year period.

Bridge Loans: Bridge loans are loans that provide short-term financing for tuition payments, books etc, while the student is waiting to receive their college financial aid. To obtain a bridge loan, contact the financial aid office at your college.

Capitalization: The addition of unpaid accrued interest applied to the principal balance of a loan that increases the total debt outstanding.

Consolidation: Combining several education loans into a new loan with a new payment schedule and interest rate.

Default: The failure to repay a loan in accordance with the terms of the promissory note. Default occurs after 270 days of non-payment on an account. for Title IV loan programs.

Deferment: An approved temporary suspension of loan payments based on certain events and criteria.

Delinquency: The failure to make scheduled monthly loan payments when they are due.

Direct Loan (DL) Program: A student loan program administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Participating schools allow their students to borrow directly from the federal government instead of from a private lender.

Disbursement: A transaction that occurs when a lender releases loan funds.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): The dollar amount that a family is expected to pay toward a student's educational costs. This federal calculation is based on family earnings, assets, students in college and size of family.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid. An application that must be filled out and submitted in order to receive any form of federal student aid.

~~**FDSL**~~**LP: The Federal Direct Student Loan Program.** **Financial Need:** The difference between the student's educational costs and the expected family contribution.



~~**FFELP:** The Federal Family Education Loan Programs formerly known as the GSL Guaranteed Student Loan Programs.~~

~~**FFEL:** — Federal Family Education Loan Program. Private lenders provide federally supported loans.~~

Forbearance: The approved temporary suspension or reduction of loan payments due to a financial hardship during which interest continues to accrue.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): The federal application form students must first complete in order to apply for virtually all forms of financial aid assistance.

Grace Period: The period after a student either graduates, ~~or~~ leaves school (unofficially or officially), or drops below half-time and before loan payments must begin.

~~**Grants:** Financial aid that does not have to be paid back is awarded to students based on financial need.~~

~~**Grant:** —A type of financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Generally, grants are for undergraduate students and the grant amount is based on need, school cost, and enrollment status.~~

Guarantor: The agency or institution that repays lenders in the event of a default in the FFELP.

Interest: The dollar amount charged to borrow money.

Lender: The institution that provides the money to be borrowed through the student loan program.

~~**Loan:** —Borrowed money that must be repaid with interest. Both undergraduate and graduate students may borrow money. Parents may also borrow to pay education expenses for dependent undergraduate students who are enrolled at least half-time. Maximum loan amounts increase with each year of completed study.~~

~~**National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS):** — —A database of federal student loan borrowers. If you are a borrower and would like to find out information about your student loans, use the NSLDS Financial Aid Review service, operated by the U.S. Department of Education. By entering your social security number, date of birth, and PIN, you will be able to access your current loan information online. *(link to <http://www.nsls.ed.gov>)*~~

~~**Perkins Loans:**— Loans offered by some schools to provide the neediest students with low-interest loans.~~

~~**PIN:**— Personal Identification Number. Your PIN serves as your electronic signature and gives you access to your personal records with the Department of Education.~~

~~**PLUS Loans:**— Loans made to qualifying parents of dependent undergraduate students that and are available through the Direct Loan Program and the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL).~~

Promissory Note: The legal and binding contract signed between the lender and the borrower which states that the borrower will repay the loan as agreed upon in the terms of the contract.

~~**PLUS Loans:** Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students. If your parents want to borrow funds to help pay for your education, they may borrow up to the difference between your educational costs and other financial aid each year from a bank or other lending institution through this program.~~

Scholarships: Awards that do not usually have to be paid back. They are given to students who demonstrate or show promise of high achievement in areas such as academics, athletics, music, art or other disciplines.



Servicer: An organization that acts on behalf of the lender to administer their student loan portfolio and is paid a fee to do so.

Stafford Loans: ~~Loans made available to students and are available~~ Loans made available to students and are available through the Direct Loan Program and the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL).

State Grant Program: State funding coordinated by the state agency that provides grants to needy state residents who meet the eligibility criteria and are pursuing postsecondary education.

~~**Student Aid Report (SAR):** The form students receive after filing a FAFSA application that notifies them of their eligibility for federal student aid.~~

Student Aid Report (SAR): ~~The SAR summarizes the information you report on your FAFSA. The schools you list on your application receive electronic copies of your SAR and use the information to determine if~~ The SAR summarizes the information you report on your FAFSA. The schools you list on your application receive electronic copies of your SAR and use the information to determine if students are eligible for federal financial aid.

Subsidized Loans: Loans on which the federal government pays the interest until the student enters repayment, as well as when the loan has been granted a deferment; during the deferment period the government pays the interest.

Undergraduate: A student who has not yet received a bachelor's degree.

Unsubsidized Loans: Loans on which the student is responsible for paying from the date of disbursement until the loan is paid in full, regardless of enrollment status.

~~**Work-Study Payments:** Federal program where payments are earned by students who work on campus or off campus to help pay for school costs.~~

Work-Study: Money for education expenses paid by the school in return for on-campus or community-based work.



Publications page (20) (#20.1)

FSA Publications (#20.2)

- [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) (*link to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>*)
(Also available in Spanish) (*link to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/scomplete013.htm>*) (#20.2.1)
- [Completing the FAFSA](http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FAFSA/instr02-03/index.html) (*link to http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FAFSA/instr02-03/index.html*) (#20.2.2)
- [The Student Guide](http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/2002-3/index.html) (Also available in Spanish or * braille) (*links to http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/2002-3/index.html and http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/2002-3/Spanish/index.html*) (#20.2.3)
- [Funding Your Education](http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FYE/FYE02/indexfye.html) (Also available in Spanish or * braille) (*links to http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FYE/FYE02/indexfye.html and http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FYE/FYE02/spanish/indexfyesp.html*) (#20.2.4)
- [Audio Guide \(CD or cassette\)](http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/2002-3/audio.html) (*links to http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/2002-3/audio.html*) (#20.2.5)
- [High School Counselors Handbook \(PDF\)](#) (#20.2.6)
- [Managing the Price of College](#). This handbook shows how families in various income groups manage to pay for college. It is based on the real life experiences of a large number of families, as described by national surveys (*links to <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/collegecosts/cover.html>*) (#20.2.7)

FSA Brochures (#20.3)

- [“Student Financial Web Sites” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.1)
- [“Myths About Financial Aid” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.2)
- [“Why Go To College?” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.3)
- [“Choosing a Career” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.4)
- [“Choose a School Carefully” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.5)
- [“Need training for a job?” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.6)
- [“Don’t get scammed on your way to college!” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.7)
- [“Be an informed consumer” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.8)
- [“Military Scholarships” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.9)
- [“Federal Student Aid at a Glance” \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.10)
- [Looking for Student Aid \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.11)
- [Stafford Loan Forgiveness for Teachers \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.12)
- [The EFC Formula](http://ifap.ed.gov/IFAPWebApp/currentEFCInformationPag.jsp) (*links to <http://ifap.ed.gov/IFAPWebApp/currentEFCInformationPag.jsp>*) (#20.3.13)
- [Don’t Get Stung! \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.14)
- [FSA Glossary \(PDF\)](#) (#20.3.15)

FSA Forms (#20.4)

- [Loan Cancellation and Discharge Forms](#)

[The following applications for loan discharge and a Statement of Financial status are available in Portable Document Format \(PDF\).](#) (#20.4.1)

- [Loan Discharge Application: School Closure \(PDF\)](#) (#20.4.2)
- [Loan Discharge Application: False Certification of Ability to Benefit \(PDF\)](#) (#20.4.3)
- [Loan Discharge Application: False Certification \(Disqualifying Status\) \(PDF\)](#) (#20.4.4)



- [Loan Discharge Application: Unauthorized Signature/Unauthorized Payment \(PDF\)](#) (#20.4.5)
- [Total and Permanent Disability Cancellation Request \(PDF\)](#) (#20.4.6)

- [Forbearance form for FFEL Loans \(PDF\)](#) (#20.4.7)

- [Forbearance form for Direct Loans \(PDF\)](#) (#20.4.8)

- [Forms for Childcare Provider Forgiveness Program](#) (#20.4.9)
 - [Application for forgiveness \(PDF\)](#) (#20.4.10)

- [Direct Loan Forms \(link to <http://www.dlsvicer.ed.gov/>\)](#)
[Deferment and forbearance forms for Direct Loan borrowers.](#) (#20.4.11)

- [Direct Consolidation Loan Forms \(link to <http://loanconsolidation.ed.gov/forms.shtml>\)](#)
[Forms and fact sheets for Direct Consolidation Loan borrowers.](#) (#20.4.12)

Note: In order to view the Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files, you must have installed version 3.0 or higher of the Adobe Acrobat Reader (free). Installation instructions can be found on the Adobe site. ([link to http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html)) (#20.5)

[*Braille publications are available from the Federal Student Aid Informaiton Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID \(1-800-433-3243\)](#) (#20.6)



Technical Help (21) (#21.1)

If you want to contact the webmaster or a person, program, or office in the U.S. Department of Education, you'll find the information below helpful in finding the right phone number or email address. (#21.2)

Technical comments or questions about the website: (#21.3)

E-mail: fsa.portals@ed.gov (#21.3.1)

Fax: (202) 708-9863 (#21.3.2)

U.S. Mail: INet Project Manager

ICIO/web Services Group
U.S. Department of Education
ROB3 Room 4923
7th & D Streets, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5130 (#21.3.3)

If you have a moment, please help us improve this site by filling out our [customer survey](#). (*link to survey page*) (#21.4)

~~If you have a moment, please help us improve this site by filling out our [customer survey](#). If you want to contact the Webmaster or a person, program, or office in the U.S. Department of Education, you'll find the information below helpful in finding the right phone number or email address. (*Link to survey.html*)~~



Site Map Page ** Note: has not yet been updated (22)

Site Resources

[About Us](#) ([about.us.jsp](#))
[Contact Us](#)
([contact.us.jsp](#))
[FAQ's](#)
[Publications](#)
[Site Map](#)
[Survey](#)
([faqs.jsp](#))
[Technical Help](#) ([help.jsp](#))

Quick Links

[PIN](#)
[FAFSA](#) (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>)
[NSLDS](#) (<http://www.nsls.ed.gov>)

Audiences

[Elementary School Students](#)
[Junior/High School](#)
[College Students](#)
[Graduate/Professional School](#)
([attending.jsp](#))

[Parents](#) ([parents.jsp](#))
[Returning Student](#)
[g-Students](#) ([returning.jsp](#))
[International Students](#)
([international.students.jsp](#))

Preparing ([preparing.jsp](#))

[Self Assessment](#)
[Planner Timeline](#)
[Student Planner](#)
[Take the Tests](#)
(<http://www.advisorteam.com/user/ktsintro1.asp>)
[Preparation Checklist](#) ([checklist.jsp](#))
[Recommended Courses](#)
([recommended.courses.jsp](#))
[Testing Information](#) ([testing.jsp](#))
[Start Early](#)
(http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/thinkecollege/earlytee_home.htm)
[Parents](#)
[College Savings Calculator](#) ([parents.jsp](#))

Choosing ([choosing.jsp](#))

[Self Assessment](#)
(<http://www.advisorteam.com/user/ktsintro1.asp>)
[Things to Consider](#)
([things.to.consider.jsp](#))
[Understanding the Costs](#)
([understanding.costs.jsp](#))
[Types of Schools](#)
[So Many Choices](#)
[College Selection](#)
[Campus Tours](#)
[Participation](#)(<http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/eool/Search.asp>)
[Distance Learning](#)

Applying ([applying.jsp](#))

[Timeline for Seniors](#) ([timeline.jsp](#))
[Early Admissions](#)
([early.admissions.jsp](#))
["To Do" List](#) ([to.do.list.jsp](#))
[Apply Online](#)

Funding ([funding.jsp](#))

[Student Aid Eligibility](#) ([aid.eligibility.jsp](#))
[FAFSA](#) (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>)
[Get a PIN](#)
[FAFSA](#)
(<http://www.pin.ed.gov>)
[Student Aid Report](#)
(<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/what006.htm>)
[Tax Information](#)
(<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/PPI/HOPE/index.jsp>)
[Grants](#)
([grants.jsp](#))
[Student Loans](#)
([student.loans.jsp](#))
[Parent Loans](#) ([parent.loans.jsp](#))
[Campus-based Aid](#) ([campus.based.aid.jsp](#))
[Student Aid Report](#)
[Tax Information](#)
[Funding Your Education](#)
[Funding Your Education](#)
(http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/FSA/FYE/)



[State Aid Agencies](#)
[State Guarantee Agencies](#)
(<http://www.ed.gov/Programs/bastmp/SHEA.htm>)
[Borrowing Responsibly](#)
([borrowing.responsibly.jsp](#))
[Financial Calculators](#)
(<http://www.finaid.org/calculators/>)
[Scholarship Information](#) ([scholarships.jsp](#))
[Reduce College Costs](#)
[Choose a Lender](#)
[Sample Award Package](#)
[Financial Aid Wizard](#)
[Saving Money for College](#)
[Other Sources of Aid](#)

[Loan Consolidation](#) ([loan.consolidation.jsp](#))
[Defaulted Borrowers](#) ([default.jsp](#))

Others

[Privacy](#) ([privacy.jsp](#))
[Security](#)
([security.jsp](#))
[Notices](#) ([notices.jsp](#))

Attending ([attending.jsp](#))

[Find a Career](#)
[New Borrowers](#) ([funding.jsp](#))
[Loan Entrance Counseling](#)
([loan.entrance.jsp](#))
[Reapply](#) (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>)
[Maintaining Eligibility](#) ([aid.eligibility.jsp](#))
[Leaving School Early](#) ([leaving.early.htm](#))
[School Closures](#) ([school.closures.jsp](#))
[Loan Exit Counseling](#) ([loan.exit.jsp](#))
[NSLDS](#)
[Career Information](#) ([career.jsp](#))

Repaying ([repaying.jsp](#))

[Direct Loans](#)
[Loan Exit Counseling](#) ([loan.exit.jsp](#))
[Student Guide](#)
(http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/FSA/StudentGuide)
[NSLDS](#) (<http://www.nsls.ed.gov/>)
[Pay Online](#)
[Financial Calculators](#)
(<http://www.finaid.org/calculators/>)
[Loan Forgiveness for](#)
[Teachers](#) (<http://www.ed.gov/studentaid/repayment/teachers/index.jsp>)
[Loan Forgiveness for Childcare Providers](#)

[Difficulty Repaying](#)
([difficulty.paying.jsp](#))
[Deferment/Forbearance](#) ([defer.forbear.jsp](#))
[Loan Discharges](#) ([loan.discharge.jsp](#))

Preparing (23) (#23.1)

Find out what you need to do to prepare for education beyond high school. (#23.2)

Education beyond high school can give you choices that may not otherwise be possible, open doors to better paying positions and give you the opportunity to do the things you enjoy most. By advancing your education, you can expand your possibilities and increase your career choices. (#23.2.1)

Financial assistance programs and requirements often vary from school to school. Always check with your school before applying for financial aid. (#23.3)

Students (#23.4)

Assess Yourself. The first step to finding the right program and type of school for you is to evaluate your interests. This self-assessment will help you examine your interests and goals, and offers some ideas about fields of study and careers that might be right for you. (*Link to <http://www.advisorteam.com/user/ktsintro1.asp><http://www.careerkey.org/english/>*) (#23.4.1)

~~**Make a Checklist.** Taking the tests, completing applications, filing for financial aid... there are so many things to do when you're furthering your education. To make your planning easier, print out this Preparing for College Checklist. It's a one-stop guide for all the things you need to do to make your journey to college a smooth one. (*Link to [checklist.html](#).*)~~

~~**Plan Your Classes.** Taking the right classes in high school helps you demonstrate your knowledge and academic potential. These recommended courses will help you find classes that will appeal to you, and look great to the colleges and programs that you're interested in! (*Link to [recommended.courses.html](#).*)~~

Planner Timeline. Find out what you should be doing each year of high school to start preparing for college. (*link to [planner timeline page](#).*) **Text from XAP (#23.4.2)

Student Planner. Use this tool to enter your high school courses and standardized test scores and determine whether you meet the minimum requirements of the schools of your choice. Please be patient if we don't currently have the academic requirements of your college choice, we are adding more as we receive them. (*link to [student planner tool](#)*) **Text from XAP (#23.4.3)

Take the Tests. Once you have assessed your interests and determined what type of program you want to enroll in, you may be required to take one or more standardized tests. [Here](#) you will find more information about common standardized tests and what you need to do to [prepare](#) for them. (*Links to [testing page](#), <http://www.number2.com>*) (#23.4.4)

Kids and Parents (#23.5)

Start Early. Because it's never too early to start planning for what you'll do after high school, we've developed a resource for elementary and middle school students called "Think College Early." It's a great way to learn about your post-high school options. (*Link to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/thinkcollege/early/tce_home.htm.*) (#23.5.1)

Parents. Preparing for your child's higher education is a long-term commitment. Find out about higher education savings plans and what you can do to help your child get ready for life beyond high school here. Parents can also find relevant information in Think College Early. (*Links to [parents](#)*) (#23.5.2)



[College Savings Calculator](#). Use this handy calculator to determine how much you could or should be saving to meet college expenses, and how to maximize your savings efforts. ([link to College Savings Calculator tool, Appendix A](#)) **Xap text (#23.5.3)

[Planner Timeline page \(XAP\) \(24\)](#)

[Grade 8](#) **[Grade 9](#) **[Grade 10](#)** **[Grade 11](#)** **[Grade 12](#)**
*(links to Grade 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 timeline pages)***

Are you thinking about going to college? Whether the decision has already been made or is still years away, please browse through our planner timeline, which we have designed to help you prepare for college. Please note that although you can complete most of the necessary tasks in your junior or senior years of high school, you should start planning as early as the eighth grade. Not only will this improve your chances of getting into the college of your choice, but it will also make applying much easier.

Below is a general guideline of steps you should follow while preparing for college. Each step contains links to sections of xap.com that contain tools and information to not only help you plan for college, but help you select colleges, apply to them online, and fund your college education. To go directly to the planner timeline, click on your grade level above.

1. Prepare for college early.

Vague advice, perhaps, but invaluable. Preparing early for your college education will help you position yourself to get into the college you want. We recommend that you start as early as the eighth grade, and start using the [Student Planner](#) in your freshman year of high school, but even if you are in your junior or senior year, you can still choose, apply, and get accepted to the college best for you if you plan carefully. [\(link to Student Planner Tool\)](#)

Regardless of the grade you are in now, there are some general notes to remember and rules to follow:

- Pay attention to deadlines and dates.
- Keep in mind that even though they may not be required for high school graduation, most colleges require at least three, and often prefer four, years of studies in math, English, science, and social studies.
- In addition to this, most colleges require at least two years of the same foreign language.
- Your grades are important but the difficulty of your coursework can also be a significant factor in a college's decision to admit you. In general, most colleges prefer students with average grades in tougher courses than students who opt for an easy A.
You should also note that most high schools grade AP courses on a 5 point scale rather than the 4 point scale used for other classes, essentially giving students a bonus point for tackling the extra difficulty (e.g., a B in an AP course is worth as much as an A in a non-AP course).
- College admission officers will pay the closest attention to your GPA, class rank, college credit, AP courses, and scores on standardized tests.
- Participation in extracurricular activities is also a good idea in high school. Activities that require time and effort outside the classroom (such as speech and debate, band, communications, and drama) indicate a willingness to cooperate with others and put forth the effort needed to succeed.
- Computer science courses or courses that require students to use computers in research and project preparation can also help aid your future college performance.



2. **[Plan a career.](#)**

Choosing a career and a corresponding major will help you decide which colleges are right for you. ([link to career page](#))

3. **[Find the college that's right for you.](#)** ([link to College Finder tool](#))

There are three ways you can select a college on this site.

- By name
- By preference: Use the [College Finder](#) to identify campuses using preferences such as college type, location, size cost, campus life, academics, etc. ([link to College Finder tool](#))
- By wizard: Using the [College Matching Wizard](#) allows you to explore the advantages/disadvantages and definitions of various factors affecting the college selection process. ([link to College Matching Wizard tool](#))

4. **Visit the college(s) of your choice through our [Campus Tours](#).** ([link to Campus Tours tool](#))

Once you have narrowed your selection, arrange to visit the campuses in person. **[This is an important step in the decision process, so whenever possible, plan a visit to the schools.](#)**

5. **Discover your payment options.**

You should look into scholarships, student loans, and other financial aid options before you apply to a particular college or university. Since there is so much financial aid available, however, and since colleges are generally willing to work with you to put together a favorable financial aid package, money shouldn't be a primary concern when considering a college.

[Apply online.](#) **[If you currently are a high school senior then you should complete the FAFSA after January 1st of your senior year.](#)** In January, we will help you complete your FAFSA and teach you other ways to Get Money for college. ([links to Online Applications tool, funding page](#))



Grade 8 page (XAP) (25)

In addition to your research here ~~at Xap.com~~, you should ask counselors, teachers, parents, and friends any other questions you have about college.

- Talk to your guidance counselor (or teachers, if you don't have access to a guidance counselor) about the following:
 - Going to a four-year college or university
 - Courses to start taking in the 9th grade
 - The importance colleges and universities place on grades, and what year in school grades will start to be considered in the admissions process
 - College preparatory classes you should be taking in high school (9th through 12th grade)
 - Academic enrichment programs (including summer and weekend programs) available through your school or local colleges

Remember, you will have more options if you start planning now and keep your grades up.

Think about pursuing extracurricular activities (such as sports, performing arts, volunteer work, or other activities that interest you).

Grade 9/Freshman Year (XAP) (26)

- Talk to your guidance counselor (or teachers, if you don't have access to a guidance counselor) about the following:
 - Attending a four-year college or university
 - Establishing your college preparatory classes; your schedule should consist of at least 4 college preparatory classes per year, including:
 - 4 years of English
 - 3 years of math (through Algebra II or trigonometry)
 - 2 years of foreign language
 - 2 years of natural science
 - 2 years of history/social studies
 - 1 year of art
 - 1 year of electives from the above list
 - Using the [Student Planner](#) to keep track of your courses and grades. ([link to Student Planner Tool](#))
 - Enrolling in algebra or geometry classes and a foreign language for both semesters (most colleges have math and foreign language requirements)

Remember, you will have more options if you start planning now for college and keep your grades up.

- Create a file of the following documents and notes:
 - Copies of report cards
 - List of awards and honors
 - List of school and community activities in which you are involved, including both paid and volunteer work, and descriptions of what you do
- Start thinking about the colleges you want to attend. (Hint: Use our [College Selection](#) section to help look for schools.) Once you have narrowed down the list of colleges and universities in which you are interested, start touring the campuses; our [Campus Tours](#) section can also give you some valuable information. ([links to College Selection and Campus Tours tools.](#))

Grade 10/Sophomore Year (XAP) (27)

- Talk to your guidance counselor (or teachers, if you don't have access to a guidance counselor) about the following:
 - Reviewing the high school curriculum needed to satisfy the requirements of the colleges you are interested in attending
 - Finding out about AP courses:
 - What courses are available
 - Whether or not you are eligible for the classes that you want to take
 - How to enroll in them for your junior year
- Update your file, or start one if you haven't already. (See [Grade 9](#) for a list of what it should contain.) ([link to Grade 9 page](#))
- Continue extracurricular activities, as admissions officers look at students' extracurricular activities when considering them for admission.
- Continue participation in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, and camps with specialty focuses such as music, arts, science, etc.
- Take the PSAT in October. The scores will not count for National Merit Scholar consideration in your sophomore year, but it is valuable practice for when you take the PSAT again in your junior year (when the scores will count), as well as for the SAT I exam which you should also be taking in your junior year. You will receive your PSAT results in December.
- Register, in April, for the SAT II for any subjects you will be completing before June.
- Take the SAT II in June.

Grade 11/Junior Year (XAP) (28)

Fall Semester

- Maintaining your grades during your junior year is especially important. You should be doing at least 2 hours of homework each night and participating in study groups. Using a computer can be a great tool for organizing your activities and achieving the grades you want. ~~If you would like to learn more about purchasing a computer, click here.~~

- Talk to your guidance counselor (or teachers, if you don't have access to a guidance counselor) about the following:
 - Availability of and enrollment in AP classes
 - Schedules for the PSAT, SAT I and II, ACT, and AP exams
 - Discuss why you should take these exams and how they could benefit you.
 - Determine which exams you will take. (You can always change your mind.)
 - Sign up and prepare for the exams you've decided to take.
 - Ask for a preview of your academic record and profile, determine what gaps or weaknesses there are, and get suggestions on how to strengthen your candidacy for the schools in which you are interested.
 - Determine what it takes to gain admission to the college(s) of your choice, in addition to GPA and test score requirements.

August:

- Obtain schedules and forms for the SAT I, SAT II, ACT, and AP exams.

September:

- Register for the PSAT exam offered in October. Remember that when you take the PSAT in your junior year, the scores will count towards the National Achievement Program (and it is good practice for the SAT I).

October:

- Take the PSAT. Narrow your list of colleges to include a few colleges with requirements at your current GPA, a few with requirements above your current GPA, and at least one with requirements below your GPA. Your list should contain approximately 8-12 schools you are seriously considering. (You may want to visit our [College Selection](#) section for more information on the schools in which you're interested.) Start researching your [financial aid](#) options as well. ([links to College Selection and Financial Aid Wizard tools](#))

- Begin scheduling interviews with admissions counselors. If possible, schedule tours of the school grounds on the same days. You and your parent(s) may want to visit the colleges and universities during spring break and summer vacation, so that you do not have to miss school. Some high



schools consider a campus visit an excused absence, however, so if need be, you may be able to schedule interviews and visits during the school year, without incurring any penalties.

November:

- Review your PSAT results with your counselor, in order to identify your strengths and to determine the areas that you may need to improve upon.

December:

- You will receive your scores from the October PSAT. Depending on the results, you may want to consider signing up for an SAT preparatory course. Many high schools offer short-term preparatory classes or seminars on the various exams, which tell the students what to expect and can actually help to boost their scores.

Spring Semester

January:

- Take [Campus Tours](#) online or in person to further narrow your list of colleges to match your personality, GPA, and test scores. ([link to Campus Tours tool](#))

February:

- Register for the March SAT and/or the April ACT tests. Find out from each college the deadlines for applying for admission and which tests to take. Make sure your test dates give colleges ample time to receive test scores. It is a good idea to take the SAT and/or ACT in the spring to allow you time to review your results and retake the exams in the fall of your senior year, if necessary.

March:

- Take the March SAT I exam.
- If you are interested in taking any AP exam(s), you should sign up for the exam(s) at this time. If your school does not offer the AP exams, check with your guidance counselor to determine schools in the area that do administer the exam(s), as well as the dates and times that the exam(s) you are taking will be offered. Scoring well on the AP exam can sometimes earn you college credit.

April:

- Take the April ACT test.
- Talk to teachers about writing letters of recommendation for you. Think about what you would like included in these letters (how you would like to be presented) and politely ask your teachers if they can accommodate you.

May:

Take AP, SAT I, and SAT II exams.

- ~~Talk to teachers about writing letters of recommendation for you. Think about what you would like included in these letters (how you would like to be presented) and politely ask your teachers if they can accommodate you.~~

June:

- Add any new report cards, test scores, honors, or awards to your file. Visit colleges. Call ahead for appointments with the financial aid, admissions, and academic advisors at the college(s) in which you are most interested. During your visits, talk to professors, sit in on classes, spend a

night in the dorms, and speak to students about the college(s). Doing these things will allow you to gather the most information about the college and the atmosphere in which you would be living, should you choose to attend. Some colleges have preview programs that allow you to do all of these; find out which of the schools that you will be visiting offer these programs and take advantage of them.

- Take the SAT I, SAT II and the ACT tests.
- If you go on interviews or visits, don't forget to send thank you notes.

Summer Between Junior and Senior Years

- Practice writing online applications, filling out rough drafts of each application, without submitting them. Focus on the essay portions of these applications, deciding how you would like to present yourself. Don't forget to mention your activities outside of school.
- Review your applications, especially the essays. Ask family, friends, and teachers to review your essays for grammar, punctuation, readability, and content.
- Decide if you are going to apply under a particular college's early decision or early action programs. This requires you to submit your applications early, typically between October and December of your senior year, but offers the benefit of receiving the college's decision concerning your admission early, usually before January 1. If you choose to apply early, you should do so for the college/university that is your first choice in schools to attend. Many early decision programs are legally binding, requiring you to attend the college you are applying to, should they accept you.
- Read your college mail and send reply cards to your schools of interest.



Grade 12/Senior Year (XAP) (29)

Fall Semester

September:

- Check your transcripts to make sure you have all the credits you need to get into your college(s) of choice. Find out from the colleges to which you are applying whether or not they need official copies of your transcripts (transcripts sent directly from your high school) sent at the time of application.
- Register for October/November SAT I, SAT II, and ACT tests.
- Take another look at your list of colleges, and make sure that they still satisfy your requirements. Add and/or remove colleges as necessary.
- Make sure you meet the requirements (including any transcript requirements) for all the colleges to which you want to apply. Double-check the deadlines, and [Apply. \(link to Online Applications tools\)](#)
- Give any recommendation forms to the appropriate teachers or counselors with stamped, college-addressed, envelopes making certain that your portion of the forms are filled out completely and accurately.
- Most early decision and early action applications are due between October 1 and November 1. Keep this in mind if you intend to take advantage of these options and remember to request that your high school send your official transcripts to the college to which you are applying.

October:

- Make a final list of schools that interest you and keep a file of deadlines and required admission items for each school.
- Take SAT and/or ACT tests. Have the official scores sent by the testing agency to the colleges/universities that have made your final list of schools. Register for December or January SAT I and/or SAT II tests, if necessary.
- Continue thinking about and beginning writing (if you have not already started) any essays to be included with your applications.

November:

- Submit your college [admission applications. \(link to Online Applications tools\)](#)

December:

- Early decision replies usually arrive between December 1st and December 31st.
- If you haven't already done so, make sure your official test scores are being sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
- Schedule any remaining required interviews.



Spring Semester

January:

- Complete and submit your college financial aid application and the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA) between January 1 and February 15, and check for other financial aid options. ~~(In other words, Get Money.)~~ In order to be considered for financial aid, you will need to submit these forms even if you have not yet been notified of your acceptance to the college(s) to which you applied.
- Go to [the FAFSA on the Web](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) form now. [link to http://www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
- ~~? You or your parents can subsidize the cost of a computer for college with in your student loans. If you would like to learn more about purchasing a computer for college, [click here.](#)~~
- Request that your high school send your official transcripts to the colleges to which you are applying.
- Make sure your parents have completed their income tax forms in anticipation of the financial aid applications. If they have not completed their taxes, providing estimated figures is acceptable.
- Contact the admissions office of the college(s) to which you have applied to make sure that your information has been received, and that they have everything they need from you.

February:

- If you completed the FAFSA, you should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) within four weeks. Make the necessary corrections and return it to the FAFSA processor.
- Complete your scholarship applications.
- Contact the financial aid office of the college(s) to which you have applied to make sure that your information has been received, and that they have everything they need from you.

March/April:

- You will probably hear from the colleges as to whether or not you are accepted by April 15.
- Compare your acceptance letters, financial aid and scholarship offers.
- When you choose a college that has accepted you, you may will be required to pay a nonrefundable deposit for freshman tuition (this should ensure your place in the entering freshman class).

May:

- Take AP exams for any AP subjects you studied in high school.
- You should make a decision by May 1st as to which college you will be attending and notify the school by mailing your commitment deposit check. Many schools require that your notification letter be postmarked by this date.
- If you were placed on a waiting list for a particular college, and have decided to wait for an opening, contact that college and let them know you are still very interested.



June:

- Have your school send your final transcripts to the college which you will be attending.
- Contact your college to determine when fees for tuition, room and board are due and how much they will be.

Summer After Senior Year

- Participate in any summer orientation programs for incoming freshmen.
- Now that you know you will be attending college in the fall, it is a good idea to evaluate whether get student health insurance in case of any unforeseen emergencies or whether your family's insurance coverage is sufficient. ~~To learn more about student health insurance, click here.~~

Testing Information page (30) (#30.1)

[If you are an international student or applying to graduate school, click here. \(link to graduate testing page\) \(#30.2\)](#)

If you are applying to college (#30.3)

In the United States, there are two national standardized tests that are accepted by U.S. accredited colleges: The SAT and the ACT. These tests are designed to allow college admissions officers to judge all students by a common measurement, and are extremely significant in determining your admittance at competitive colleges. Scores in the SAT and ACT can also often times compensate for differences in high school curriculum, grade inflation, and quality of teaching. Moreover, they usually serve as a predictor of how you will perform academically in your freshman year of college. [\(#30.3.1\)](#)

- **SAT (#30.4)**

The SAT is the most widely taken college entrance examination. It is designed to test your skill level in math, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The test is divided into seven sections: 3 math, 3 verbal, and 1 experimental section. The math and verbal sections each have their own distinct question types, including quantitative comparisons, sentence completions, grid-ins, and more. The experimental section, used by the test developer to try out new questions, is not scored and can be either math or verbal. You will not know which section is experimental. [\(#30.4.1\)](#)

The SAT is scored on a scale of 200-800 for both the math and verbal sections. The College Board sets the average for all test takers at 500 for each section. A perfect score on the SAT is 1600. However, in recent years, fewer than 20% of all test takers achieve a math score of 600 or better. Fewer than 10% score higher than 600 on the verbal section. [\(#30.4.2\)](#)

- **ACT (#30.5)**

The ACT is designed to test your skill levels in English, math, reading, and science reasoning. On the test, you will have 2 hours and 55 minutes to complete a variety of multiple choice questions divided into four sections - one for each tested subject area. The English, reading, and science sections each include several reading passages with anywhere from 5 to 15 questions per passage. The math section includes 60 questions - each with 5 possible answer choices. [\(#30.5.1\)](#)

You will actually receive 12 separate scores on the ACT: 1 composite, 4 subject scores, and 7 sub-scores. The composite, or scaled, score is the most important. It ranges from 1-36. Nearly half of all test takers fall in the 17-23 range. [\(#30.5.2\)](#)

- **So what is the difference between the SAT vs. ACT? (#30.6)**

Until recently, colleges in the Midwest required the ACT, while the SAT was the test of choice for schools in the Northeast and on both coasts. Now, however, most schools accept both. This increased acceptance of both exams gives students a strategic advantage. The ACT is a content-based test, whereas the SAT tests critical thinking and problem solving skills. Depending on your particular strengths and weaknesses, you may perform significantly better on one test than the other. Regardless, you should check with each of your target schools before taking either exam. [\(#30.6.1\)](#)

SAT/ACT Test Dates and Registration Information (#30.7)

There are generally three test dates administered in each the fall semester and spring semester as well as once in the early portion of the summer. Most college application deadlines occur in the early part of the spring semester, such as February 1st or March 1st. However, keep in mind that many competitive colleges also have early application deadlines that often fall as early as November of the previous academic year. You should always check with your high school counselor or other school official in verifying that the test date will not affect the timing of college deadlines. (#30.7.1)

To register for the SAT, fill out the registration form in the College Board's Bulletin for the SAT Program. You can get a free copy of this publication through your school or guidance counselor. If this isn't possible, [register online](#) or contact the Educational Testing Service (ETS) at 609-771-7600. Registration deadlines tend to fall approximately 5 weeks prior to each test date. (Link to <http://www.collegeboard.com/sat/html/satform.html>) (#30.7.2)

To register for the ACT, consult your high school or guidance counselor for the necessary registration materials. If this isn't possible, [register online](#) or call ACT at 319-337-1270. They will send you the materials free of charge. (Link to <http://www.act.org/aap/regist/>) (#30.7.3)

Test Preparation and Practice Tests Exams (#30.8)

In addition, another standardized tests, **such as** the Practice SAT (PSAT) and the Practice ACT (PLAN), are widely used by high school underclassmen for a number of reasons but not for admittance into college. These include: (#30.8.1)

- Usually estimates how well you will do on the ACT or SAT. (#30.8.2)
- It includes measures on determining a student's scholastic achievements. (#30.8.3)
- It gives students practice in taking standardized tests. (#30.8.4)
- Used in identifying potential National Merit Scholars. (#30.8.5)
- Additional information is available at <http://www.act.org/plan/> (PLAN) and at <http://www.collegeboard.com/> (PSAT). (#30.8.6)

Free SAT and ACT test preparation assistance is available at <http://www.number2.com>. (#30.9)

Graduate and International Testing Information (80) (#80.1)

If you are applying to graduate school

Going to Grad School. If you are currently in college and plan on pursuing a graduate degree, or if you are a college graduate returning to pursue an advanced degree, you likely will find yourself taking a graduate entrance test, which varies depending on the field of study you wish to pursue. (#80.2)

The most common types of graduate school admission entrance examinations and related information are listed below: (#80.3)

- **Graduate Records Examination (GRE).** The General GRE Test is a three-and-a-half hour aptitude test that measures verbal, quantitative, and analytical skills that have been acquired over a long period of time and that are not related to any specific field of study. The GRE also offers subject tests in eight disciplines, as well as a separate writing assessment test. For more information, contact the college you are interested in attending, or call the GRE General Information line at (609) 771-7670 or visit their website at <http://www.gre.org>. [Free GRE test preparation assistance is available at http://www.number2.com.](#) (#80.3.1)
- **Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT).** The GMAT is a four-hour standardized test that is required for admission to most business schools in the United States. This multiple-choice and essay exam measures basic verbal, quantitative and writing skills, resulting in scores for each section as well as a total score. For more information, contact the business college you would like to attend, or contact the GMAT information line at (609) 771-7330 or visit their website at <http://www.gmat.org>. (#80.3.2)
- **Law School Admission Test (LSAT).** The LSAT is a half-day, multiple-choice test required for admission to all 198 law schools that are members of the Law School Admission Council (LSAC). The test is administered four times a year. For more information, call the LSAT information line at (215) 968-1001 or visit their website at <http://www.lsat.org>. (#80.3.3)
- **Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).** The MCAT is a seven-hour test given in April and August of each year. It is a standardized, multiple-choice exam designed to assess problem solving, critical thinking, and writing skills in addition to the test-taker's knowledge of science concepts and principles prerequisite to the study of medicine. The test includes four major components: verbal reasoning, scientific reasoning (both physical science and biological science), and a writing sample. For more information, contact the medical school you are interested in attending, call the MCAT general information line at (319) 337-1357, or visit <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm>. (#80.3.4)

Attention International Students. If you plan on pursuing a graduate degree in the United States, you will most likely be required to take the **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)**. Alternatively, you may be required to take the **Test of Spoken English (TSE)** and/or the **Test of Written English (TWE)**. (#80.4)

The TOEFL is a two-hour multiple choice test that evaluates a student's English proficiency; the TSE evaluates English speaking ability; and the TWE evaluates English writing ability. For more information, contact the college you are planning to attend, or call the TOEFL information line at (609) 951-1100 or visit their web site at www.toefl.org. (#80.4.1)

Please check with the prospective graduate program you plan on applying to. In addition to these language examinations, and depending on the graduate program, you may also be required to take one of the graduate school entrance examinations described above. (#80.4.2)



Source: <http://www.wiredscholar.com> (#80.5)

Choosing **(31)** (#31.1)

Get advice on how to find the right school for you. (#31.2)

You've taken all the tests and made the grades, and now it's the moment of truth - deciding where to go to school! With so many schools to choose from, it could take forever to find the perfect one for you. (#31.2.1)

Financial assistance programs and requirements often vary from school to school. Always check with your school before applying for financial aid. (#31.3)

Assess Yourself. The first step to finding the right program and type of school is to evaluate your interests, if you haven't already. This self-assessment will help you examine your interests and goals and offers some ideas about fields of study and careers that might be right for you. (Link to <http://www.advisorteam.com/user/ktsintro1.asp>) (#31.4)

Things to Consider. There are hundreds of things to consider while you are making decisions about what to do after high school. Here are a few points to take into account before you commit to a school. (Link to *things to consider page*). (#31.5)

Understanding the Costs. Most people believe that school is much more expensive than it really is. Although some are expensive, there is most likely a school near you that is within financial reach. (Link to *understanding costs page*) (#31.6)

Types of Schools. Once you have an idea of what your interests are, it's time to figure out what kinds of schools offer programs that match those interests. Whether you are considering 2-year, 4-year, vocational schools, or private career schools, make sure that the school is accredited and participates in the Federal Student Aid programs. If you are not sure, contact the school to find out. (Link to *types of schools*) (#31.7)

So Many Choices. With help from this school search, you'll be able to find the school of your dreams quickly and easily! (Link to *school search*) (#31.8)

College Selection. Find the colleges right for you. Select criteria to match campuses from across the US to your needs or if you already know the name of your college of choice, search by the name of the college. (link to *college selection tools*) ****Text from Xap** (#31.9)

Campus Tours. Explore the campuses by browsing through the detailed profiles and key information of each college. (link to *Campus Tours tool*) ****Text from Xap** (#31.10)

Participation. To check to see if the schools you are interested in participate in the Federal Student Aid programs, search for schools that are Title IV participating. (Link to <http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/Search.asp>) (#31.11)

Possible Link to Distance Learning here. **Distance Learning.** Lots of schools are experimenting with distance learning - whereby students access lectures or course materials via the Internet or thorough other electronic media rather than in person. Whether a distance learning course or degree is right for you is a matter of personal preference. You should note that not every distance learning course or degree is eligible for federal student aid. For more information, check with your school's financial aid professional. (link to <http://www.workers.gov/child1.asp?intCategoryId=2&intSubCategoryId=48>) (#31.12?)

Things to Consider (32) (#32.1)

Here are just a few things to think about when choosing a school: (#32.2)

- **Curriculum:** What do you want to study? Do you have a specific subject in mind, like art or music, or do you want a more general education? Do you want a range of potential majors and study programs? Are you interested in a career that requires professional certification and does the school provide the necessary training? Do you want to take advantage of special programs, like study abroad and internships? (#32.2.1)
- **Community college v. Vocational-technical school.** What is the difference in cost between a local community college and a private vocational school? Are the differences in the certification programs worth the difference in price? (#32.2.2)
- **Quality of education:** Is the school accredited? How much contact do you want with your instructors? How much does it matter to you whether professors as opposed to graduate students teach your courses? How involved do you want to be in research and in learning outside of the classroom? (#32.2.3)
- **Size:** How large or small a school do you want to attend? Do you prefer large lectures or small classes with lots of student participation? (#32.2.4)
- **Admission requirements:** What does the school require for admission? What does the school look for in prospective students? And what are your chances of being accepted? (#32.2.5)
- **Facilities:** What would you like to see on or near the college campus? Are restaurants, shops, and health clubs important to you? What about laundry rooms? The computer lab? The library and research facilities? What about transportation on and around the campus? (#32.2.6)
- **Campus life:** How is life outside the classroom? What special interest groups, activities, fraternities/sororities do you want to be involved in? (#32.2.7)
- **Campus security:** What's the local community like? How safe do you think you'd feel on the campus and surrounding neighborhoods? (#32.2.8)
- **Athletics:** Does the school offer intramural and varsity sports? How are the sports facilities? (#32.2.9)
- **Location:** Which part of the country would you like to experience? Do you want an urban or small-town setting? Do you want to stay close to home? (#32.2.10)
- **Housing and resources:** If you plan to live on campus, make sure you check out the quality of ~~dorm~~ residence hall life. Find out if housing is guaranteed for returning students. And don't forget to check on the meal plan—can the school provide for special dietary needs? (#32.2.11)
- **Retention and graduation rates:** Retention rate is the percentage of students who stay for four years to complete their program of study in the allotted time. Graduation rate is the percentage of students who graduate within ~~four years~~ the allotted time. Both rates tell you whether students are satisfied with their experience at the school and get the support they need. (#32.2.12)
- **Cost:** How much can you afford? What kinds of financial aid does the school offer? (#32.2.13)
- **Others:** In addition to these and others you come up with, you might also want to consider: (#32.2.14)



- Percentage of applicants accepted (#32.2.15)
- Average test scores of the accepted applicants (#32.2.16)
- Job placement services (#32.2.17)

Source: <http://www.wiredscholar.com> (#32.3)

Types of Schools (33) (#33.1)

Basic Types of Postsecondary Schools (#33.2)

- **Colleges:** Colleges offer four-year Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees. Some also offer a two-year Associate of Arts (AA) degree. Colleges can be specialized (for example, in nursing) or they can offer a broad curriculum, like the liberal arts, which focus on the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Professors see teaching as their primary responsibility and classes tend to be smaller than those in universities. This provides students with more personal attention and better access to the faculty. (#33.2.1)
- **Universities:** Universities can be quite large and usually include a liberal arts division, some professional schools, and graduate programs. This means they can offer the two-year and four-year degrees as well as graduate degrees in advanced studies beyond four years. Universities typically offer a large course selection and may have extensive resources. Class size varies, depending on the size of the university, the subject area, and the course level. University professors are usually involved in research. Graduate students, rather than professors, may teach some of the classes. (These graduate students are called Teaching Assistants or TAs.) (#33.2.2)
- **Community colleges:** Community or junior colleges offer two-year liberal arts programs or specific career training programs. After completing their studies, students receive a certificate or an associate's degree. Many students then transfer to a four-year college or university to continue their education and to earn more advanced degrees useful for employment. (#33.2.3)
- **Vocational, technical, professional, and trade schools:** These institutions are for students who know exactly what they want to do and have chosen certain specialized occupations. Study programs at these schools prepare students for specific careers and may last weeks, months, or years, depending on career requirements. At these schools, students usually receive a license, a certificate, or an associate's degree. (#33.2.4)
- **Possible link to Distance learning:** Lots of schools are experimenting with distance learning - whereby students access lectures or course materials via the Internet or thorough other electronic media rather than in person. Whether a distance learning course or degree is right for you is a matter of personal preference. You should note that not every distance learning course or degree is eligible for federal student aid. For more information, check with your school's financial aid professional.

here (#33.2.5?)

- Search these databases to find the school in which you are interested: (#33.3)

Database of 2-year schools (Link to <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Template.cfm?Section=CommunityCollegeFinder1>) (#33.3.1)

Database of 4-year schools (Link to <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/Search.asp>) (#33.3.2)

Database of vocational schools (Link to <http://www.rwm.org/rwm/usamaplink.htm>) (#33.2.3)

Source: <http://www.wiredscholar.com> (#33.4)

Understanding the Costs(34) (#34.1)

The average cost of attending a public in-state 4-year college for one year is about \$9,500 and for an in-state community college, it's about \$1,300¹. If you are going to an out-of-state 4-year college, you can add about \$5,000 to that total. And if you would like to attend a private 4-year college, it may cost about \$21,500; a private community college may cost you around \$7,500². You may wonder what expenses are included in these figures. (#34.2)

The cost of attendance is the total amount it will cost you to go to school—usually expressed as a yearly figure. Each school is responsible for determining the annual average cost of attendance for its students using a standard definition established by the U.S. Congress. This figure is an important component in determining how much financial aid you may be eligible for. Remember, once you're in school, your actual expenses will vary based on your lifestyle! (#34.3)

Some expenses will depend on the choices that you make—public or private school; in-state vs. out-of-state school; its location; and your decision to live on campus, off campus, or at home. Other expenses, such as the total cost for your books, stay relatively constant regardless of which school you choose to attend. (#34.4)

Direct Costs (#34.5)

This category typically includes tuition, fees, and room and board when you contract with the institution. You pay the money directly to your school. Tuition and fees vary by school, and if you've selected a state school, your tuition will depend on your residency status. The difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition can amount to thousands of dollars per year. (#34.5.1)

Tuition: Some schools base your tuition, which is the cost of your classes, on the number of credit hours you will take during an academic period. Others rely on your enrollment status (full-time vs. half-time). These details are easy to find out from the financial aid or admissions officer or school brochures. (#34.5.2)

Fees: Schools often charge additional fees for other services, activities, or facilities (e.g., insurance or use of the gymnasiums) they're providing to you. Usually, these fees appear on your tuition bill and are not charged on a per-use basis. (#34.5.3)

Room & Board: You may choose to live on campus and eat in campus dining facilities. A variety of meal plans may be offered and costs may vary significantly based on what plan you select. (#34.5.4)

Indirect Costs (#34.6)

¹ http://www.aacc.nche.edu/pdf/AboutCC_Tuition.pdf (American Association of Community Colleges, 1997-98 school year)

² http://www.aacc.nche.edu/pdf/AboutCC_Tuition2.pdf (American Association of Community Colleges, 1997-98 school year)



These expenses are not paid directly to your school, but are associated with attending school. You and your family can control some of them. (#34.6.1)

Books and Supplies: Individual book costs vary greatly, depending on the courses you are taking. You may be able to purchase used books to lower these costs. Some classes also require more supplies than others—course materials and equipment, printing, copying, and computer costs. (#34.6.2)

Computer: Many schools require each student to have a PC. Check the school's admissions requirements to determine whether you need a basic PC or a more expensive laptop model. And don't forget additional expenses, such as software and hooking up to the school network if you live off campus. (#34.6.3)

Room & Board: If you choose to live off campus, you will need to budget for monthly rent, furnishings, utilities, and your meals. You may want to share an apartment with other students so you can pool your funds. Now is the time to fine-tune your cooking skills. It's expensive to eat out all the time! (#34.6.4)

Transportation: These costs depend on your school's location. If you commute, be sure to factor in the cost of public transportation or gas, car insurance, and parking fees. Some schools provide free parking, while others may require you to pay for a permit. Don't forget the cost of breaks and holiday travel! For example, think about how many times you'll want to go home. You can lower these costs by carpooling or shopping around for student rates on airfare. (#34.6.5)

Personal Expenses: Your lifestyle can have a big impact on this cost category. Consider such living expenses as clothing, laundry, haircuts, phone, entertainment, etc. Try to reevaluate your priorities so you can stay within your budget. (#34.6.6)

Special Circumstances: If you have a disability and are found eligible for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, the VR agency in your state might provide special service such as an adapted computer or a personal assistant. In some cases your state VR agency may even consider paying part or all of the cost of tuition for attending college. If you have child care costs or expenses related to a disability, be sure to include them in your budget. (#34.6.7)

Other Costs: You can plan on some expenses such as special lab fees for some science courses. Other costs may be unexpected such as drop-and-add fees you may have to pay if you decide to change your course schedule. And don't forget athletic, sorority or fraternity, or other organizational expenses! Always try to keep a little extra money in your budget to cover emergencies. (#34.6.8)

Remember: By the time you attend school, the costs will most likely be higher than the amounts listed here, which is why it is so important to start planning and saving early. (#34.7)

Source: <http://www.wiredscholar.com> (#34.8)

School Search So Many Choices (35) (#35.1)

As you gather information, file it away in your-a folders for each institution. The more information you get, the better your chance of choosing the best school for you. (#35.2)

Here are some key information resources: (#35.3)

- **Internet:** Almost every school has a website. Most describe the school's mission and curriculum, as well as available financial aid programs. Some include a map of the school campus. There are even some school websites that include a virtual tour so you can take a quick hike around campus without leaving your chair! (#35.3.1)
- **College guidebooks:** You can find college guides in your high school library or counselor's office, public libraries, and bookstores. Some of the more comprehensive guidebooks provide most of the facts you'll need. (#35.3.2)

Look for books that are updated each year. Beware of books that make broad school rankings. Such broad rankings are generally inaccurate and unfair. Most schools have some strong areas. (#35.3.3)

- **School viewbooks, catalogs, brochures, and newspapers:** Contact the school's admissions office to find out how to get these publications. Most schools will send them to you in their information packets, either at no charge or for a nominal fee. Reading the school's newspaper is a great way to get a feel for the campus culture. Catalogs provide detailed information about admission requirements, curriculum, costs, deadlines, and financial aid. Viewbooks give you an idea of campus life, the school's layout, and living arrangements. These books usually include important contact information as well. Look over these publications, but don't make any decisions based on them alone. After all, schools are showing you only their best side here. (#35.3.4)
- **College nights, fairs, and open houses:** A college night or fair is a gathering of representatives from many colleges and universities. Usually held at a local high school, college nights are great opportunities for collecting information and talking with a school's admissions staff. Open houses are held at the college itself to give prospective students a chance to explore the grounds and experience campus life. Check with your high school guidance office to find out when and where these events are scheduled. (#35.3.5)

If you are out of high school: Check with your local librarian or with a local high school guidance counselor. (#35.3.6)

High school guidance/career counselors: Not only do high school counselors know a lot about colleges and the admissions process, they can help you determine your postsecondary education options. (#35.3.7)

- **Admissions officers:** School admissions officers may visit your high school. If they do, ask lots of questions. Get their contact information, so you can follow up with letters or phone calls. (#35.3.8)
- **Alumni, friends, family:** Anyone you know who attends or has attended a school you're interested in is a great resource. Sit down and talk with them. You'll be surprised at how much you learn. (#35.3.9)



- **Computer software:** There are some software programs that let you search for schools based on your interests, priorities, and other criteria. Look for them at your high school guidance office, library, or community center. (#35.3.10)

College and University Websites (#35.4)

If you want to find the website for a specific college or university, use one of these sites. They provide direct links to the home pages of most colleges and universities in the United States. (#35.4.1)

[Database of 2-year schools](#) (Link to

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/Template.cfm?Section=CommunityCollegeFinder1>) (#35.4.2)

[Database of 4-year schools](#) (Link to <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/Search.asp>) (#35.4.3)

[Database of vocational schools](#) (Link to <http://www.rwm.org/rwm/usamalink.htm>) (#35.4.4)

Source: <http://www.wiredscholar.com> (#35.5)



Applying (36) (#36.1)

Learn how to navigate the school application process. (#36.2)

Applying to schools means more than just filling out forms. You need to understand each school's requirements, gather information, meet deadlines, and pay any necessary fees for each submitted application. (#36.2.1)

Financial assistance programs and requirements often vary from school to school. Always check with your school before applying for financial aid. (#36.3)

In this section, you'll get a look at the whole application process. It may seem a little overwhelming, but once you have a clear picture of everything that's involved, you can determine what needs to be done. Getting organized will help eliminate a lot of stress. Remember, use the folders we discussed earlier and get out your calendar!
(#36.4)

Timeline for High School Seniors. Not sure when you should start submitting your applications? Do you know when the FAFSA is due? Refer to our timeline and stay on top of those deadlines. (*Link to timeline page*) (#36.5)

Applying Early. If you know the school you want to attend, and even if you don't, you may have the option of applying early and getting a response in the fall rather than the spring. Be careful, early applications are not always first-come, first admitted. There are no "for sure's" so make sure to take the time to fill out your applications. (*Link to early admissions page*) (#36.6)

Make a "To Do" List. Taking the tests, filling out applications, filing for financial aid... there are so many things to do when you're thinking about higher education. Here are some of the things you need to do to make your journey to higher education a smooth one. (*Link to to do list page*) (#36.7)

Apply Online. Apply to any of over 500 colleges in a matter of minutes. Find out if the college of your choice offers online applications. (*link to online applications tool*) (#36.8)



Timeline for Seniors (37) (#37.1)

When should you begin submitting admissions applications? Check for your schools' deadlines! Some dates in the application package are suggested, while others are absolute. Be sure you know the difference. Leave plenty of time for things like getting forms and transcripts, obtaining letters of recommendation, and writing those essays. Remember – your first draft will need tweaking and there may be many revisions until you get the essay that is truly you! (#37.2)

Remember, too, that applying for financial aid is a separate process that starts with filling out the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#). Even if you think you don't qualify for aid, be sure to complete the FAFSA - many scholarship programs depend on FAFSA information. (Link to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>) (#37.3)

As you begin the application process, mark your calendar with the schools' key dates to ensure your applications are timely and complete. Refer to the sample timeline provided below, but keep in mind that it's a very general list. You'll need to be specific when you establish your target dates. You should also allow for school and federal mail holidays, as well as which day might be best for certain tasks. (Mondays and Fridays aren't usually good days.) Involve your parent(s). A parent can be your best resource for keeping you to task! (#37.4)

Sample Application Timeline: Your Senior Year (#37.5)

September (#37.6)

- Check your transcripts to make sure you have all the credits you need to get into your college(s) of choice. Find out from the colleges to which you are applying whether or not they need official copies of your transcripts (transcripts sent directly from your high school) sent at the time of application. (#37.6.1)
- Register for October/November SAT I, SAT II, and ACT tests. (#37.6.2)
- Take another look at your list of colleges, and make sure that they still satisfy your requirements. Add and/or remove colleges as necessary. (#37.6.3)
- Make sure you meet the requirements (including any transcript requirements) for all the colleges to which you want to apply. Double-check the deadlines, and Apply. (link to [Online Applications tools](#)) (#37.6.4)
- Give any recommendation forms to the appropriate teachers or counselors with stamped, college-addressed, envelopes making certain that your portion of the forms are filled out completely and accurately. (#37.6.5)
- Most early decision and early action applications are due between October 1 and November 1. Keep this in mind if you intend to take advantage of these options and remember to request that your high school send your official transcripts to the college to which you are applying. (#37.6.6)

October (#37.7)

- Make a final list of schools that interest you and keep a file of deadlines and required admission items for each school. (#37.7.1)
- Take SAT and/or ACT tests. Have the official scores sent by the testing agency to the colleges/universities that have made your final list of schools. Register for December or January SAT I and/or SAT II tests, if necessary. (#37.7.2)



- Continue thinking about and beginning writing (if you have not already started) any essays to be included with your applications. (#37.7.3)

November-December-January (#37.8)

- Submit your college admission applications. (link to *Online Applications tools*) (#37.8.1)
- Early decision replies usually arrive between December 1st and December 31st. (#37.8.2)
- If you haven't already done so, make sure your official test scores are being sent to the colleges to which you are applying. (#37.8.3)
- Schedule any remaining required interviews (#37.8.4)
- Complete and submit your college financial aid application and the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA) between January 1 and February 15, and check for other financial aid options. In order to be considered for financial aid, you will need to submit these forms even if you have not yet been notified of your acceptance to the college(s) to which you applied. (#37.8.5)
- Go to the FAFSA on the Web form now. (link to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>) (#37.8.6)

~~You or your parents can subsidize the cost of a computer for college with student loans. (#37.8.7)~~

- Request that your high school send your official transcripts to the colleges to which you are applying. (#37.8.8)
- Make sure your parents have completed their income tax forms in anticipation of the financial aid applications. If they have not completed their taxes, providing estimated figures is acceptable. (#37.8.9)
- Contact the admissions office of the college(s) to which you have applied to make sure that your information has been received, and that they have everything they need from you. (#37.8.10)

February (#37.9)

- If you completed the FAFSA, you should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) within four weeks. Make ~~the any~~ necessary corrections and return it to the FAFSA processor, for example, you completed the FAFSA using estimated parents tax information but now they have filed their IRS forms and the FAFSA must be updated. (#37.9.1)
- Complete your scholarship applications. (#37.9.2)
- Contact the financial aid office of the college(s) to which you have applied to make sure that your information has been received, and that they have everything they need from you. (#37.9.3)

March-April-May (#37.10)

- Take AP exams for any AP subjects you studied in high school. (#37.10.1)
- You should make a decision by May 1st as to which college you will be attending and notify the school by mailing your commitment deposit check. Many schools require that your notification letter be postmarked by this date. (#37.10.2)
- If you were placed on a waiting list for a particular college, and have decided to wait for an opening, contact that college and let them know you are still very interested. (#37.10.3)



May (#37.11)

- Take AP exams for any AP subjects you studied in high school. (#37.11.1)
- You should make a decision by May 1st as to which college you will be attending and notify the school by mailing your commitment deposit check. Many schools require that your notification letter be postmarked by this date. (#37.11.2)
- If you were placed on a waiting list for a particular college, and have decided to wait for an opening, contact that college and let them know you are still very interested. (#37.11.3)

June (#37.12)

- Have your school send your final transcripts to the college which you will be attending. (#37.12.1)
- Contact your college to determine when fees for tuition, room and board are due and how much they will be. (#37.12.2)

Source: <http://www.wiredscholar.com> (#37.13)

Applying Early (38)

Some schools offer options for an earlier school admission decision for applications that are submitted before the normal admissions deadline. These options are available to everyone whether you're a high school senior or an adult returning to school. The names of these programs are similar, but you need to know the differences in what they offer. Make sure that you are getting the program that fits your needs. (#38.2)

Early Decision (#38.3)

You apply to your first-choice school, usually by November of your senior year. The school usually decides on your application by the December holidays. If accepted, you have a **binding** agreement to attend that school. (#38.3.1)

Early Action or Notification (#38.4)

You apply for college in the fall of your senior year, usually by November, and have the school's decision by the December holidays. Unlike Early Decision, you are free to apply to other colleges and may have until May to accept or decline. This allows you to consider other options. Most schools do **not** require a non-refundable deposit for Early Action. (#38.4.1)

Early Admission (#38.5)

You are a high school junior who has most of the credits needed for graduation and you apply to start taking college classes during your senior year of high school. This may be actual admission at the college of your choice, but is more likely to be at a community college. You take some basic courses with a plan to transfer these credits later. (#38.5.1)

These basic definitions may be helpful, but schools often have their own unique programs and policies. Be sure you check with your chosen school and carefully review their timelines and the commitments you each make! (#38.5.2)

Source: <http://www.wiredscholar.com> (#38.6)



“To Do” page (39)

"To Do" List (#39.1)

A list of "To Do" items can help you keep on track. Here are some suggestions for organizing your “to do” list. (#39.2)

- Start by determining what is required at each school, including the application fee amount and acceptable payment method. (#39.2.1)
- Create a list of tasks associated with each school's requirements (e.g., getting the correct number of recommendations and writing the required essays). (#39.2.2)
- Assign a begin date and determine a target end date for each task. Beginning is often the hardest thing to do – give yourself an incentive for initiating a task and another once the task is completed. (#39.2.3)
- Check off each task as you finish it. (#39.2.4)
- Keep copies of everything you submit. (#39.2.5)
- Keep all your information organized in a filing folder, box, or cabinet. (#39.2.6)

Source: <http://www.wiredscholar.com> (#39.3)



Funding (40) (#40.1)

We can help make your education affordable! (#40.2)

The Federal Student Aid programs are the largest source of student aid in America. If you are interested in financial aid, you've come to the right place. These programs provide over \$60 billion a year in grants, loans and work-study assistance. Federal Student Aid is the largest but not the only source! Read on to learn more about other options. (#40.2.1)

Financial assistance programs and requirements often vary from school to school. Always check with your school before applying for financial aid. (#40.3)

Student Aid Eligibility. Are you entering school for the first time? Returning after an extended absence? Has your financial situation changed since you entered college? Thinking about transferring? Find out if you are eligible for financial aid. (*Link to aid eligibility page*) (#40.4)

Get a PIN. If this is your first time filling out the FAFSA online and you have not applied for a Personal Identification Number (PIN), then you should do so now. Your PIN is what allows you to complete the FAFSA paper-free! (*Link to <http://www.pin.ed.gov>*) (#40.5)

Apply. Fortunately, it's easy to fill out your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online, without having to deal with the hassle of paperwork. Even if you think you may not qualify for federal aid, this form is also the basis for many other forms of financial assistance. (*Link to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> FAFSA page*) (#40.6)

Federal Student Aid has a variety of programs to help you pay for your college education. Find out more about [grants](#), [parent loans](#), [student loans](#), and [work-study](#) here. (*Links to grants, parent loans, student loans, campus based aid pages*) (#40.7)

Student Aid Report. Have you already filled out the FAFSA and received your Student Aid Report (SAR)? The SAR contains financial aid information critical to your college decisions. Here's some help on understanding your SAR. (*Link to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/what006.htm>*) (#40.8)

Tax Break. You've heard about the Hope and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits, but what are they exactly? Find out what the tax credits are and how they impact you. (*Link to <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/display/0,,i1%3D50%26genericId%3D12989,00.html>*) (#40.9)

Understanding Financial Aid. Our guide, Funding Your Education, will answer many of the questions that you may still have. From electronic applications to Pell Grants, you'll find the aid information you need here. (*Link to http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/FSA/FYE/*) (#40.10)

State Aid. Even if you are not eligible for federal aid, you may be eligible for financial assistance from your state aid agency. Contact your state [grant or guaranty](#) agency for more information. (*Links to <http://www.ed.gov/Programs/bastmp/SHEA.htm> and <http://www.ed.gov/Programs/bastmp/SGA.htm>*) (#40.11)

Borrowing Responsibly. Taking out a student loan means taking on certain obligations. Find out what they are and how to maintain your account in good standing. (*Link to borrowing responsibly page*) (#40.12)



Calculate your Interest Rates. Find out what you will owe on your loans and more with these budget calculators. (*Link to <http://www.finaid.org/calculators>.*) (#40.13)

Finding Scholarships. Scholarships are available throughout your college education. Don't get scammed: Look in our guide for free scholarship information. (*Link to [scholarships page](#)*) (#40.14)

Reduce College Costs. The typical cost of attendance includes not just tuition, but room and board, fees for special programs or activities, books, personal items, and traveling to and from college. Here are 35 tips for reducing your college costs. (*link to [Reducing college costs page](#)*) ****Text from Xap** (#40.15)

How to Choose and Evaluate Lenders. Choosing a lender is relatively easy. Schools that participate in the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (DL) program will usually issue Direct Loans to all the student loan borrowers at their school. In such an instance, the federal government - through the U.S. Department of Education - is the lender. Schools that participate in the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL) will usually have a list of preferred lenders. Student loan borrowers may choose a lender from the list, or choose a different lender that they prefer (e.g., credit union).~~Insert paragraph here.~~ (*link to [how to choose page](#)*) (#40.16)

Sample Award Package. Most schools will prepare an 'award letter' which will inform you of the types and amount of student aid you will receive at that school. Once you've selected the types of aid you want to receive, that selection is referred to as an 'award package'. View a sample award package here.~~Insert paragraph here.~~ (*link to [sample award page](#)*) (#40.17)

Financial Aid Wizard. Explore your financial aid needs and options with a step-by-step process for calculating your cost of attendance, expected family contribution, and discovering potential scholarships and loans available to you. (*link to [Financial Aid Wizard Tool](#)*) (#40.18)

Saving Money for College. Paying for college is easier when you can invest money in an education IRA that will accumulate interest tax free, and when you can withdraw money from an IRA without penalty. Also, you can save money in a state-sponsored tuition plan and not pay taxes on it until you withdraw the money. (*links to [saving money page](#)*) ****FSA text** (#40.19)

Other Sources of Student Aid. We encourage you to explore other federal websites to find out about additional aid sources. Veterans and their dependents, students training in various medical fields, and persons interested in earning funds in exchange for community service may link to other federal agencies for program descriptions and qualifications. (*link to [Other Sources page](#)*) ****FSA text** (#40.20)



*****Note: Information between ~~***~~ and ~~***~~ has been taken directly from Funding Your Education 2002-2003**

Aid Eligibility (41) (#41.1)

~~***~~

Eligibility for federal student aid is determined on the basis of financial need and on several other factors. The financial aid administrator at the college or career school you plan to attend will determine your eligibility. (#41.2)

To receive aid from our programs, you must (#41.3)

- qualify for financial need (except for certain loans) (#41.3.1)
- have a high school diploma or a General Education Development (GED) certificate, or pass a test approved by the U.S. Department of Education (#41.3.2)
- be working toward a degree or certificate (#41.3.3)
- be enrolled in an eligible program (#41.3.4)
- be a U.S. citizen or [eligible non-citizen](http://www.ifap.ed.gov/sfahandbooks/attachments/sech2-citizenship.pdf) (link to [Link to http://www.ifap.ed.gov/sfahandbooks/attachments/sech2-citizenship.pdf](http://www.ifap.ed.gov/sfahandbooks/attachments/sech2-citizenship.pdf))
- have a valid Social Security Number (#41.3.5)
- register with the Selective Service if required (you can use the paper or electronic FAFSA to register) (#41.3.6)
- maintain satisfactory academic progress once in school. (#41.3.7)

~~A law—The Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended (HEA)~~ suspends aid eligibility for students who have been convicted under federal or state law of the sale or possession of drugs. If you have a conviction or convictions for these offenses, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) to find out if, or how, this law applies to you. (#41.4)

Even if you are ineligible for federal aid, you should complete the FAFSA because you may be eligible for nonfederal aid from states and private institutions. If you regain eligibility during the award year, notify your financial aid administrator immediately. If you are convicted of a drug-related offense after you submit the FAFSA, you may lose eligibility for federal student aid, and you may be liable for returning any financial aid you received during a period of ineligibility. Information about this law is available by calling the Information Center at the number above. (#41.5)

If you have a question about your citizenship status, contact the financial aid office at the college or career school you plan to attend. (#41.6)

How will I know what I'm eligible for? (#41.7)

When your FAFSA is processed, a formula is applied to the information you provided to determine your expected family contribution (EFC). ~~The formula used to calculate your EFC is established by law and is used to~~ It measures your family's financial strength on the basis of your family's income and assets. The EFC is used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid.

~~The formula result is called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).~~ It indicates how much money you and your family are expected to contribute toward your cost of attendance for the school year. If your EFC is below a certain number, you'll be eligible for a federal Pell Grant, assuming you meet all other eligibility requirements. (#41.7.1)



The amount of your Pell Grant depends on your EFC, your cost of attendance (which the financial aid administrator at your college or career school will figure out), and your enrollment status (full time, three-quarter time, half time, or less than half time). (#41.7.2)

For our other aid programs, the financial aid administrator at your college or career school takes your cost of attendance and then subtracts your EFC, the amount of a federal Pell Grant you are eligible for, and aid you will get from other sources. The result is your remaining financial need: (#41.7.3)

~~?~~ Cost of Attendance ~~-~~ EFC ~~-~~ (#41.7.4)

Federal Pell Grant Eligibility (#41.7.5)

~~-~~ Aid From Other Sources (#41.7.6)

- = Remaining Financial Need (#41.7.7)

What is a cost of attendance? (#41.8)

Your cost of attendance is the sum of: (#41.9)

- your actual tuition and fees (or the school's average tuition and fees) (#41.9.1)
- the cost of room and board (or living expenses for students who do not contract with the school for room and board) (#41.9.2)
- the cost of books, supplies, and miscellaneous expenses (including a reasonable amount for a the documented cost of a personal computer) (#41.9.3)
- an allowance for transportation. (#41.9.4)

Costs unrelated to the completion of a student's course of study are not included in calculating that student's cost of attendance. (#41.9.5)

Are my family's special circumstances considered? (#41.10)

A financial aid administrator can consider special or unusual circumstances. The financial aid administrator at your college or career school can change your status from dependent to independent if he or she believes there is a good reason to do so. You'll have to provide your college or career school with documentation to justify the change. However, the decision to change or not to change your dependency status is based on the aid administrator's judgment, and it's final. It can't be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education. (#41.10.1)

The financial aid administrator also has the authority to adjust your cost of attendance or some of the information used to calculate your EFC. This kind of change can be made if you have unusual circumstances that affect your family's ability to contribute money to the cost of your education. If your family has any unusual circumstances (for example, high medical expenses or reduced income due to a recent job loss), contact the financial aid administrator at the school you plan to attend. He or she will decide whether an adjustment is necessary appropriate due to your unique circumstances. ~~That~~ the financial aid officer's decision cannot be appealed to the Department of Education. (#41.10.2)

***/
|



*****Note: Information between */*** and */***/ and between */###* and */###/* has been taken directly from Funding Your Education 2002-2003.**

Grants Information page (42) (#42.1)

*/***

Federal Pell Grants (#42.2)

A Federal Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Pell Grants are awarded to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree. (In some cases, however, a student enrolled in a post-baccalaureate teacher certification program might receive a Pell Grant.) (#42.2.1)

How much can I get? (#42.3)

The maximum award for the 2002-03 award year (July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003) is \$4,000. The amount you get will depend not only on your financial need, but also on your costs to attend school, your status as a full-time or part-time student, and your plans to attend school for a full academic year or less. (#42.3.1)

If I'm eligible, how will I get the Pell Grant money? (#42.4)

Your school can apply Pell Grant funds to your school costs, pay you directly (usually by check), or combine these methods. The school must tell you in writing how much your award will be and how and when you'll be paid. Schools must disburse funds at least once per term (semester, trimester, or quarter). Schools that do not use semesters, trimesters, or quarters must disburse funds at least twice per academic year (#42.4.1)

*/***

/###

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants. (#42.5)

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG) are gift aid for undergraduates with exceptional financial need. Pell Grant recipients with the lowest EFCs will be the first to get FSEOGs, which as grants don't have to be paid back. (#42.5.1)

How much can I get? (#42.6)

You can receive between \$100 and \$4,000 a year, depending on when you apply, your financial need, and the funding at the school you're attending. These grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree. (#42.6.1)

If I'm eligible, how will I get the FSEOG money? (#42.7)

If you're eligible, your school will credit your account, pay you directly (usually by check), or combine these methods. Your school must pay you at least once per term (semester, trimester, or quarter). (#42.7.1)

For more grant information, please visit the U.S. Department of Education, [Office of Postsecondary Education's web site](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/programs/index.html). (Link to <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/programs/index.html>) (#42.7.2)

/###

[/--- XAP Content](#)

Institutional Grants (#42.8)



Most institutional grants are provided by the college to help make up the difference between college costs and what a family can be expected to contribute through income, savings, loans, and student earnings. (#42.8.1)

Other institutional grants, known as merit awards or merit scholarships, are awarded on the basis of academic achievement. Some merit awards are offered only to students whose families demonstrate financial need; others are awarded without regard to a family's finances. (#42.8.2)

Some grants come with special privileges or obligations. You'll want to find out about the types of grants awarded by each college you are considering. (#42.8.3)

Merit Awards -(#42.9)

Merit awards are grants awarded to students on the basis of academic achievement. (#42.9.1)

Some colleges offer merit awards only to students whose families demonstrate financial need; other colleges offer them without regard to a family's finances. (#42.9.2)

Be sure to find out if merit awards are offered, and to whom, while exploring college choices. (#42.9.3)



*****Note: Information between */*** and */***/ and between */###* and */###/* has been taken directly from Funding Your Education 2002-2003.**

Student Loan Information (43) (#43.1)

*/***

There are three types of student loans that are available through the federal government: FFEL, Direct, and Perkins Loans. Find out more about each of these programs below. Regardless of the type of loan you have, you must receive entrance counseling before you're given your first loan disbursement, and you must receive exit counseling before you leave school. Entrance counseling will cover topics such as the seriousness of your obligation to repay your loan, the consequences of defaulting on your loan, and your rights and responsibilities as a borrower. Exit counseling will include an estimate of your average monthly payments and a discussion of the various loan repayment plans available to you.(#43.2)

FFEL and Direct Loans (#43.3)

Schools generally participate in either the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program. Under the Direct Loan Program, the funds for your loan come directly from the federal government. Funds for your FFEL will come from a bank, credit union, or other lender that participates in the program. (#43.3.1)

The terms and conditions of both loans are similar. The amounts you may borrow are the same whether you get a Direct Stafford Loan or a FFEL Stafford Loan. The major differences between the two programs are the source of the loan funds and certain repayment provisions. (#43.3.2)

How can I get a FFEL or Direct Loan? (#43.4)

For either type of loan, you must fill out a FAFSA. After your FAFSA is processed, your school will review the results and will inform you about your loan eligibility. You will also have to sign a promissory note. (#43.4.1)

~~If you have financial need remaining after your EFC, the amount of any Federal Pell Grant funds you are eligible for, and aid from other sources are subtracted from your cost of attendance, you can borrow a FFEL or Direct Loan to cover some or all of that remaining need. This type of loan is a subsidized loan. You can borrow a subsidized FFEL or Direct Loan based upon your remaining need after any federal Pell Grant and aid from other sources are considered and before considering an unsubsidized loan.~~ -If you are eligible for a subsidized loan, the government will pay the interest on your loan while you're in school, for the first six months after you leave school, and when you qualify to have your payments deferred. (#43.4.2)

Depending on your financial need, you may borrow subsidized money for an amount up to the annual loan borrowing limit for your grade level. (Annual loan limits are listed below.) (#43.4.3)

You might be able to borrow loan funds beyond your subsidized loan amount or even if you don't have demonstrated financial need. In that case, you'd receive an unsubsidized loan. Your school will subtract the total amount of your other financial aid from your cost of attendance to determine whether you are eligible for an unsubsidized loan. Unlike a subsidized loan, you are responsible for the interest from the time the unsubsidized loan is disbursed until it is paid in full. You can choose to pay the interest or allow it to accumulate and be capitalized (that is, added to the principal amount of your loan). (#43.4.4)

You can receive a subsidized loan and an unsubsidized loan for the same enrollment period as long as it doesn't exceed the annual loan limits. (#43.4.5)

How will I get the loan money? (#43.5)

For both the Direct Loan and FFEL programs, you'll be paid through your school in at least two installments. No installment may exceed one-half of your loan amount. Your loan money must first be applied to pay for tuition and fees, room and board, and other school charges. If loan money remains, you'll receive the funds by check or in cash, unless you give the school written authorization to hold the funds until later in the enrollment period.

(#43.5.1)

If you're a first-year undergraduate student and a first-time borrower, your school generally cannot disburse your first payment until 30 days after the first day of your enrollment period. This practice ensures that you won't have a loan to repay if you don't begin classes or if you withdraw during the first 30 days of classes. (#43.5.2)

How much can I borrow? (#43.6)

If you're a dependent undergraduate student, each year you can borrow up to: (#43.7.1)

- \$2,625 if you're a first-year student enrolled in a program of study that is at least a full academic year (#43.7.2)
- \$3,500 if you've completed your first year of study and the remainder of your program is at least a full academic year (#43.7.3)
- \$5,500 if you've completed two years of study and the remainder of your program is at least a full academic year. (#43.7.4)

If you're an independent undergraduate student or a dependent student whose parents have applied and were unable to get a PLUS Loan (a parent loan), each year you can borrow up to: (#43.8)

- \$6,625 if you're a first-year student enrolled in a program of study that is at least a full academic year (at least \$4,000 of this amount must be in unsubsidized loans) (#43.8.1)
- \$7,500 if you've completed your first year of study and the remainder of your program is at least a full academic year (at least \$4,000 of this amount must be in unsubsidized loans) (#43.8.2)
- \$10,500 if you've completed two years of study and the remainder of your program is at least a full academic year (at least \$5,000 of this amount must be in unsubsidized loans) (#43.8.3)

These amounts are the maximum yearly amounts you can borrow in both subsidized and unsubsidized FFELs or Direct Loans, individually or in combination. Because you can't borrow more than your cost of attendance minus both the amount of any Pell Grant you're eligible for and any other financial aid you'll get, you may receive less than the annual maximum amounts. (#43.9)

What's the interest rate? (#43.10)

The interest rate is variable (adjusted annually on July 1st) but will never exceed 8.25 percent (it can go down also). You'll be notified any time the variable rate changes. (#43.10.1)

When do I pay back the loan? (#43.11)

After you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment, you will have a six-month "grace period" before you begin repayment. During this period, you will receive repayment information, and you'll be notified of your first payment due date. You are responsible for beginning repayment on time, even if you don't receive this information. Payments are usually due monthly. (#43.11.1)

[Insert paragraph here re: loan entrance/exit counseling](#) (#43.11.2)



/###

Federal Perkins Loans (#43.12)

A Federal Perkins Loan is a low-interest (5 percent) loan for both undergraduate and graduate students with exceptional financial need. Federal Perkins Loans are made through a school's financial aid office. Your school is your lender, and the loan is made with government funds. You must repay this loan. (#43.12.1)

Your school will either pay you directly (usually by check) or apply your loan to your school charges. You'll receive the loan in at least two payments during the academic year. (#43.12.2)

How much can I borrow? (#43.13)

You can borrow up to \$4,000 for each year of undergraduate study, depending on when you apply, your financial need, and the funding level at the school. (#43.13.1)

Other than interest, is there a charge for this loan? (#43.14)

No, there are no other charges. However, if you skip a payment, if it's late, or if you make less than a full payment, you may have to pay a late charge plus any collection costs. (#43.14.1)

When do I pay it back? (#43.15)

If you're attending school at least half time, you have nine months after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time status before you must begin repayment. This is called a "grace period." If you're attending less than half-time, check with your college or career school to find out how long your grace period will be. At the end of your grace period, you must begin repaying your loan. You may be allowed up to 10 years to repay the loan in full. Periods of deferment and forbearance (see the next paragraph for more information on these terms) do not count as part of this 10-year period. Your monthly payment amount will depend on the size of your debt and the length of your repayment period. (#43.15.1)

What if I have trouble repaying the loan? (#43.16)

Under certain circumstances, you can receive a deferment or forbearance on your loan. During a deferment, no payments are required. In addition interest does not ~~and interest does not~~ accrue for subsidized Stafford loans. During forbearance, your payments are postponed or reduced. Interest continues to accrue, and you are responsible for paying it. (#43.16.1)

A Perkins Loan can also be canceled under certain circumstances, such as your death or a total and permanent disability. You also might qualify for having your loan canceled because of the type of work you do once you leave school. (#43.16.2)

If you serve in the military, repayment assistance (not a cancellation, but another way to repay) may be available. For more information, contact your recruiting officer. (#43.16.3)

If you have more questions about Perkins Loans, check with the college or career school you plan to attend. (#43.16.4)

###/



Note: Information between **/* and **/**** has been taken directly from Funding Your Education, 2002-2003

Parent Loan Information(44) (#44.1)

/**

PLUS Loans (#44.2)

PLUS Loans to meet students' education costs are available through both the FFEL Program and the Direct Loan Program. Parents who have an acceptable credit history can borrow a PLUS Loan to pay the education expenses of a child who is a dependent student enrolled at least half time in an eligible program at an eligible school.

(#44.2.1)

How do my parents get a loan? (#44.3)

Your parents fill out a PLUS Loan application, which is available from your school's financial aid office. (#44.3.1)

To be eligible to receive a PLUS Loan, your parents generally will be required to pass a credit check. A parent cannot be turned down for having no credit history - only for having an adverse one. If your parents don't pass the credit check, they may still be able to receive a loan if someone, such as a relative or friend who is able to pass the credit check, agrees to endorse the loan. An endorser promises to repay the loan if your parents fail to do so. Your parents may also qualify for a loan without passing the credit check if they can demonstrate that extenuating circumstances exist. You and your parents must also meet other general eligibility requirements for federal student financial aid. (#44.3.2)

How much can my parents borrow? (#44.4)

The yearly limit on a PLUS Loan is equal to your cost of attendance minus any other financial aid you receive. If your cost of attendance is \$6,000, for example, and you receive \$4,000 in other financial aid, your parents can borrow up to \$2,000. (#44.4.1)

Who gets my parents' loan money? (#44.5)

Your school will receive the money in at least two installments. No one payment may exceed half of the loan amount. Your school might require your parents to endorse a disbursement check and send it back to the school. The school will then apply the money to your tuition and fees, room and board, and other school charges. If any loan money remains, your parents will receive the amount as a check or in cash, unless they authorize that it be released to you. Any remaining loan money must be used for your education expenses. (#44.5.1)

What's the interest rate? (#44.6)

The interest rate is variable (adjusted annually on July 1st), but it will never exceed 9 percent. Your parents will be notified of interest rate changes throughout the life of their loan. Interest is charged on the loan from the date of the first disbursement until the loan is paid. (#44.6.1)

When do my parents begin repaying the loan? (#44.7)

Generally, the first payment is due within 60 days after the final loan disbursement for the year. There is no grace period for these loans. Interest begins to accumulate at the time the first disbursement is made, and your parents will begin repaying both the principal and interest while you're in school. (#44.7.1)

/**



*****Note: Information between */*** and */***/ and between */###* and */###/* has been taken directly from Funding Your Education 2002-2003.**

Campus-Based Aid Information (45) (#45.1)

*/***

The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work-Study (FWS), and Federal Perkins Loan programs are called campus-based programs because they're administered directly by the financial aid office at each participating school. (#45.2)

Not all schools participate in all three programs. Check with your school's financial aid office to find out in which programs they participate. (#45.3)

How much aid you receive from each of these programs depends on your financial need, on the amount of other aid you receive, and on the availability of funds at your college or career school. Unlike the Federal Pell Grant Program, which provides funds to every eligible student, the campus-based programs provide a certain amount of funds for each participating school to administer each year. When the money for a program is gone, no more awards can be made from that program for that year. (#45.4)

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (#45.5)

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOGs) are gift aid for undergraduates with exceptional financial need. Pell Grant recipients with the lowest EFCs will be the first to get FSEOGs, which don't have to be paid back. You can get between \$100 and \$4,000 a year, depending on when you apply, your financial need, and the funding at the school you're attending. These grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or a professional degree. (#45.5.1)

If you're eligible, your school will credit your account, pay you directly (usually by check), or combine these methods. Your school must pay you at least once per term (semester, trimester, or quarter). (#45.5.2)

*/**/*

/###

Federal Work-Study (#45.6)

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. The program encourages community service work and work related to the recipient's course of study. Federal Work-Study can help you get valuable experience in your chosen field before you leave school. (#45.6.1)

Will I be paid the same as I would in any other job? (#45.7)

You'll be paid by the hour. No FWS student may be paid by commission or fee. Your school must pay you directly at least once a month. Wages for the program must equal at least the current federal minimum wage but may be higher, depending on the type of work you do and the skills required. Your total Federal Work-Study award depends on when you apply, your financial need, and the funding level at your school. The amount you earn can't exceed your total FWS award. When assigning work hours, your employer or financial aid administrator will consider your award amount, your class schedule, and your academic progress. (#45.7.1)



What kinds of jobs are there in Federal Work-Study? (#45.8)

If you work on campus, you'll usually work for your school. 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. (#45.8.1)

Your school may have agreements with private for-profit employers for Federal Work-Study jobs. This type of job must be relevant to your course of study. If you attend a career school, there may be further restrictions on the jobs you can be assigned. (#45.8.2)

###/

*****Note: Information between */*** and **/* has been taken directly from Funding Your Education 2002-2003**

Borrowing Responsibly (46) (#46.1)

*/***

When you take out a student loan, you have certain responsibilities. Here are some important ones: (#46.2)

- When you sign a promissory note, you're agreeing to repay the loan according to the terms of the note. The note is a binding legal document and states that, except in cases of loan discharge, you must repay the loan - even if you don't complete your education (unless you were unable to complete your program of study because the school closed); aren't able to get a job after you complete the program; or are dissatisfied with, or don't receive, the education you paid for. (#46.2.1)
- You should think about what your repayment obligation means before you take out a loan. If you don't repay your loan on time or according to the terms in your promissory note, you may go into default, which has very serious consequences and will affect your credit rating. (#46.2.2)
- You must make payments on your loan even if you don't receive a bill or repayment notice. Billing statements (or coupon books) are sent to you as a convenience, but you're obligated to make payments even if you don't receive any reminders. You must also make payments in the full amount agreed upon each month. Partial payments do not fulfill your obligation. (#46.2.3)
- If you apply for a deferment or forbearance, you must continue to make payments until you are notified that the request has been granted. If you don't, you may end up in default. You should keep a copy of any request form you submit, and you should document all contacts with the organization that holds your loan. You must notify the loan servicer when you graduate, withdraw from school, or drop below half-time status; change your name, address, or Social Security Number; or transfer to another school. (#46.2.4)
- If you borrow a Perkins Loan, your loan will be managed by the school that lends you the money or by an agency that the school employs to service the loan. (#46.2.5)
- If you borrow a Direct Loan, your loan will be serviced by the Direct Loan Servicing Center. (#46.2.6)
- If you borrow a FFEL Program Loan, your lender or its servicing agent will service your loan. During your loan counseling session, you'll be given the name of the representative that manages your loan. (#46.2.7)

Regardless of the type of loan you borrow, you must receive entrance counseling before you're given your first loan disbursement, and you must receive exit counseling before you leave school. These counseling sessions will be administered by your school and will provide you with important information about your loan. Your lender will provide you with additional information about your loan. Remember that regardless of the type of loan you have, you must receive entrance counseling before you're given your first loan disbursement, and you must receive exit counseling before you leave school. Entrance counseling will cover topics such as the seriousness of your obligation to repay your loan, the consequences of defaulting on your loan, and your rights and responsibilities as a borrower. Exit counseling will include an estimate of your average monthly payments and a discussion of various loan repayment plans available to you. (#46.2.8)

Insert paragraph here re: loan entrance/exit counseling (#46.2.9)

**/*



Scholarships (47) (#47.1)

~~**Finding Scholarships.** Scholarships are available throughout your college education. A number of privately operated scholarship search services charge fees ranging from \$50 to over \$500 to aid you in locating scholarships, often with varying degrees of success.~~

~~**Employers.** Many large companies and organizations make scholarships available to their employees or to immediate family of their employees. Parents, check with your employers to see if they have such programs available.~~

~~**Hit the books.** Doing research can help you find scholarships you may not have otherwise known about. Most public and campus libraries carry scholarship guides. Ask your librarian or guidance counselor for help.~~

~~**Search the Net.** Searching on keywords like “financial aid”, “student aid” and “scholarships” can lead you to a wealth of free scholarship information on the World Wide Web. Some sites even allow you to apply online for scholarships.~~

~~**Don’t get scammed.** Unfortunately, in their efforts to pay the bills, many students and their families are falling prey to scholarship scams. Here are some [telltale signs](#) that someone may be trying to scam you. (*Link to <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/scholarship/index.html>*) (#47.2)~~

~~[General Scholarship Information.](#) (*link to general scholarships page*) (#47.3)~~

~~[What does it Take to get a Scholarship?](#) (*link to what does it take page*) (#47.4)~~

~~[How do I find out about Scholarships?](#) (*link to how do I find out page*) (#47.5)~~

~~[How do I apply for Scholarships?](#) (*link to how do I apply page*) (#47.6)~~

~~[Scholarship Checklist.](#) (*link to scholarship checklist page*) (#47.7)~~



General Scholarships Information (XAP) (48)

The term "scholarship" can have many meanings. At its most basic, a scholarship is money for college that you will not be expected to repay. They are worth seeking!

Scholarships sponsored by colleges are often designated for students who fit a particular profile (from the college's home state, holding a specified grade average, enrolling in a particular major, or bringing special talent in athletics, music, and the like).

Other outside scholarships may be available to students whose parents work for a particular company or to students who are eligible for scholarships sponsored by church or civic organizations.

You will need to check with each college to see what scholarships are available. You should also become familiar with any scholarships available through your company or community.

And be sure to use our free [Scholarship Search](#) for any other scholarships you might qualify for!



What ~~d~~oes it ~~T~~ake to get a Scholarship? (XAP) (49)

Many students assume that they have to be brilliant, or athletically talented, or gifted musically, to earn a scholarship for college. What they don't realize is that sometimes they just need to be persistent!

Be persistent in getting good grades. Many colleges award scholarships to students with significant financial need in the accepted applicant group--a grant that you don't need to repay, just for making the cut and getting admitted!

Good grades won't hurt if you hope to get a scholarship even if your family doesn't demonstrate financial need. When scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic merit, without regard for need, students who have worked hard and achieved results in high school will be the winners.

You should also be persistent in seeking out other scholarship sources. Sometimes all it takes to get a scholarship is to find out who in your area is offering them: your church, your employer, your parents' employers, local civic organizations. You'll just need to fill out any required applications or interviews on time in order to be considered.



How do I find out about Scholarships? (XAP) (50)

College-sponsored scholarships

Check with the colleges you are applying to. Most college-sponsored scholarships don't require additional applications beyond their standard admission and financial aid applications. Just be sure to complete and file the applications on time!

Some colleges offer special scholarships (for certain major fields or for certain talents) that you can apply for in addition to any that are open to all applicants.

Employer-Sponsored Scholarships

Your parents may already be aware if scholarships are provided for children of employees. If not, the human resource department is usually the place to check to find out what is available. The staff there should be able to provide applications, deadlines, and any other information you'll need.

If you are employed, check with your employer to see if scholarships are available. Be sure to get any application forms and information about deadlines and complete the process on time.

Local Scholarships

Many community organizations, churches, and clubs offer scholarships. Your high school guidance counselor should be able to provide information about most of them, and can refer you to sponsors who can provide applications and information.

Other Scholarships

Try our free [Scholarship Search!](#) (*link to scholarship search tool*)



How do I apply for a scholarship? (XAP) (51)

The most important thing to do to apply for scholarships is to get accurate information up front:

- What are the qualifications for applicants?
- Where do you get forms and how do you apply (online, by mail, etc.)?
- Are additional interviews or references required?
- What are the deadlines?

Once you have the information in hand, you can make a chart of what's due and when (use the [Scholarship Checklist](#)), and follow through. Taking small steps throughout the process will help insure you will finish with all the requirements met on time. Then you get to sit back while the sponsors make their decisions.

Remember, most scholarship funding comes directly from the colleges themselves, so focus on making your college applications as strong as possible.

Scholarship Checklist (XAP) (52)

Institutional Scholarships

- Special application forms required?
- Interview required?
- Application deadline?

Special Talent Scholarships

- Art, Music, Theater
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview, audition, or portfolio required?
 - Application deadline?
- Athletics
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview, highlight tape required?
 - Application deadline?
- Leadership
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview required?
 - Application deadline?
- Science/Engineering
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview required?
 - Application deadline?
- Other _____
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview required?
 - Application deadline?

Employer-Sponsored Scholarships

- Parents' Employer(s)
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview required?
 - Application deadline?
- Student's Employer
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview required?
 - Application deadline?

Local/Community Scholarships

- Organization _____
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview required?
 - Application deadline?
- Organization _____
 - Special application forms required?
 - Interview required?
 - Application deadline?

35 Ways to Reduce College Costs (XAP) (53)

1. Most colleges and universities offer merit or non-need-based scholarships to academically talented students. Students should check with each school in which they're interested for the criteria for merit scholarships.
2. The National Merit Scholarship Program awards scholarships to students based upon academic merit. The awards can be applied to any college or university to meet educational expenses at that school.
3. Many states offer scholarship assistance to academically talented students. Students should obtain the eligibility criteria from their state's education office.
4. Many schools offer scholarships to athletically talented students. Parents and students should be careful, however, to weigh the benefits of an athletic scholarship against the demands of this type of award.
5. Some colleges and universities offer special grants or scholarships to students with particular talents. Music, journalism, and drama are a few categories for which these awards are made.
6. A state college or university charges lower fees to state residents. Since public institutions are subsidized by state revenues, their tuition costs are lower than private schools' costs. The college selection process should include consideration of a state school. Although cost should be a consideration, students should not base their choice of a school only on cost.
7. Some students choose to attend a community college for 1 or 2 years, and then transfer to a 4-year school. Tuition costs are substantially lower at community colleges than at 4-year institutions.
8. Some parents may be financially able to purchase a house while their child is in school. If other students rent rooms in the house, the income may offset monthly mortgage payments. Families should make certain, however, that the property they purchase meets all of the requirements of rental property. If you have any questions, consult a tax professional.
9. Commuting is another way for students to reduce college costs. A student living at home can save as much as \$6,000 per year.
10. Many schools provide lists of housing opportunities that provide free room and board to students in exchange for a certain number of hours of work each week.
11. Cooperative education programs allow students to alternate between working full time and studying full time. This type of employment program is not based upon financial need, and students can earn as much as \$7,000 per year.
12. Another way to reduce college costs is to take fewer credits. Students should find out their school's policy regarding the Advanced Placement Program (APP), the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and the Provenience Examination Program (PEP). Under these programs, a student takes an examination in a particular subject and, if the score is high enough, receives college credit.



13. Some colleges give credit for life experiences, thereby reducing the number of credits needed for graduation. Students should check with the college for further information. You can also write to Distance Education and Training Council at 1601 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009, or call 202.234.5100.
14. Most schools charge one price for a specific number of credits taken in a semester. If academically possible, students should take the maximum number of credits allowed. This strategy reduces the amount of time needed to graduate.
15. In many cases, summer college courses can be taken at a less expensive school and the credits transferred to the full-time school. Students should check with their academic advisor, however, to be certain that any course taken at another school is transferable.
16. Most schools have placement offices that help students find employment, and all schools have personnel offices that hire students to work on campus. These employment programs are not based upon financial need, and working is an excellent way to meet college expenses.
17. Most colleges and universities participate in the federal employment program, the college work-study program. This program is based upon financial need and is administered by the school's financial aid director. Awards range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per year.
18. Most colleges and universities offer their employees a tuition reduction plan or tuition waiver program. Under this type of arrangement, the school employee and family members can attend classes at a reduced cost or no cost at all. This type of program is based not upon financial need, but rather on college employment.
19. Most colleges and universities sponsor resident advisor programs that offer financial assistance to students in the form of reduced tuition or reduced room and board costs in exchange for work in resident halls.
20. The Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Scholarship Program pays all tuition fees, and textbook costs, as well as providing a monthly living stipend. Students should be certain, however, that they want this type of program before signing up because there is a service commitment after graduation.
21. Service Academy Scholarships are offered each year to qualified students to attend the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, or the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The scholarships are competitive and are based upon a number of factors, including high school grades, SAT or ACT scores, leadership qualities, and athletic ability. Students receive their undergraduate education at one of the service academies. They pay no tuition or fees, but there is a service commitment after graduation.
22. One of the most obvious ways of reducing college costs is to attend a low-cost school, either public or private. There are many colleges and universities with affordable tuition and generous financial assistance. Students should investigate all schools that meet their academic and financial needs.
23. Some schools offer combined degree programs or 3-year programs that allow students to take all of the courses needed for graduation in 3 years, instead of 4, thereby eliminating 1 year's educational expenses.



24. Partial tuition remission for the children of alumni is a common practice. Parents and students should investigate their alma mater's tuition discount policy for graduates.
25. Some college and universities offer special discounts if more than one child from the same family is enrolled.
26. Some colleges and universities offer discounts to enrolled students if they recruit another student.
27. Some schools offer a tuition discount to student government leaders or to the editors of college newspapers or yearbooks.
28. Some colleges offer bargain tuition rates to older students.
29. Some colleges and universities convert school loans into grants if the student remains in school and graduates.
30. Some schools will pay a student's loan origination fees.
31. Some schools offer reduced tuition rates to families if the major wage earner is unemployed.
32. Some colleges and universities have special funds set aside for families who do not qualify for federal or state funding.
33. Some private colleges will match the tuition of out-of-state institutions for certain students. Check with your college to determine whether you qualify for this option.
34. Some companies offer tuition assistance to the children of employees. Parents and students should check with the personnel office for information.
35. Students should try to buy used textbooks.



How to choose and evaluate Lenders (XAP) (54)

Loans to help cover educational costs are available to students through the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program or the Federal Direct Loan Program. Under the Direct Loan Program, the funds come directly from the federal government, while the funds from the FFEL Program come from various sources such as banks, credit unions and other lenders.

If the school of your choice participates in the FFEL Program, you can choose from the school's preferred list of lenders or a lender of your choice. By making good choices about the lenders from the start...

If you make good choices about lenders right from the start, the whole process will go more smoothly, from application to that final payment. You'll want to compare the following aspects of lender services when deciding which lender to choose:

- Ability of lender to service all your loans
- Interest rates and terms: Although for the federal loan programs, they are very similar, some lenders do offer better terms or discounts. As for private programs, rates and terms vary significantly.
- Loan application processes: Can you apply online? Is instant loan approval offered?
- Repayment plans: some are simple, others complex.
- Benefits for borrowers who pay on time or make loan payments electronically
- Customer service: Can you reach a live operator quickly to check on the status of your loan during hours convenient for you?



Typical Sample Award Package (XAP) (55)

If your application for admission has been accepted, and you have taken all the steps to apply for financial aid, and your family demonstrates financial need, you are likely to receive a financial aid award.

Now what?

Below is a sample of an award package that students may receive once their admission application is accepted. Interpreting the award letter can take time, and this sample may help you and your family interpret your aid award letter once you receive it. Be sure to ask all questions you have and get the answers before the acceptance deadline.

Sample Financial Aid Award Package	
Total Cost of Attendance	\$20,000
Expected Family Contribution	\$5,000
Outside Scholarship	\$1,000
Financial Need	\$14,000
Federal Pell Grant	\$0
State Scholarship Grant	\$1,500
Institutional Grant	\$7,500
Federal Perkins Loan	\$1,500
Federal Direct Loan	\$1,500
Federal Work--Study	\$2,000
Total Award	\$14,000

In this award, the college is covering more than half of the demonstrated financial need with a grant. That certainly helps! But it would be important to ask the financial aid staff whether this level of grant can be expected in future years. (Unfortunately, some colleges do make large initial grants to encourage students to enroll, and may reduce or remove grants after the first year.)

You'll also want to ask about the continued availability of the state grant.

If the grants look to be stable over the time you'd be enrolled, you can estimate the total student loan indebtedness you would have after four years--in this case, around \$12,000 if college costs remain the same. That's about the average level of indebtedness for students graduating nationwide. [Click here](#) to see what the average monthly payments on these loans would be, depending on the interest rate. ([links to loan repayment calculator](#))

You'll also want to look at the work-study figure. Are you willing to work on campus to earn these funds? If not, you will be expected to come up with the \$2,000 in some other way (either extra work beyond the summer earnings expectation, a gift from a relative, a loan, etc.).



[Click here](#) to use the Award Worksheet to enter and interpret the figures on your own financial aid award(s).
[\(links to Financial Aid Wizard\)](#)

Of course, if you have received more than one financial aid award, you will want to compare them. [Click here](#) for more information about comparing financial aid packages. [\(links to award comparison tool\)](#)

How do I compare Award Packages? (XAP) (56)

If you've received more than one financial aid award package, this module will help you compare them. Here are some points you'll want to consider:

- **Ratio of grant to loan**
In general, packages with higher percentages of grant aid than loan aid will be more appealing. You'll have less to pay while in college and fewer debts to repay when you graduate. This ratio may also give you a clue as to how much the college wants you, since colleges tend to award higher proportions of grant aid to the most desirable students in the accepted group.
- **Ratio of self-help to grant**
This looks at the big picture beyond just grant vs. loan. How much of the total cost of attendance are you expected to cover through loans, the expected family contribution, and student employment on campus? You'll need to be realistic about whether you can meet the earnings expectations.
- **Loan terms**
Compare the types of loans you are expected to take on. Are the terms favorable in terms of interest and repayment? Student loans with low interest rates and no repayment until after college are preferable to private or unsubsidized loans with less attractive terms.
- **Gapping**
Some colleges award aid that amounts to less than the difference between the Expected Family Contribution and the total cost of attendance. If you find you have been gapped in an award, only you can determine if you will be able to, and want to, come up with the additional money in order to attend.
- **Future Packages**
You'll want to find out if all or part of your financial aid award is renewable if family circumstances stay the same (or worsen!). Beware of packages that seem too good to be true: often the terms will not be as favorable for subsequent years of enrollment.
- **Outside Scholarships**
If you are applying for or will otherwise qualify for outside scholarships, be sure to find out how this money will be treated in each college's financial aid award package. At some colleges, an outside scholarship directly reduces the institutional grant by the same amount. Other colleges allow a certain amount to go first against any suggested loan, then, if the outside scholarship is greater than that amount, it will reduce equally institutional grant and loan.



Other Sources of Student Aid (FSA) (57) (#57.1)

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers several programs administered by its Education Service. Aid is available for veterans, reservists, National Guard persons, widows, and orphans. (links to <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>) **FSA text (#57.2)

The United States Army offers education benefits for individuals enlisting in selected military occupational specialties. The Montgomery GI Bill and the Army's College Fund offer financial assistance to defray future education expenses. Students leaving college may be eligible for the Army's Loan Repayment Program. The enlistment option, for active Army or Army Reserve, repays eligible federally insured loans for education. (links to <http://www.armyeducation.army.mil/>) (#57.3)

AmeriCorps A service program administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps allows people of all ages and backgrounds to earn help paying for education in exchange for a year of service. (links to <http://www.americorps.org/>) (#57.4)

The Department of Health and Human Services offers scholarships and loans through its Indian Health Service and National Institutes of Health (NIH). (links to <http://www.dhhs.gov>, <http://www.ihs.gov/JobCareerDevelop/DHPS/HPRTSC.asp>, and) (#57.5)

Workforce Investment Act Formerly the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), ~~this is a~~ Department of Labor program of tuition and free assistance for job training for the economically disadvantaged, dislocated workers, and others facing employment barriers. (links to <http://usworkforce.org/asp/act.asp>) (#57.6)

students.gov ~~This site P~~ provides links to scholarship and grant sites, state aid information, and more! (links to <http://www.students.gov>) (#57.7)



FAFSA Information (58) (#58.1)

FAFSA on the Web. Check out *FAFSA on the Web*-- the fastest way to apply on-line for student financial aid! Students who applied for aid last year may also be able to complete a Renewal FAFSA application on-line.

~~Renewal FAFSA filers will need to obtain a PIN first.~~ (link to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>) (#58.2)

PIN. The **PIN** is your identifier to let you access personal information in various U.S. Department of Education systems. You must have a PIN to file an **on-line** Renewal FAFSA or to make on-line corrections to your FAFSA. Request one [here](#). (link to <http://www.pin.ed.gov>) (#58.3)

Federal School Code Search Page. If you are filing a paper application, you can use the [Federal School Code Search](#) to look up codes for the colleges you are considering so that you can list them on the FAFSA. Schools equipped for electronic communication with the Department of Education will receive your FAFSA information automatically. (link to <http://www.ed.gov/studentaid/apply/search.html>) (#58.4)

Completing the FAFSA. If you're wondering, "Why do they ask *that?*," or saying, "*MY* family situation is *different*, now what do I do?," see [Completing the FAFSA](#). It explores the purpose of FAFSA questions and discusses how information should be reported in some unusual cases. (link to http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FAFSA/instr02-03/index.html) (#58.5)

Questions... (#58.6)

- Call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)/ TDD 1-800-730-8913 if you have general questions about what information you need to report on the FAFSA or to check on the status of your application. If you are unable to dial the toll-free number from your area, an alternate number is 1-319-337-5665. (#58.6.1)



Attending (59) (#59.1)

Get the facts on financial aid, how to remain eligible, and what to do when school's over... (#59.2)

If you are enrolled as a full- or part-time student and need to find out more about your educational loans, you'll find all the information you need right here. (#59.2.1)

Financial assistance programs and requirements often vary from school to school. Always check with your school before applying for financial aid. (#59.3)

Find a Career. Planning can go a long way in helping you in your search for a career. By using the right tools you can minimize the time you spend searching for a career. From job search advice to resume tips, we have the tools you need to help you maximize your potential. (*Link to career page*) (#59.4)

New Borrowers. Has your financial situation changed since you entered school and you now need financial assistance? No problem. The aid application process is the same for new and current students. (*Link to funding page*) (#59.5)

Loan Entrance Counseling. Once you've taken out a loan and entered school, you must go through loan entrance counseling and learn about the terms and conditions of your loans. (*Link to loan entrance page*) (#59.6)

Reapply. Did you know that you must reapply each year for federal student aid? Fortunately, it's now easy to annually renew your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online, without having to deal with the hassle of paperwork. (*Link to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>*) (#59.7)

Deadlines for Renewal. ~~Be sure to stay on top of these deadlines or you may lose your financial aid for the upcoming year.~~

Maintaining Eligibility. While you are in school, there are certain requirements that you must meet in order to keep your account in good standing and remain eligible for financial aid. (*Link to aid eligibility page*) (#59.8)

Leaving School Early. Have you decided to take time off for personal reasons? Are you going to drop below half-time student status? If you are planning on leaving school early, regardless of whether or when you are planning to return, you may have to start repaying your loans. (*Link to leaving early page*) (#59.9)

School Closures. You may be able to have your student loan debt reduced or discharged if your school closed while you were enrolled. (*Link to school closures page*) (#59.10)

Attention College Seniors. The classes may be over, but loan payments are just beginning. Luckily, there's help for those of you about to enter into repayment. (*Link to loan exit page*) (#59.11)

Get Your Loan Info. The NSLDS Financial Aid Review service allows you to access information on loan and/or grant amounts, outstanding balances, loan status, and disbursements. (*Link to <http://www.nsls.ed.gov>*) (#59.12)

†



Loan Entrance Counseling (60) (#60.1)

FFEL Loan Borrowers (#60.2)

For FFEL loan entrance counseling, please contact your loan provider for more information. [Don't know who your lender is? Use the NSLDS to find out.](#) ([links to https://www.nsls.ed.gov](https://www.nsls.ed.gov)) (#60.2.1)

Direct Loan Borrowers (#60.3)

About Direct Loans. Direct Loans are made to students attending school at least half-time. The U.S. Department of Education is the lender, and you receive the loan money through your school. You may receive a Direct Subsidized Loan, a Direct Unsubsidized Loan, or both for the same academic year. A student qualifies for a Direct Subsidized Loan based on financial need, as determined under federal regulations. A student's need is not a factor in determining eligibility for a Direct Unsubsidized Loan. (#60.3.1)

Most of the provisions below apply to both the FFEL and Direct Loan programs. (#60.3.2)

Borrow only what you need. When your school determined your federal financial aid award, it used a standard budget to estimate the expenses you would incur while attending school. This expense estimate is referred to as your cost of attendance (COA). If you can reduce your expenses to an amount less than the school's estimated COA, you might not need to borrow as much as the school has awarded. (#60.4)

Interest rates. The interest rate you are charged for both Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans is variable and is adjusted once a year, on July 1, according to the formula on your promissory note. The rate will never exceed 8.25 percent. The interest on a Subsidized Loan is paid by the federal government while you are enrolled in school at least half time, or during grace or deferment periods. If you have a Direct Unsubsidized Loan, you are responsible for the interest from the day the loan is paid to you until you pay off the loan. (#60.5)

Loan fee. The loan fee is another expense of borrowing a loan. The loan fee charged for Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans is 4 percent of the amount you borrow. The loan fee is subtracted proportionately from each loan disbursement. (#60.6)

Promissory note. Before you receive your loan funds, you must sign a promissory note. In past years, borrowers completed a separate promissory note for each new loan borrowed. Now, if you attend a four-year school or graduate school, in most cases, you will sign only one promissory note that will be used for all of your loans at a single school. This new note is called a *Master Promissory Note* (MPN). Direct Loan borrowers can now complete the promissory note [online](#). FFEL borrowers should contact their private lender for promissory note guidance. ([Link to http://dlenote.ed.gov/aboutmpn.shtml](http://dlenote.ed.gov/aboutmpn.shtml)) (#60.7)

When you sign the Master Promissory Note, you are confirming your understanding that your school may make new loans for you for the duration of your education (up to 10 years) without having you sign another promissory note. You are also agreeing to repay your lender, the U.S. Department of Education, all loans made to you under the terms of the MPN. Therefore, it is very important that you completely read and understand all of the information on the MPN before you sign it. (#60.7.1)

You are not required to accept the amount that your school awards you. You should notify your school if you want to borrow a lower amount than the school has awarded you. (#60.7.2)



School notification. Your school must notify you in writing or electronically whenever it makes a loan disbursement. The notice must tell you the date and the amount of the loan disbursement, which loan funds are subsidized and which are unsubsidized, information about your right to cancel all or a portion of the loan, including the current loan disbursement, and procedures for canceling the loan. (#60.8)



Note: Information between **/* and ***/** has been taken directly from **Funding Your Education, 2002-2003**.

Leaving School Early (61) (#61.1)

/**

After you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment, you will have a six-month "grace period" before you begin repayment. During this period, you will receive repayment information, and you'll be notified of your first payment due date. You are responsible for beginning repayment on time, even if you don't receive this information. Payments are usually due monthly. **(#61.2)**

The law requires that, when you withdraw during a payment period or period of enrollment (your school can define these periods for you and tell you which one applies to you), the amount of FSA Program assistance that you have "earned" up to that point is determined by a specific formula. If you received (or your school received on your behalf) less assistance than the amount that you earned, you will be able to receive those additional funds. If you received more assistance than you earned, the excess funds must be returned. **(#61.3)**

The amount of assistance that you have earned is determined on a pro-rata basis. That is, if you completed 30 percent of the payment period or period of enrollment, you earn 30 percent of the assistance you were originally scheduled to receive. Once you have completed more than 60 percent of the payment period or period of enrollment, you earn all of your assistance. **(#61.4)**

If you received excess funds that must be returned, your school can explain what portion of those funds must be returned. **(#61.5)**

***/**

[Link to Master Promissory note.](#)



Note: Information between */ and */*** has been taken directly from <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/closedschool/>.

Closed School Information (62) (#62.1)

*/***

You may be able to have your student loan debt discharged if your school closed while you were enrolled. (#62.2)

The loan can be discharged if you were enrolled when the school closed and couldn't complete the program because of the closure. If you were on an approved leave of absence, you are considered to have been enrolled at the school. If your school closed within 90 days after you withdrew, you are also considered eligible for the discharge. However, your loan cannot be cancelled because of personal circumstances that caused you to withdraw more than 90 days before the school closed. If you need to find out the day when your school officially closed, you can visit our [Closed School Search Page](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/closedschool/search.html). (Link to <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/closedschool/search.html>) (#62.2.1)

[List of Closed Schools and contact information. \(link to closed school contact page\)](#) (#62.2.2)

Please bear in mind that you are not eligible for the discharge if you are completing a comparable educational program at another school. If you complete a comparable program of study at another school *after* your loan is discharged, you may have to pay back the amount of the discharge. If you haven't received a diploma or certificate but have completed all of the coursework for the program, you're not eligible for the discharge. (#62.3)

[Link to Loan Discharges page. \(link to loan discharges page\)](#) (#62.3.1)

How do I apply for a loan discharge?

~~If the holder of your loan learns that a school closed, that organization will send you a loan discharge application. If you haven't received the discharge application, you may request one by contacting the organization that holds your loan. Or you can get a copy of the loan discharge application on the Department's web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DCS/repay/cancel/index.html>. If you're not sure who holds your loan, you can contact our Federal Student Aid Information Center to find out (call 1-800-4-FED-AID).~~

Am I required to make payments on the loan while the discharge application is being reviewed?

~~Yes. While waiting for a decision about whether you qualify for a loan discharge, you should continue to make payments on your loan to prevent the loan from going into default or accruing additional interest, unless you are granted a forbearance (see next paragraph). When you received your loan, you signed a legally binding agreement to repay that loan. Failure to honor that agreement may result in enforcement action against you, including a lawsuit, garnishment of your wages, offset of your federal income tax refund, an adverse credit record, and loss of eligibility to receive financial aid to attend other schools.~~

~~If you submit an application that appears to make you eligible for a loan discharge, the holder of your loan should grant forbearance until a decision is made on your application. If a forbearance is granted, no one is permitted to collect on your loan until the holder of your loan determines whether you are eligible for a loan discharge.~~



What happens if my application for discharge is approved?

If you qualify for a discharge of your loan, you are no longer obligated to make any payments on the loan. The holder of the promissory note will refund to you all monies that you paid on the loan, including any late charges and collection fees. In addition, the holder of the loan will delete any adverse credit record related to a default on the loan, and no tax refund offset or wage garnishment will take place to collect the loan. If the loan was in default, the discharge erases the default status—if you have no other defaulted loans, you regain eligibility for federal student aid.

What can I do if my discharge application is denied?

For a closed school or unpaid refund discharge:

The holder of your loan makes the final decision on whether to discharge the loan—that decision cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.

You should ask the holder of the loan to arrange reasonable and affordable payments on your loan. If your loan is in default, ask about loan rehabilitation and loan consolidation. See our [Guide to Defaulted Student Loans](#) for more information. You should also explore the following options: ([Link to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DCS/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DCS/))

- ? Contact the state licensing agency and ask if there is a tuition recovery fund or performance bond that will cover your damages based on the school closure.
- ? If the school filed bankruptcy, you should file a claim for your loss in the bankruptcy proceeding. You may also consult an attorney about any options you may have through the court system.

How do I get my financial aid and academic records if my school closes? (#62.4)

If you are trying to locate your records from a closed school, you should contact the state licensing agency in the state in which the school was located to ask whether the state made arrangements to store the records. For your convenience, we're providing a listing of telephone numbers for [State Licensing Agencies](#). Note that these records may be useful in substantiating your claim for a loan discharge. ([Link to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/closedschool/statelicensing.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/closedschool/statelicensing.html)) (#62.4.1)

You may need your academic records if you plan to attend another school and wish to have your coursework at the closed school taken into consideration. If you are applying for aid at the new school, it can check the Financial Aid History information included on the Student Aid Report that you received, or in the electronic record that it receives. If you're transferring in the middle of the year, your new school must check your information in the National Student Loan Data System. (#62.4.2)

***/



Closed School Contact page (63) (#63.1)

There ~~isare no information~~-closed school updates at this time. (#63.2)

Loan Exit Counseling (64) (#64.1)

FFEL Loan Borrowers (#64.2)

For FFEL loan exit counseling, please contact your loan provider for more information. [Don't know who your lender is? Use the NSLDS to find out. \(links to <http://www.nsls.ed.gov/>\)](#) (#64.2.1)

Direct Loan Borrowers (#64.3)

[Link to DL Exit Counseling will be included in this section.](#)

About Direct Loans. Direct Loans are made to students attending school at least half-time. The U.S. Department of Education is the lender, and you receive the loan money through your school. You may receive a Direct Subsidized Loan, a Direct Unsubsidized Loan, or both for the same academic year. A student qualifies for a Direct Subsidized Loan based on financial need, as determined under federal regulations. A student's need is not a factor in determining eligibility for a Direct Unsubsidized Loan. (#64.3.1)

When do I begin repaying my loans? (#64.4)

After you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment, you have six months before you must begin repaying your loans. This is called the "grace period." Your repayment period begins the day after your grace period ends. Your first payment will be due within 60 days after your repayment period begins. (#64.4.1)

If you have Direct Subsidized Loans, you won't be charged any interest during your grace period. If you have Direct Unsubsidized Loans, you'll be responsible for the interest charged during your grace period. You may either pay this interest as it accumulates or have it [capitalized](#) when you start repaying your loans. ([Link to <http://www.ed.gov/DirectLoan/pubs/exitborr/exb5.html>](http://www.ed.gov/DirectLoan/pubs/exitborr/exb5.html)) (#64.4.2)

What is the interest rate on my loans? (#64.5)

The interest rate for both Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans is variable and is adjusted each year on July 1. The interest rate will be calculated differently depending on several circumstances. (#64.5.1)

The interest rate during the in-school, grace, and deferment periods is equal to the 91-day Treasury bill rate plus 2.5 percentage points--if your loan was made *before* July 1, 1995. If your loan was made *on* or *after* July 1, 1995, the interest rate for those periods is equal to the 91-day Treasury bill rate plus 3.1 percentage points. (#64.5.2)

For *all* Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans in repayment, regardless of the date the loans were made, the interest rate is equal to the 91-day Treasury bill rate plus 3.1 percentage points. **By law, however, your interest rate can never exceed 8.25 percent.** (#64.5.3)

Repayment Plans. There are four repayment plans available. If you do not select one, you will be assigned the Standard Plan. (#64.6)

- **Standard Repayment Plan.** With the Standard Plan, you'll pay a fixed amount each month until your loans are paid in full. Your monthly payments will be at least \$50, and you'll have up to 10 years to repay your loans. (#64.7)

The Standard Plan is good for you if you can handle higher monthly payments because you'll repay your loans more quickly. Your monthly payment under the Standard Plan may be higher than it would be

under the other plans because your loans will be repaid in the shortest time. For the same reason--the 10-year limit on repayment--you may pay the least interest. (#64.7.1)

- **Extended Repayment Plan.** Under the Extended Plan, you'll still have minimum monthly payments of at least \$50, but you can take from 12 to 30 years to repay your loans. The length of your repayment period will depend on the total amount you owe when your loans go into repayment. (#64.8)

This is a good plan if you will need to make smaller monthly payments. Because the repayment period generally will be at least 12 years, your monthly payments will be less than with the Standard Plan. However, you may pay more in interest because you're taking longer to repay the loans. **Remember that the longer your loans are in repayment, the more interest you will pay.** (#64.8.1)

- **Graduated Repayment Plan.** With this plan, your payments start out low, then increase, generally every two years. The length of your repayment period will depend on the total amount you owe when your loans go into repayment. If you expect your income to increase steadily over time, this plan may be right for you. Your initial monthly payments will be equal to either the interest that accumulates on your loans or half of the payment you would make each month using the Standard Plan, whichever is greater. However, your monthly payments will never increase to more than 1.5 times what you would pay with the Standard Plan. (#64.9)
- **Income Contingent Repayment (ICR) Plan.** This plan gives you the flexibility to meet your Direct Loan obligations without causing undue financial hardship. Each year, your monthly payments will be calculated on the basis of your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), family size, and the total amount of your Direct Loans. To participate in the ICR Plan, you must sign a form that permits the Internal Revenue Service to provide information about your income to the U.S. Department of Education. This information will be used to recalculate your monthly payment, adjusted annually based on the updated information. For more information on this plan, visit this [ICR definition site](http://www.ed.gov/DirectLoan/pubs/repabook/icr2.html). (Link to <http://www.ed.gov/DirectLoan/pubs/repabook/icr2.html>) (#64.10)

Career Information (65) (#65.1)

Are you trying to figure out which career is right for you? (#65.2)

Evaluate Your Interests. The first step to finding the right career is to decide what things you like to do and do well. Evaluate your interests by using a [self-assessment](#) tool. This self-assessment will examine your interests and goals, and offer some ideas about careers that might be right for you. (Link to <http://www.careerkey.org/english/>) (#65.3)

Plan Your Career. Planning can go a long way in helping you in your search for a career. By using the right tools, you can minimize the time you spend searching for a career. Follow these suggestions on [planning your career](#) and simplify your job search! (Link to <http://safetynet.doleta.gov/>) (#65.4)

Get Experience. For those who are not seniors, and even those who are, summer job experience is the best way to figure out what you do, or don't, want to pursue as a career. Here are some tips for [finding an internship or fellowship that's right for you](#). (Link to <http://www.studentjobs.gov/>.) (#65.5)

Find a Career. [Once you have completed your self-assessment enter your scores into the Career Finder, which will match you to possible careers or search careers by name. \(links to Career Finder tool\) **XAP text](#) (#65.6)

Career List. [If you already have an idea of a career path, search the Career List by Industry to find recommended majors and academics to obtain your career choice. \(link to Career list by industry tool\)](#) (#65.7)

Find a Job. Now that you know what you want to do, it is time to begin the [Job Search](#). Before you begin the search you may want to try a [resume builder](#). Resume builders can help you maximize your potential. A good resume can increase your possibilities of being the one called for the interview. (Links to <http://www.dol.gov/> and http://www.ajb.org/html/skr_res_ins.html) (#65.8)

Explore Your Options. Did you know that if you are a teacher serving in a low-income or subject-matter shortage area, it may be possible for you to cancel or defer your student loans? Find out more by visiting [Cancellation and Deferment Options for Teachers](#). (Links to [Teacher Loan Forgiveness Page](#)) (#65.9)

Repaying **(66)** (#66.1)

What you need to know about repaying student loans... (#66.2)

After you graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment, you have anywhere from six to nine months before you begin repayment on your federal student loans. You will receive information about repayment and will be notified by your loan provider of the date loan repayment begins. (#66.2.1)

Financial assistance programs and requirements often vary from school to school. Always check with your school before applying for financial aid. (#66.3)

Direct Loan Servicing Online. Do you have a Direct Loan? Here you can view your detailed account information, complete Exit Counseling, make an online payment, enroll in any of our electronic services and much more. ~~click here~~ (Link to www.dlsvicer.ed.gov) (#66.4)

Paying Back Student Loans. You should start the repayment process with [loan exit counseling](#). It is full of helpful tips and explanations that will help guide you through the repayment process. The types of repayment plans available to you depend on whether you received a Direct Loan, a Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL), or a Federal Perkins Loan. The [Student Guide](#) is an excellent source for information about the different repayment options available. (Links to [loan exit page](#) and to http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/FSA/StudentGuide.) (#66.5)

Get Your Loan Info – The NSLDS Financial Aid Review service allows you to access information on loan and/or grant amounts, outstanding balances, loan status, and disbursements. (link to <http://www.nsls.ed.gov>) (#66.6)

Electronic Debit Pay Online. In some cases, you may be able to reduce your interest rate if you sign up for electronic debiting. Find out more about electronic [payment and](#) debiting here. (Link to [electronic payment page](#)) (#66.7)

Calculate. Figure out what your loan payments would be under each of the payment plans with these financial calculators. (Link to <http://www.finaid.org/calculators>.) (#66.8)

Cancellation and Deferment Options for Teachers - If you're a teacher serving in a low-income or subject-matter shortage area, it may be possible for you to cancel or defer your student loans. Let us help you find out if you qualify. (Link to <http://www.ed.gov/studentaid/repayment/teachers/index.html> [Cancellation Options for Teachers page](#)) (#66.9)

Child Care Provider Loan Forgiveness Program. In some instances, your student loan balance may be reduced or even eliminated if you pursue activities that are identified as being in the national interest. Learn more about the loan forgiveness program for childcare providers here. ~~Insert paragraph here.~~ (links to PDF) (#66.10)

Counseling for Borrowers. ~~If you are having trouble making your loan payments on time, you may be able to avoid defaulting on your loans through deferments, forbearances or consolidation.~~ (#66.11)

Loans are Obligations Difficulty Repaying. It is very important to pay your student loans. Loans are not like grants. Loans have to be repaid. If you do not repay your student loans on time or according to the terms of the promissory note, you may go into default, which has very serious consequences and will affect your credit rating.



There is assistance for borrowers having difficulty repaying their education loans. ([Link to difficulty paying page](#)) (#66.12)

Postpone Repayment. Under certain circumstances you can receive a deferment or forbearance, which will allow you to postpone payments temporarily. Deferments and forbearances are not automatic - you must apply. In rare cases, you may be able to have some or all of your loans [discharged](#) (forgiven). ([Link to defer forbear page and discharges page](#)) (#66.13)

Consolidate your Student Loans. A Federal Consolidation Loan is a student debt management tool that enables you to bundle all of the federal loans you received to finance your college education into a single loan. [Here](#) are some tips to consider while you are deciding whether or not to consolidate. ([Links to loan consolidation, consolidation tips pages.](#)) (#66.14)

Defaulted Borrowers. Have you fallen behind in your loan payments? Don't worry, there's help available. Consult our Guide for Defaulted Borrowers and find out what options are available to you. ([Link to Guide to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DCS/](#)) (#66.15)



Electronic Debiting Payment page (67) (#67.1)

Direct Loan borrowers now have a variety of ways to receive and pay their student loan bill. Borrowers can opt to receive their student loan statement electronically, make a student loan payment on-line through electronic debiting, or schedule a recurring electronic debit to pay their bill. (#67.2)

About Electronic Debit. Electronic debiting is a service that allows your bank to automatically deduct your monthly loan payments from your checking and saving accounts. Your payment will be forwarded to your loan holder for processing. (#67.3)

Benefits of Electronic Debit. Electronic debiting is the most convenient way to make your student loan payments. It is an efficient repayment method that will save you time and the inconvenience of mailing a check each month. With electronic debiting, your loan payments can always be made on time. (#67.4)

Electronic Debit Incentives. Some loan holders will even reduce your interest rate as an incentive for paying by electronic debiting. (#67.5)

FFEL Borrowers: To sign up for electronic debit, contact your loan provider. (#67.6)

Direct Loan Borrowers: [Enroll in electronic debiting online.](http://www.dlsonline.com/navBarMain.asp?Sect=4&Tab=1) (Link to <http://www.dlsonline.com/navBarMain.asp?Sect=4&Tab=1>) (#67.7)

[Link to EBPP information.](#)



Cancellation/Deferment Options for Teachers page (FSA) (68) (#68.1)

If you're a teacher serving in a low-income or subject-matter shortage area, it may be possible for you to cancel or defer your student loans. ~~(#68.2) Recipients of the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship may reduce the years of service they must perform by teaching in a shortage area.~~

Canceling a Perkins Loan. If you have a loan from the Federal Perkins Loan Program, you may be eligible for loan cancellation for full-time teaching at a low-income school or in certain subject areas. [\(link to canceling a perkins loan page\)](#) (#68.3)

Cancelation for Stafford Loans. If you received a Stafford loan on or after October 1, 1998 and have taught full-time for five years in a low-income school, you may be eligible to have a portion of the loan cancelled. This applies to Stafford Loans, Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans, and in some cases Consolidation Loans. [\(link to canceling a stafford loan page\)](#) (#68.4)

Stafford Loan deferment provisions. If you have a Stafford or PLUS loan, you may be eligible for deferment if you're teaching full-time in a teacher shortage area. This provision also applies to Consolidation Loans and loans offered in earlier years through the Guaranteed Student Loan Program. [\(link to stafford loan deferment provisions page\)](#) (#68.5)

Douglas Scholarship reduced service. If you have a Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship, you may be eligible for reduced service obligations. Note: The last of these scholarships were awarded in 1995-96. ~~Recipients of the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship may reduce the years of service they must perform by teaching in a shortage area.~~ [\(link to douglas scholarship page\)](#) (#68.6)

Perkins Loan Cancellation (FSA) (69) (#69.1)

<http://www.ed.gov/studentaid/repayment/teachers/perkins.html>

This page last modified March 26, 2002

Who qualifies for cancellation (#69.2)

The following All three categories of teacher cancellation have been extended to borrowers with Perkins loans prior to July 23, 1992 for teaching service performed on or after October 7, 1998: **(#69.3)**

- **Teaching in an elementary or secondary school that serves low-income students (Perkins/NDSL loans made on or after July 1, 1987). (#69.3.1)**

-To be eligible for Perkins teaching cancellation, you must be teaching full-time at a low-income school as determined by the State Education Agency. To be considered a "low-income school", the school must be in a school district that qualified for funds-in the year for which the cancellation is sought-under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. The school also must have more than 30% of its enrolled children counted in the Title I funding formula. To find out if the school that employs you is classified as a low income school, you can check our online database for the year(s) that you have been employed as a teacher. Usually, you will want to check the database for the most recent years in which you taught at the school. Questions about the inclusion or omission of a particular school should be directed to the State Education Agency contact in the state where the school is located and not to the U.S. Department of Education. (#69.3.2)

(link to <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/repayment/teachers/stcol.html>)

The Secretary considers all elementary and secondary schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or operated on Indian reservations by Indian tribal groups under contract with BIA to qualify as schools serving low-income students. (#69.4.2)

School Year: 1997-1998 | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 (links to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/repayment/teachers/search_t97.html)

~~To be eligible for Perkins teaching cancellation, you must be teaching full-time at a low-income school as determined by the State Education Agency. To be considered a "low-income school", the school must be in a school district that qualified for funds in the year for which the cancellation is sought under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended. The school also must have more than 30% of its enrolled children counted in the Title I funding formula. To find out if the school that employs you is classified as a low income school, you can check our online database for the year(s) that you have been employed as a teacher. Usually, you will want to check the database for the most recent years in which you taught at the school. Questions about the inclusion or omission of a particular school should be directed to the State Education Agency contact in the state where the school is located and not to the U.S. Department of Education.~~

NOTE: If you have had a portion of your loan cancelled for teaching at a low-income elementary or secondary school in one year, you can continue to have portions of your loan cancelled for teaching at that school even if it is not listed as a low-income school in later years. Under certain circumstances the institution that holds your Perkins Loan may permit retroactive cancellation if you can demonstrate that

you qualified for cancellation in a prior year. However, the institution may not refund payments made during such a retroactive period. (#69.3.3)

School Year: ~~1997-1998 | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002~~

NOTE: If you have had a portion of your loan cancelled for teaching at a low-income elementary or secondary school in one year, you can continue to have portions of your loan cancelled for teaching at that school even if it is not listed as a low-income school in later years. Under certain circumstances the institution that holds your Perkins Loan may permit retroactive cancellation if you can demonstrate that you qualified for cancellation in a prior year. However, the institution may not refund payments made during such a retroactive period

- **Teaching in an elementary or secondary school system that has a shortage of teachers in a designated subject (Perkins Loans made on or after July 23, 1992). (#69.4)**

Federal Perkins Loan Borrowers can also have their loans cancelled for full-time teaching if there is a shortage of teachers in their subject area. Each year the State Education Agency determines any subject shortage areas in the elementary and secondary schools within the state. These designated subject shortage areas include mathematics, science, foreign languages, and bilingual education. You should check with your local school system or State Education Agency to find out if your subject matter area has been designated as a teacher shortage area. These teaching benefits would be extended to any borrower with an outstanding loan balance on a Federal Perkins, Direct or Defense loan made prior to July 23, 1992 for teaching service performed on or after October 7, 1998 if the cancellation benefits provided under this section are not included in the borrower's promissory note. (#69.4.1)

~~Federal Perkins Loan Borrowers can also have their loans cancelled for full-time teaching if there is a shortage of teachers in their subject area. Each year the State Education Agency determines any subject shortage areas in the elementary and secondary schools within the state. These designated subject shortage areas include mathematics, science, foreign languages, and bilingual education. You should check with your local school system or State Education Agency to find out if your subject matter area has been designated as a teacher shortage area. These teaching benefits would be extended to any borrower with an outstanding loan balance on a Federal Perkins, Direct or Defense loan made prior to July 23, 1992 for teaching service performed on or after October 7, 1998 if the cancellation benefits provided under this section are not included in the borrower's promissory note.~~

~~The Secretary considers all elementary and secondary schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or operated on Indian reservations by Indian tribal groups under contract with BIA to qualify as schools serving low-income students. (#69.4.2)~~

- **Teaching disabled students in a public or other nonprofit elementary or secondary school (Perkins/NDSL loans made on or after July 1, 1987). (#69.5)**

You must have an official at the public or other nonprofit elementary or secondary school certify that you are teaching handicapped or learning disabled students, either on the Federal Perkins Loan postponement/cancellation form or on an official letter from the school bearing the school's seal or letterhead. For Perkins Loans made on or after July 23, 1992, this cancellation includes special education teachers, including teachers of infants, toddlers, children, or youth with disabilities. (#69.5.1)

- **Cancellation amounts for years of service (#69.6)**

If a borrower is eligible for teacher cancellation under any of the three categories listed above, up to 100% of the loan may be canceled for teaching service, in the following increments: (#69.6.1)



- 15% canceled per year for the first and second years of service. (#69.6.2)
- 20% canceled for the third and fourth years, and (#69.6.3)
- 30% canceled for the fifth year. (#69.6.4)

How to apply for teacher cancellation for a Perkins Loan (#69.7)

To apply for loan cancellation, you must request the appropriate forms from the office that administers the Perkins loan program at the college or university that holds your loan. You must submit two forms for each year for which you seek cancellation: postponement/deferment request form at the beginning of the school year, and a cancellation request form at the end of the second year. You must also provide any documentation the college requests to show that you qualify for cancellation. It is the college's responsibility to determine whether you qualify for cancellation. The institution's decision cannot be appealed to the Department. (#69.7.1)

See your loan promissory note for information on other Perkins/NDSL cancellation provisions for Head Start, Peace Corps, or VISTA workers, nurses or medical technicians, military personnel serving in areas of imminent danger, or certain types of law enforcement, family service, or early intervention work. Note that some of these cancellation provisions were added to Perkins Loans made after 1990 and 1992, and some of them offer partial rather than full cancellation. You should consult your Perkins Loan promissory note to see if you meet all of the requirements for cancellation. If you have further questions, contact the office that administers the program at your former college or university. (#69.8)

You must have an official at the public or other nonprofit elementary or secondary school certify that you are teaching handicapped or learning disabled students, either on the Federal Perkins Loan postponement/cancellation form or on an official letter from the school bearing the school's seal or letterhead. For Perkins Loans made on or after July 23, 1992, this cancellation includes special education teachers, including teachers of infants, toddlers, children, or youth with disabilities.

Cancellation amounts for years of service

If a borrower is eligible for teacher cancellation under any of the three categories listed above, up to 100% of the loan may be canceled for teaching service, in the following increments:

15% canceled per year for the first and second years of service,

20% canceled for the third and fourth years, and

30% canceled for the fifth year.

How to apply for teacher cancellation for a Perkins Loan

To apply for loan cancellation, you must request the appropriate forms from the office that administers the Perkins loan program at the college or university that holds your loan. You must submit two forms for each year for which you seek cancellation: postponement/deferment request form at the beginning of the school year, and a cancellation request form at the end of the second year. You must also provide any documentation the college requests to show that you qualify for cancellation. It is the college's responsibility to determine whether you qualify for cancellation. The institution's decision cannot be appealed to the Department.



~~See your loan promissory note for information on other Perkins/NDSL cancellation provisions for Head Start, Peace Corps, or VISTA workers, nurses or medical technicians, military personnel serving in areas of imminent danger, or certain types of law enforcement, family service, or early intervention work. Note that some of these cancellation provisions were added to Perkins Loans made after 1990 and 1992, and some of them offer partial rather than full cancellation. You should consult your Perkins Loan promissory note to see if you meet all of the requirements for cancellation. If you have further questions, contact the office that administers the program at your former college or university.~~



Stafford Loan Cancellation for Teachers (FSA) (70) (#70.1)

<http://www.ed.gov/studentaid/repayment/teachers/stafford.html>

Content

This page last modified May 13, 2002

Over 50% of students graduate from college with at least some debt in the form of student loans. But many fewer are aware that the number of programs that will forgive (repay all or part of) a student's loans is substantial--and growing. (#70.2)

Student loan forgiveness programs encourage recent graduates to work in areas where their professional contributions are desperately needed. Some of the most common fields where graduates can find this help in repaying loans are law enforcement, medicine, and teaching. In addition, some colleges even promise loan forgiveness to students who maintain a certain level of academic standing by the time they graduate! (#70.3)

The loan cancellation for teachers Appplies to Stafford Loans, Direct Subsidized, and Unsubsidized Loans made to new borrowers after 10/1/1998 and to the portions of a Consolidation Loan derived from these loans. (#70.4)

-You may be able to cancel up to \$5,000 of your Stafford Loans if you are teaching in a low-income school and you are a "new borrower." A new borrower is one who received his or her first Stafford Loan on or after October 1, 1998 or who, when the new loan was made, had no remaining balance on a Stafford Loan made prior to 10/1/98. (#70.4.1)

To qualify you must work as a full-time teacher for 5 consecutive years in an elementary or secondary school that has been designated as a "low-income" school. Low-income elementary and secondary schools are designated by the Department each year. Following is the list of low-income schools by year: (#70.4.2)

School Year: 1997-1998 | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 (links to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/repayment/teachers/search_t97.html) School Year: 1997-1998 | 1998-1999 | 1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 (#70.5)

Additional conditions: (#70.6)

- At least one of the five qualifying years of teaching must be later than the 1997-98 academic year. (#70.6.1)
- The loan must have been made before the end of the fifth year of qualifying teaching. (#70.6.1)
- The elementary school must be public or private nonprofit. (#70.6.2)
- A defaulted loan cannot be cancelled for teacher service unless you've made satisfactory repayment arrangements with the holder of the loan. (#70.6.3)
- A borrower may not receive loan forgiveness for qualifying teaching service if the borrower receives an Americorps benefit for the same teaching service. (#70.6.4)

Interruptions in your school's low-income designation (#70.7)

Your school does not have to be designated a low-income school in each of the 5 consecutive years. If you are teaching at a school that is listed as a low-income school for at least one year (during your employment), your subsequent years of service at that school can be counted in the five consecutive years, even if the school is not

designated as a low-income school in every subsequent year. For example, if you began teaching at a secondary school in the 1994-95 academic year, and it was designated as a low-income school in 1996-97, you may count your five consecutive years of service at that school starting with the 1996-97 academic year, even if the school is not designated as a low-income school in subsequent years. **(#70.7.1)**

Interruptions in teaching service (#70.8)

Your five consecutive years won't necessarily be interrupted if you were unable to teach a full year because of a family or medical leave condition*, if you went back to school (at least half-time) for reasons directly related to the performance of your teaching service, or if you were called or ordered to active duty status for more than 30 days as a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces**. If you completed at least one-half of the academic year and your employer considers you to have fulfilled your contract requirements for the academic year for the purposes of salary increases, tenure, and retirement, that academic year can be counted as one of your qualifying years of teaching service. **(#70.8.1)**

* A condition that is covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) (19 U.S.C. 2654) **(#70.8.2)**

** A reserve component of the Armed Forces named in section 10101 of Title 10, United States Code. **(#70.8.3)**

How to apply (#70.9)

You may apply for cancellation after completing the five year teaching requirement. To apply you must submit an application to the lender or servicer holding your loan. Copies of the application can be obtained from the holder of your loan. The chief administrative officer at your school must certify on this form that you have taught full-time for five consecutive years at that school, and--- **(#70.9.1)**

- if you're teaching in an elementary school, that you have knowledge of or teaching skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and other areas of the elementary curriculum. **(#70.9.2)**
- if you're teaching in a secondary school, that you are teaching in a subject area relevant to your academic major. **(#70.9.3)**

Postponing repayment while under consideration for cancellation (#70.10)

You can get a forbearance for up to 60 days while you're getting the required information for your application and during the time it takes for your application to be reviewed by the lender and guarantor. (The loan holder and guaranty agency must notify you within 135 days of the decision on your application and, if it is approved, provide new repayment terms based on any remaining loan balances.) The lender may cancel up to \$5,000 of the aggregate loan amount that is outstanding after you've finished your fifth year of teaching. (The aggregate loan amount includes both principal and interest.) However, the lender cannot refund the payments you made before you completed the fifth year of teaching service. You may want to request forbearance from your lender for each of the years of your qualifying teaching service if the expected cancellation amount will satisfy the anticipated remaining outstanding balance on the loan at the time of the expected cancellation. Unless you give your lender or servicer other instructions, your unsubsidized Stafford loan balance will be cancelled first, followed by any outstanding subsidized Stafford loan balances, and then any eligible outstanding consolidation loan balances. The lender may cancel only the outstanding portion of the consolidation loan that was used to repay subsidized or unsubsidized Stafford loans that qualified for loan forgiveness. **(#70.10.1)**

Definitions: (#70.11)

- "Academic year" means one complete school year at the same school, or two complete and consecutive half years at different schools, or two complete and consecutive half years from different school years at either the same school or different schools. Half years exclude summer sessions and generally fall within a twelve-month period. For schools that have a year-round program of instruction, nine months is considered an academic year. **(#70.11.1)**



- "Elementary school" and "secondary school" means a public or nonprofit private school that provides elementary education or secondary education as determined by state law (or by the Department if the school is not in a state). (#70.11.2)
- "Full-time employment as a teacher" is determined by the state's standard. For a borrower teaching in more than one school, the determination of full-time is based on the combination of all qualifying employment. (#70.11.3)
- "Teacher" means a person who provides direct classroom teaching or classroom-type teaching in a non-classroom setting, including Special Education teachers. (#70.11.4)

Download a summary of this information (#70.12)

You can download and print out this information in a convenient Portable Document Format (PDF), requires the Adobe Acrobat Reader, which you can download for free at the Adobe Web site). The color version works best if printed as a two-sided sheet and then folded into a brochure. The black-and-white version can be easily printed and copied. Both have the same text and can be duplicated but not sold. (#70.12.1)

Community service loan forgiveness (#70.13)

This provision excludes from income student loan amounts forgiven by non-profit, tax-exempt charitable or educational institutions for borrowers who take community-service jobs that address unmet community needs. For example, a recent graduate who takes a low-paying job in a rural school will not owe any additional income tax if in recognition of this service her college or another charity forgives a loan it made to her to help pay her college costs. This provision applies to loans forgiven after August 5, 1997. (#70.13.1)

Deferments for FFEL and Direct Loans (FSA) (71) (#71.1)

<http://www.ed.gov/studentaid/repayment/teachers/dlffel.html>

This page last modified February 23, 2001

Repayment of loans from the FFEL or Direct Loan programs (Federal Stafford Loans, Federal PLUS Loans, and Federal Consolidation Loans) may be deferred for full-time teaching in a federally-designated teacher shortage area for a maximum of three years if: **(#71.2)**

- you received an FFEL Program Loan for enrollment in classes that started between July 1, 1987 and June 30, 1993, and **(#71.2.1)**
- you had no outstanding FFEL Program Loan on the date you signed the promissory note for the loan. **(#71.2.2)**
- If you qualify for teacher service deferment of an FFEL Program loan for enrollment between July 1, 1987 and June 30, 1993, you may also defer any additional FFEL Program loan or Direct Loan that you received after June 30, 1993. If your loan is unsubsidized, you must still pay the interest that accumulates on the loan during eligible periods of deferment, either during the deferment period or as an increase in the amount or number of your monthly payments when you resume making payments. **(#71.2.3)**

To obtain a targeted teaching deferment, you must submit a deferment form to your lender for each school year of teaching service. Under the FFEL and Direct Loan programs, a federally-designated teacher shortage area is a shortage of elementary or secondary school teachers and can be a grade level, subject-matter, discipline classification, or geographic area as identified by the State Education Agency (and approved by the U.S. Department of Education). **(#71.3)**

List of federally-designated teacher shortage areas (link to

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/repayment/teachers/tsa.html>) **(#71.4)**

The principal at the school where you are teaching must certify on the deferment form that you are teaching in a federally-designated teacher shortage area. If the State Education Agency has not informed principals that their schools were designated as having a shortage of teachers, you should contact your State Education Agency to get the form certified. Please remember that you must reapply each school year for a targeted teaching deferment. **(#71.4.1)**

If you continue to teach in the same shortage area for which you obtained the original deferment, you may continue to receive the deferment for a maximum of three years, even if your position is no longer considered to be in a teacher shortage area for those subsequent years. To receive the continuing deferment, you must provide the lender with a completed deferment form, certified by the school principal, indicating that you continue to teach, full time, in the same teacher shortage area for which the deferment was received the previous school year. **(#71.4.2)**

For more information about targeted teaching deferments for the FFEL Program, you should consult your loan promissory note, and contact the lender or guarantor holding your loan, or the State Education Agency in the state where you are teaching. Direct Loan borrowers should contact the Direct Loan Servicing Center at 1-800-848-0979. **(#71.4.3)**



Teaching Reduces Service Requirement for Douglas Scholars (FSA) (72) (#72.1)

<http://www.ed.gov/studentaid/repayment/teachers/douglas.html>

This page last modified April 9, 2002

If you received a scholarship under the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program (formerly the Congressional Teacher Scholarship Program), you are generally required to teach for two years for every year of scholarship assistance received. However, if you are teaching in a federally-approved teacher shortage area, you are required to teach only one year for each year of scholarship assistance received. (#72.2)

No new funding for individual scholarships has been authorized since the beginning of the 1996-97 year. However, former scholarship recipients who have not fulfilled the scholarship agreement must continue to do so. (#72.3)

A federally-approved teacher shortage area is a state region with a shortage of elementary or secondary school teachers, or a grade level, subject-matter, or discipline classification in which there is a statewide shortage of elementary or secondary school teachers, identified by the State Education Agency (and approved by the U.S. Department of Education). (#72.4)

[List of federally-designated teacher shortage areas \(link to http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/repayment/teachers/tsa.html\)](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/repayment/teachers/tsa.html) (#72.5)

To fulfill the teaching service requirements under this program, you must give the office that administers the program (in the state that granted the scholarship) a written statement from the school's principal certifying that you are teaching full time in a teacher shortage area. If you are teaching in a state other than the one that granted you the scholarship, you should obtain this certification from either (1) the school principal if the State Education Agency has informed the appropriate principals in the state that their schools have been designated as having a shortage of teachers, or (2) directly from the State Education Agency if it has not informed the appropriate principals of their designation. (#72.6)

If you teach in a shortage area one year, but it is not designated as such the next year, you will still be eligible for the teaching reduction if you provide the state office with the appropriate forms certifying that you are continuing to teach in the area for which the original teacher cancellation was received. Under certain circumstances, you may receive credit for substitute teaching service performed in accordance with the state policy in affect at the time. (#72.7)

If a scholar fails to fulfill the teaching obligation, he or she will be required to repay, on a pro rat a basis, the amount of the scholarships received as well as accrued interest and any required collection costs. (#72.8)

For more information about teaching service requirements under the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program, you should contact the office that administers the program in the state from which you received the scholarship. (Note that the state office that administers the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program may be separate from the State Education Agency.) (#72.9)



Difficulty Paying (73) (#73.1)

If you have trouble making your education loan payments, contact your loan servicer immediately. You may qualify for a deferment, forbearance, or other form of payment relief. And it's important to take action before you incur late fees. (#73.2)

- **Deferment:** You have a right to defer repayment for certain defined periods. A deferment is a temporary suspension of loan payments for specific situations such as returning to school, unemployment, or economic hardship. (#73.2.1)
- **Forbearance:** Forbearance is a temporary postponement or reduction of payments for a period of time, as you and the lender or holder of your loan may agree, because you are experiencing financial difficulty. (#73.2.2)
- **Other forms of payment relief:** Graduated and income sensitive payment plans are available. Graduated payment plans provide short-term relief through low, interest only payments followed by standard principal and interest payments. An income sensitive payment plan offers borrowers payment relief with payments that are a percentage of the borrower's gross monthly income. (#73.2.3)

These will provide you with payment relief and help you maintain a good credit rating. The government will be making interest payments on your behalf during periods of deferment for your subsidized FFEL or Direct Loans. However, if you do not qualify for federal interest subsidies on your deferment, or if your loan is in forbearance, your loan balance will increase by the amount of the unpaid accrued interest unless you elect to pay the interest as it accrues. (Calculate how much a deferment or forbearance will cost you before you apply.) (#73.3)

Different types of deferments are available for Perkins, Stafford, and PLUS loans and for the [Direct Loan](#) consolidation accounts. Contact your lender or servicer if you have questions about your deferment eligibility. (Link to <http://www.dlsonline.com/>) (#73.4)

It's important to **act quickly** if you find your education loan payments hard to handle. (#73.5)

If you default, or fail to make your loan payments as scheduled, you risk very serious consequences. Your school, the financial institution that made or owns your loan, your state education loan guarantor, and the federal government can *all* take action to recover the money you owe. They may notify national credit bureaus of your default, negatively affecting your credit record. You could find it difficult to borrow money to buy a car or a house, and you would be ineligible for additional federal student aid if you decided to return to school. The financial institution that owns your loans may ask your employer to deduct loan payments from your paycheck, and your state and federal income tax refunds could be withheld and applied toward the amount you owe. Also, delayed payment and collection activities could increase the cost of your loan and you could be sued. (#73.6)

~~So if you're having trouble with loan payments, don't wait contact your loan servicer **immediately**.~~ (#73.7)
So if you're having trouble, don't wait - contact your loan servicer **immediately**. If you don't know which organization(s) are servicing your loan(s), click here to research your account information: www.nsls.ed.gov

If you have already contacted your loan servicer(s) and you still are unable to resolve an issue, you may wish to contact the FSA Office of the Ombudsman - which can intercede on your behalf under certain circumstances. The FSA Ombudsman can be reached on-line at URL: <http://www.sfahelp.ed.gov/general/faqs1.cfm> or via phone at 1-877-557-2575.

Deferments and Forbearances (74) (#74.1)

Is it ever possible to postpone repayment of my loan? (#74.2)

Yes. Under certain circumstances, you can receive a deferment or forbearance on your loan. (#74.2.1)

Deferments (#74.3)

A deferment allows you to temporarily postpone payments on your loan. If you have a subsidized loan, including Perkins loans, you will not be charged interest during the deferment. If your loan is unsubsidized, you will be responsible for the interest on the loan during the deferment. If you don't pay the interest as it accrues, it will be capitalized and increase the amount you will have to repay. (#74.3.1)

For information on deferments available to borrowers with outstanding loans received prior to July 1, 1993: (#74.3.2)

Direct Loan borrowers should contact the Direct Loan Servicing Center at:

Borrower Services: ~~1-800-848-0979~~ or ~~1-315-738-6634~~ 1-800-4-FED-AID

Fax: 1-800-848-0984

TTY: 1-800-848-0983

www.dlservicer.ed.gov (#74.3.3)

FFEL borrowers should contact the lenders or agencies holding the loans. (#74.3.4)

Perkins borrowers should contact their loan servicer or the school that issued the loan. (#74.3.5)

You can't receive a deferment if your loan is in default. (#74.3.6)

Forbearances (#74.4)

If you are temporarily unable to meet your repayment schedule but are not eligible for a deferment, you may receive forbearance for a limited and specified period. During forbearance, your payments are postponed or reduced. Whether your loans are subsidized or unsubsidized, you will be charged interest. If you don't pay the interest as it accrues, it will be capitalized. (#74.4.1)

For example, you may be granted forbearance if you are: (#74.5)

- unable to pay due to poor health or other unforeseen personal problems. (#74.5.1)
- serving in a medical or dental internship or residency. (#74.5.2)
- serving in a position under the National Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (forbearance may be granted for this reason for a Direct or FFEL Stafford Loan, but not for a Direct or FFEL PLUS Loan). (#74.5.2)
- obligated to make payments on certain federal student loans that are equal to or greater than 20 percent of your monthly gross income. (#74.5.3)

Deferments and forbearances are not automatic. If you have a Direct Loan, you must contact your Direct Loan Servicing Center to request either option. If you have a FFEL Loan, you must contact the lender or agency that holds your loan. Perkins borrowers should contact their loan servicer or the school that issued



the loan. For each program, you may have to provide documentation to support your request. You must continue making scheduled payments until you receive notification that the deferment or forbearance has been granted. Failing to make payments on your loan may have a negative effect on your credit rating.

(#74.6)

[Loan Consolidation page-Loan Consolidation \(75\)](#) (#75.1)

[Checklist Tool for Consolidation](#) (link to Loan checklist page) (#75.2)

[Consolidation Tips](#) (link to Consolidation Tips page) (#75.3)

Federal Consolidation Loans allow borrowers to combine their federal education loans into a single loan with one monthly payment, which can be significantly lower than the payment required under the standard 10-year repayment option. Most borrowers with Stafford, PLUS, Perkins, and other federal education loans are eligible for the Federal Consolidation Program. Consolidation loans are provided by banks, secondary markets, credit unions and other lenders under the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL), and by the federal government under the Direct Loan Program. (#75.4)

In general, consolidation loans issued under the FFEL and the Direct Loan Program carry the same terms and conditions. (#75.4.1)

- **Interest rate.** The interest rate for both FFEL and Direct Loan consolidations is set according a formula established by federal statute. The rate is the weighted-average rate of the current rates charged on the loans being consolidated, rounded up to the nearest 1/8th of a percent. This means that the consolidation rate cannot be more than 1/8th of a percent more than the effective rate on the borrower's individual loans. The consolidation rate is fixed for the life of the loan, which protects borrowers from future increases in variable rate loans but prevents them from benefiting from future decreases in variable rates. (#75.5)

Borrowers with Stafford loans issued on or after July 1, 1995, can reduce the consolidation rate by up to half a percentage point or more by consolidating before the end of grace. That's because variable interest rate formulas for these Stafford loans is the in-grace rate 0.6% below the rate paid during repayment. (#75.5.1)

Notes: In general, lenders base consolidation interest rate calculations on the variable rate set according to federal rate formulas, exclusive of interest rate discounts provided under various borrower benefit programs. Also, any HEAL loans included in a consolidation loan remain subject to a variable rate, also set according to a federal formula. (#75.5.2)

- **Repayment period.** The payback term ranges from 10 to 30 years, depending on the amount of education debt being repaid and the repayment option selected by the borrower. Education loans not included in the consolidation loan are considered in determining the maximum payback period. Borrowers may elect to repay their loans under a shorter period than the maximum allowed. (#75.6)
- **Repayment options.** The FFEL and Direct Loan Program offer three basic repayment options for consolidation loans: level-repayment (equal-installment), graduated repayment, and income-based payment plans. Under FFEL, graduated repayment schedules may vary from lender to lender; however, payments must be sufficient to cover accruing interest and no payment can be more than three times any other payment. Under the Direct Loan program, income-based repayment is available only to Stafford borrowers via the income contingent repayment plan (ICRP). FFEL Consolidation offers an income-sensitive repayment plan to both Stafford and PLUS borrowers. (#75.7)



- **Eligibility rules.** Virtually all federal education borrowers are eligible to consolidate their loans. All FFEL Stafford borrowers are eligible to consolidate after they graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment. All The Direct Loan Stafford borrowers may opt for an consolidation allows in-school consolidation; however, in-school consolidation is subject to a number of restrictions. PLUS loans are eligible for consolidation once they are fully paid out. Borrowers who are delinquent or in default must meet certain requirements before they may consolidate their loans. (#75.8)
- **Fees.** Borrowers who consolidate will not pay any application fees or prepayment penalties. (#75.9)
- **Credit checks.** Under FFEL consolidation loans, no credit checks are required, even for PLUS borrowers. Under the Direct Loan consolidation program, PLUS borrowers are subject to a check for adverse credit history. (#75.10)

Always consider the cost. You should keep in mind that consolidation can significantly increase the total cost of repaying your their loans. Consolidation offers lower monthly payments by giving borrowers up to 20 years longer to repay their loans. Thus, you will make more payments and thus pay more in interest. In fact, in some situations -consolidation can double their total interest expense. Borrowers, especially those who do not need monthly payment relief, should compare the cost of repaying their unconsolidated loans against the cost of repaying a consolidation loan. You also should take into account the impact of losing any borrower benefits offered under non-consolidated repayment plans. Borrower benefits, which may include interest rate discounts or principal rebates, can significantly reduce the cost of repaying your loans. (#75.11)

Once made, Federal Consolidation Loans cannot be unmade. That's because the loans that were consolidated have been paid off and no longer exist. Thus, you should take the time to study your consolidation options before you they submit your their applications. The following checklist has been designed to help you determine whether and how you should consolidate your loans. (#75.12)~~under a Federal Consolidation Loan.~~



Consolidation Checklist page (76) (#76.1)

The very first step: Take inventory of your student loans. (#76.2)

For information on your student loans, review your loan documents, contact your lender or loan servicer. If you are uncertain of current lenders or loan servicers, visit the Web site of the National Student Clearinghouse at www.nslc.org and use the LoanLocator service to identify the location of your education loans. There is no charge for this service. (#76.2.1)

Loan Type	Lender/ Loan Servicer	Amount	Current Status-of Loan	Monthly Payment	Current Interest Rate	Eligible for Borrower Benefits?	Eligible for Consolidation? Yes/No

Loan Type: Subsidized Stafford, Unsubsidized Stafford, SLS, Perkins, Federal Nursing Loans, Health Education Assistance Loans, other federal education loans (#76.2.2)

Status: In-School; Grace; Repayment; Deferment; Forbearance. Note length of time before end of grace or deferment period, etc. (#76.2.3)

Monthly Payment Amount: If not in repayment status yet, estimate monthly payment based on current interest rate and balance. You can get payment amounts by calling lender or loan servicer or visiting Website repayment calculators. (#76.2.4)

Eligibility for Borrower Benefits: Make note of any borrower benefits currently available or potentially available for your loans. (#76.2.5)

Eligibility for Consolidation Loans: Most federal education loans are eligible for consolidation. Private education loans are not eligible. (#76.2.6)

Next Steps: (#76.3)

1. Determine total monthly payment for unconsolidated loans. (#76.3.1)
- ~~1.~~ 2. Use worksheet to determine whether monthly payment exceeds percentage of income to be allocated to student loan payment. This percentage should be based on realistic budget. (#76.3.2)
- ~~2.~~ ~~1.~~ • If payment exceeds monthly allocation, re-evaluate budget and assess income situation. (#76.3.3)
- ~~2.~~
3. Consider deferment or forbearance option for short-term payment relief needs. (#76.3.4)
4. If debt relief needs are long term, consider consolidation. (#76.3.5)

1.5. Select loans for consolidation. (#76.3.6)

6. Determine monthly payment and total interest costs for consolidation loan and compare to cost of repaying loans without consolidation. (#76.3.7)

- 1. For help in calculating monthly payments, contact your lender or loan servicer or use one of the Web resource calculators that accompanies this checklist. (#76.3.8)

2.

7. Assess future education plans. Are you planning to return to school (at least half-time) in the near future? (#76.3.9)

- If answer is yes, exclude Perkins and other subsidized loans. (#76.3.10)

- 1. If answer is no, include these loans. (#76.3.11)

2.

1.8. Consider impact of consolidation on future deferment options. (#76.3.12)

- This is important issue for medical school students if they received a student loan before July 1, 1993. (#76.3.13)

- 1. If uncertain about deferment impact, call lender or loan servicer. (#76.3.14)

2.

9. Consider impact on loan forgiveness programs. (#76.3.15)

- 1. Perkins loans will lose eligibility for federal loan forgiveness programs. (#76.3.16)

2.

1.10. Contact lender to begin consolidation process. (#76.3.17)

- 1. If only one Stafford lender, contact that lender. (#76.3.18)

2.

1.11. If eligible for in-school consolidation and planning to consolidate while in-school, make mak sure to apply prior toprior to your graduation dateleaving school. (#76.3.19)

11.

1.12. If still in grace, consider consolidating before the end of grace to begin consolidation at least two months before end of grace. You can lock-in Stafford interest rate based on grace rate-currently .6 percent lower than repayment rate. By consolidating in grace, you may-will give up the remaining portion of grace period.

(#76.3.20)

13. If consolidating in grace, submit your application at least two months before the end of grace. Some lenders offer to hold disbursement of consolidation loans until the end of grace to enable borrowers to minimize their interest rate and maximize their grace period. (#76.3.21)

14. Make sure to complete consolidation application. (#76.3.22)

- Provide complete address information, include two references, and sign promissory note. (#76.3.23)
- Complete applications are easier and faster to process. (#76.3.24)

15. If already in repayment, continue making payments on loans you are consolidating until consolidation is completed. (#76.3.25)

- If you need immediate payment relief, request deferment or forbearance. (#76.3.26)



- Repayment of consolidation loans begins within 60 days of the disbursement of the consolidation loan. (#76.3.27)

16. If you have questions about consolidation, do not hesitate to contact your lender or loan servicer. Check your loan documents for the toll-free customer assistance number. (#76.3.28)

Consolidation Tips (77) (#77.1)

- The rules governing where borrowers can consolidate are a bit complicated. Under current federal rules: (#77.2)
 - An eligible borrower whose FFEL loans are held by one lender or loan holder must first request consolidation from that FFEL lender/loan holder. (#77.2.1)
 - An eligible borrower who has multiple FFEL lenders or loan holders is not required to select a lender/loan holder that currently holds one of the loans. (#77.2.2)
 - Borrowers with one or more Direct Loans may consolidate under the Direct Loan Consolidation Program. (#77.2.3)
 - Borrowers with one more Direct Loans, including consolidation loans, are eligible to consolidate under a FFEL consolidation loan. (#77.2.4)
 - A borrower may consolidate FFEL loans under the Direct Loan consolidation program if the borrower certifies that one of the following conditions is true: (#77.3)
 - i. The borrower has at least one Direct Loan. (#77.3.1)
 - ii. The borrower does not have a direct loan but is attending a Direct Lending school and is requesting an in-school consolidation. (#77.3.2)
 - iii. The borrower has only FFEL loans but cannot obtain a consolidation loan from a FFEL lender. (#77.3.3)
 - iv. The borrower has only FFEL loans, can obtain a consolidation loan from a FFEL lender, and has requested income-sensitive terms from that lender but found the income-sensitive repayment terms offered to be unacceptable. Note: Under this rule, the borrower must be eligible for the income contingent repayment plan offered under the Direct Loan Program. Thus, only Stafford borrowers may qualify under this rule, because PLUS borrowers are not eligible for the income contingent repayment option. (#77.3.4)
- Make sure to sort out how consolidation can affect deferment and grace period benefits. Borrowers who consolidate in grace will lose any grace period that would otherwise remain after the disbursement date. Borrowers seeking in-school consolidation under the Direct Loan Program will keep their post-school grace period for the consolidated loans; this grace period will also apply to loans that had previously entered repayment and are currently placed in an educational deferment status. Deferment issues can vary from borrower to borrower, so make sure to call your lender or loan servicer if you have any questions. (#77.4)
- In general, borrowers should always pay off their highest-rate debt first. Thus, it may make good financial sense for borrowers to consolidate their low-rate federal education loans and use the extra monthly discretionary income generated by the lower student loan payment to repay high-rate credit card debts. (#77.5)
- Consolidation loans are deemed eligible loans for the federal interest deduction for education loans. The ability to take this deduction is subject to a number of federal rules, including an income test. However, Congress recently eased these restrictions. Beginning with tax year 2002, borrowers may deduct interest paid beyond the first 60 months of repayment; borrowers will also be subject to higher income limits. For details or assistance in determining eligibility, borrowers should contact a qualified tax adviser or the Internal Revenue Service. A good place to start is the IRS ~~W~~website at www.irs.gov. (#77.6)



- Married couples are allowed to consolidate their loans under a single spousal consolidation loans. However, borrowers are generally advised **NOT** to jointly consolidate their loans. This is because the husband and wife become jointly and severally liable for repaying the entire consolidation balance, even in the event of divorce or the death or total and permanent disability of a spouse. (#77.7)



Note: Information between **/* and **/****/ has been taken directly from <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/closedschool/index.html>

Discharges (78) (#78.1)

/**

You may be able to have your student loan* debt reduced or discharged if your school ... (#78.2)

- Closed (#78.2.1)
- Owes you a refund, (#78.2.2)
- Forged your signature, or (#78.2.3)
- Certified your loan even though you didn't have the ability to benefit from the coursework. (#78.2.4)

*Applies to FSA loans made on or after January 1, 1986. FSA loans include **Federal Perkins Loans, Stafford, PLUS, and Consolidation Loans**. Except for Perkins, these loans are made through the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans Program or the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL) (formerly known as the Guaranteed Student Loan Program). (#78.2.5)

What circumstances qualify for a loan discharge? (#78.3)

- **You didn't have the "ability to benefit" from the coursework ...** (#78.3.1)
The loan can be discharged if the school admitted you based on your ability to benefit from the training, but you weren't properly tested to measure that ability or failed the test. You may also be eligible for this type of discharge if you did not meet the physical or legal requirements of your state to enroll in the program or work in the career for which you were training, regardless of whether you had a high school diploma or GED. (#78.3.2)

If you had a high school diploma or GED when you enrolled in the program, you are ineligible for this discharge because those documents are sufficient to establish your ability to benefit from further training after high school. *You may not be eligible for a discharge if you received a GED before you completed your program of study at the college or career school or you completed a developmental or remedial program at the school.* (#78.3.3)

- **Your signature was forged on the loan documents ...** (#78.4)
If you believed that someone forged your signature on the loan application, promissory note, or authorization for electronic fund transfer, you must attach five different samples of your signature to your application for the loan discharge. At least two of the samples must be on documents that are clearly dated within a year before or after the date of the contested signature. *You may not be eligible if the loan was used to pay your school charges for the portion of the program of study you completed (whether the payment was by a credit to your account or by cash or check).* (#78.4.1)
- **The school owes you a refund** (#78.5)
You may also qualify for partial discharge of an FFEL or Direct Loan if your school failed to pay a tuition refund required under federal law. Only the amount of the unpaid refund will be discharged. You may qualify for this refund whether the school is closed or opened. (#78.5.1)

Can my loan be discharged because I wasn't satisfied with the school's services? (#78.6)

Your loan cannot be discharged solely because you believe that the school : (#78.6.1)

- provided poor training or had unqualified instructors or inadequate equipment, (#78.6.2)
- did not provide job placement or other services that it promised, or (#78.6.3)

- engaged in fraudulent activities (other than falsely certifying the loan). (#78.6.4)

Also, a loan discharge cannot be granted because you attended an ineligible program of study offered by the school. There is no authority for the discharge of your loan based on any of these reasons. The state licensing and accrediting agencies for the school have the responsibility for the quality of educational services that the school provides. The U.S. Department of Education does not endorse the school's educational programs or guarantee that the school will deliver the services for which a student contracted. (#78.6.5)

How do I apply for a loan discharge? (#78.7)

If the holder of your loan learns that a school closed, that organization will send you a loan discharge application. If you haven't received the discharge application, you may request one by contacting the organization that holds your loan. Or you can get a copy of the loan discharge application ~~on the Department's website at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DCS/repay/cancel/index.html>~~ [here](#). If you're not sure who holds your loan, you can contact our Federal Student Aid Information Center to find out (call 1-800-4-FED-AID). ([links to Portal Publications section](#)) (#78.7.1)

Am I required to make payments on the loan while the discharge application is being reviewed? (#78.8)

Yes. While waiting for a decision about whether you qualify for a loan discharge, you should continue to make payments on your loan to prevent the loan from going into default or accruing additional interest, unless you are granted a forbearance (see next paragraph). When you received your loan, you signed an a legally-binding agreement to repay that loan. Failure to honor that agreement may result in enforcement action against you, including a lawsuit, garnishment of your wages, offset by the of your federal income tax refund, an adverse credit record, and loss of eligibility to receive financial aid to attend other schools. (#78.8.1)

If you submit an application that appears to make you eligible for a loan discharge, the holder of your loan should grant forbearance until a decision is made on your application. If a forbearance is granted, no one is permitted to collect on your loan until the holder of your note determines whether you are eligible for a loan discharge. (#78.8.2)

What happens if my application for discharge is approved? (#78.9)

If you qualify for a *complete* discharge of your loan, you are no longer obligated to make any payments on the loan. The holder of the promissory note will refund to you all monies that you paid on the loan, including any late charges and collection fees. In addition, the holder of the loan will delete any adverse credit record related to a default on the loan, and no tax refund offset or wage garnishment will take place to collect the loan. If the loan was in default, the discharge erases the default status—if you have no other defaulted loans, you regain eligibility for federal student aid. (Note that only a *portion* of your loan will be cancelled for an unpaid refund and you will responsible for paying the remaining amount on the loan.) (#78.9.1)

What can I do if my discharge application is denied? (#78.10)

- **For a closed school or unpaid refund discharge: (#78.10.1)**
The holder of your loan makes the final decision on whether to discharge the loan—that decision cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education. (#78.10.2)
- **For a false certification discharge: (#78.10.3)**
You may ask the Department to review that denial. (#78.10.4)



You should ask the holder of the loan to arrange reasonable and affordable payments on your loan. If your loan is in default, ask about loan rehabilitation and loan consolidation. See our [Guide to Defaulted Student Loans](#) for more information. You should also explore the following options: (#78.11)

- Contact the state licensing agency and ask if there is a tuition recovery fund or performance bond that will cover your damages based on the school closure. (#78.11.1)
- If the school filed bankruptcy, you should file a claim for your loss in the bankruptcy proceeding. You may also consult an attorney about any options you may have through the court system.

(Link to <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DCS/>) (#78.11.2)

***/



XAP Tools (79)

[Appendix A: College Savings Calculator](#)

[Appendix B: Self Assessment](#)

[Appendix C: Student Planner](#)

[Appendix D: College Finder](#)

[Appendix E: College Matching Wizard](#)

[E.1 College Matching Wizard Pop up Windows](#)

[Appendix F : Campus Tours](#)

[Appendix G: Online Applications](#)

[Appendix H: Financial Aid Wizard](#)

[Appendix I: Scholarship Search](#)

[Appendix J: Career Finder](#)