

Financial Aid

What exactly is Financial Aid?

Financial aid is the money you and your family can get for educational expenses. It's designed to supplement the amount you and your family contribute. There are four basic types of financial aid: Grants, Scholarships, Work Study and Loans.

- Grants – awarded based on need; you do not have to repay a grant.
- Scholarships – awarded on special ability, academic achievement, religious affiliation, ethnic background, special interest, or random drawing; you do not have to repay a scholarship.
- Work Study – a federal program offering part-time jobs both on and off campus. You don't repay work study funds because you're trading work for financial aid.
- Education Loans – funds borrowed from a financial institution or the federal government. You must repay education loans usually with interest.

How to get started:

- File a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) in January of the senior year. This establishes eligibility for grants and loans from the federal and state government such as Cal-Grants. Eligibility for this money is based primarily on parents' income and assets in the year prior to the student's freshman year in college.
**You have nothing to lose by filing the FAFSA – it's free. Even if your family has a middle to high income don't rule yourself out. Factors other than income are weighed when calculating need. For instance an applicant may have siblings who are also in college, parents who are older, or the family may have had a recent financial setback. Also, most colleges use FAFSA information to award their financial aid.*
- The due date for the FAFSA is generally March 2nd.
- Private schools often have their own need-base methodology that is separate from the FAFSA. Contact colleges in the fall of the senior year for this information.

You can complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov . ***Note: This is the official FAFSA website. Do not go to a .com Web site. If you go to a .com site, you will probably be asked to pay to submit the FAFSA. Remember, the first F in "FAFSA" stands for "free" – so use the official government site to submit your application.***

- ❖ The College & Career Center will electronically file GPA verifications for Cal-Grants. In order for this process to be successful please make sure the correct student's Social Security is in our school data base. Check with the Career Center to make sure this information is entered. .

PIN Information

Federal Student Aid requires you (and a parent if you are a dependent student) to sign your FAFSA, as well as any corrections that you make to your FAFSA, each year. Using a PIN to sign your forms electronically is by far the fastest and most reliable way.

If you or your parents do not already have a PIN, we encourage you to apply for one. You can apply for a PIN while completing a FAFSA on the Web application, or you can go to the Federal Student Aid PIN Web site at www.pin.ed.gov to apply.

Your FAFSA and Cal Grant will need to be renewed every year. Save your PIN numbers.

What Information Will You Need to Correctly Fill Out the FAFSA?

You'll need accurate records for your income (and your family's income) earned in the year prior to when you will start school. Therefore, for the 2012-2013 school year, you will need 2011 information.

You will need to refer to:

- Your Social Security card and driver's license
- W-2 Forms or other records of income earned
- Your (and your spouse's, if you're married) Federal Income Tax Return
- Your parents' Federal Income Tax Return, if you are a dependent student
- Records of other untaxed income received such as welfare benefits, Social Security benefits, TANF or ADC, veteran's benefits, or military or clergy allowances
- Current bank statements and records of stocks, bonds, and other investments
- Business or farm records, if applicable
- Your permanent resident card (if you are not a U.S. citizen)

FINANCIAL AID FILING DEADLINE

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2012

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

FAFSA ON THE WEB Email: federalstudentaidcustomerservice@ed.gov	(800) 433-3243
CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION	(916) 526-7590
U. C. DAVIS FINANCIAL AID OFFICE	(530) 752-2390
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SACRAMENTO FINANCIAL AID OFFICE	(916) 278-6554
SIERRA COLLEGE FINANCIAL SERVICES OFFICE	(916) 660-7310