



senior year financial aid checklist

Staying organized while planning for college can make a big difference. Use the below checklist as a guide for keeping on top of financial aid. Remember, deadlines for schools vary and the amount and type of aid you receive will depend on the funding your school has available.

August - December

- Begin searching for scholarships. Thousands of scholarship opportunities are available to students. Plus, scholarships don't need to be repaid. Check with your guidance office on where to look for scholarships and contact community organizations, churches and local businesses. Many of these groups sponsor scholarships. There are also free scholarship search tools on the internet. Remember, you don't have to pay someone to find scholarships for you. There are many tools available that don't require you to pay a fee.

January

- Complete the FAFSA as early as possible but not prior to January 1. Information from your taxes will help determine how much your family will need to contribute to education costs. If your school's filing deadline is prior to your ability to file your taxes, submit the FAFSA form with estimated income information. You can revise this information later.
- If required by your school, file the CSS PROFILE. Certain schools use this form to determine your eligibility for institutional aid.

February - March

- You should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) two to three weeks after filing the FAFSA. The SAR outlines the amount of money your family will be expected to contribute to education costs. This cost is referred to as your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). EFC is determined by student and parent income, assets, and savings, family size, number of children attending college, and age of older parent. The difference between the Cost of Attendance (COA) at a school and your EFC is known as your financial need or eligibility.
- Many schools require you to submit supplemental financial aid forms in addition to the FAFSA (and PROFILE, if applicable) in order to be eligible for financial aid. Each school's deadlines vary, so make sure to pay close attention.

April - May

- Financial Aid Award Letters from your prospective schools will start arriving soon. Your financial aid package will outline the school's Cost of Attendance (COA), which estimates a student's annual expenses such as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and other personal expenses. The package will also summarize the amount and type of aid you are receiving. This may include grants, scholarships, work study, and loans.

June - July

- If your family needs additional funds to help cover the cost of education, apply for PLUS loans (for parents), unsubsidized Stafford loans (for students) and/or private loans. AAA offers discounted education loans to members.