

# What is FAFSA and Do I Need to Apply?

Financial Aid is based on a family's ability to pay in relation to the college's tuition. All colleges require completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - even if you don't think you will qualify (the schools want to ensure that your income is from legitimate sources :).

This form should be submitted on-line as soon on or after October 1 (PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE) of the senior year as possible. You can download/complete the previous year's form from the FAFSA website and use it to get a general idea of what information is needed and approximately how much aid can be expected. The new form will not be posted until midnight on September 30.

Most colleges have a priority deadline for FAFSA of February 15. The closer to October 1 that this is completed, the greater your chances for receiving available grant money, as it is assigned on a first-come/ first-served basis.

Your financial-aid package will be composed of three possible sources:

- 1) scholarships and grants, which do not need to be paid back
- 2) loans
- 3) work study

Financial-aid packages are typically not included with the “Letter of Acceptance.” They will follow several weeks to months later. The most important thing to keep in mind when applying for aid is the exact list of financial-aid requirements for each college or university and to carefully read/follow their instructions.

For complete information and to get registered, go to the FAFSA website (<https://fafsa.ed.gov> – not "org," as that is a commercial website).