

PREPARING FOR FINANCIAL AID SEASON

Government Financial Aid

- ☐ Apply to **FAFSA**. *This should be done before the new year!*
 - Review your completed FAFSA with an expert before submitting (ie: Ocean Discovery, CAC, TRiO).
 - Make sure that transcript, college applications, and FAFSA application all report **the exact same NAME and SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER** (as recorded on your social security card).
 - Confirm you have received a response from FAFSA, called the **Student Aid Report (SAR)**.
 - Identify your **estimated family contribution (EFC)**.
 - Confirm that all the schools applied to are listed in your FAFSA application. If a school is missing, add it.
 - If you've reached the max number of schools you can include, omit one and replace it with the missing school, *only after you have received your SAR*.
- ☐ Create your **Web Grants 4 Students** account (Cal Grant award). Can only be done after FAFSA is submitted.
 - Confirm you have received a preliminary award from CalGrant, called the **California Aid Report (CAR)**.
- ☐ Determine if schools require **anything in addition to the FAFSA** for students to be considered for financial aid. (Example: private schools often require the **CSS Profile**)
- ☐ For community college, the main source of financial aid should come from the **California College Promise Scholarship**.

Scholarships

- ☐ Determine **next meeting** time with your mentor.
 - Discuss how often pair would like to meet for scholarship support.
- ☐ Estimate the cost schools will expect families to pay based on student's **EFC** and school's **net price calculator** (found on school website).
- ☐ **Create expectations** together about scholarships, how many you want to accomplish and timeline of due dates.
 - In general, students want to gain about **\$10,000 in scholarships** to make their first-year college transition smooth. That means they should aim to submit **at least 20 scholarships**.
- ☐ **Identify at least 1 scholarship** you would like to work on in January.
 - Consider criteria (as targeted as possible for small applicant pools):
 - Local is better than national (order of preference: Hoover, City Heights, San Diego, California, US)
 - Ethnicity/Religion/Gender
 - First-generation
 - Sports/Music
 - Community service
 - Ideal scholarships:
 - Multi-year awards
 - Cash-in-pocket or physical prizes (ie: check, laptop, car, etc.)

- ☐ Make a **San Diego Foundation Common Scholarship Application** account and browse scholarship offerings.
 - In addition to listing separate awards, The San Diego Foundation website has a number of other tools to help students, parents, and mentors navigate the scholarships process.
 - Although a “common” scholarship, must submit pre-populated applications individually (like CSU application).
- ☐ **Contact top 3 schools** and research their available scholarships (found on school websites).
- ☐ Gather **2 letters of recommendation** (or at least already make the request) so those will be ready to go as scholarship applications open up. See below for tips on how to request a recommendation.

IMPORTANT DATES & SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

- ☐ **December**
 - San Diego Foundation Common Scholarship Application, due in February
 - San Diego County Salute to Education (with a chance to win a car), due in February
- ☐ **February**
 - Stephen Effron Scholarship opens, due in April (multi-year award)
 - MTS & Coca-Cola Laptop Scholarship, due in April (early application due in March)
- ☐ **March 2** – FAFSA priority deadline
- ☐ Hoover specific scholarships – visit Mrs. Pringle in counseling for more information
 - Teenager of the Month – new winner selected at the end of every month, cash-in-pocket prize
 - Hoover Alumni Association
 - Academy Scholarships (ie: CADES)
- ☐ CAC and WAHUPA

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

There are many **free** services on the Internet for students seeking financial aid. Samples of these services are:

- ☐ <http://collegeboard.com>
- ☐ <https://www.collegegreenlight.com/>
- ☐ <http://collegescholarships.com/>
- ☐ <http://fastweb.com/>
- ☐ <http://www.college-scholarships.com/>
- ☐ <http://www.free-4u.com/minority.htm>
- ☐ <http://www.scholarships.com/>

We do not endorse the above sites; the information is provided for reference only. Students and their families should thoroughly investigate any web site or scholarship company before using its services. **DO NOT apply to any scholarships that charge a fee.**

FINANCIAL AID DEFINITIONS

Award Letter

The document you receive from a college that explains the terms of the financial aid that the college is offering you. The information includes the types and amounts of financial aid offered, what you're expected to do to keep the award and a deadline for accepting the award.

Cost of Attendance

The total amount of college expenses before financial aid. Cost of attendance includes money spent on tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and living expenses.

CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®

A financial aid application used by more than 300 colleges, universities and private scholarship programs to award their financial aid funds.

Demonstrated Need

The difference between your expected family contribution (EFC) and the total cost of attendance for a particular college.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

A measure of your family's financial strength. States and colleges use this number to help determine your financial aid award. The EFC is calculated using information you supply about your family's financial circumstances.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The free application form you submit to apply for federal financial aid. It is required for all students seeking federal student grants, work-study programs and loans. Most colleges require it as well. The FAFSA may also qualify you for state-sponsored financial aid (ie: Cal Grant).

Grant

A kind of "gift aid" — financial aid that doesn't have to be paid back. Grants are usually awarded based on need.

Loan

Money you borrow from the government, a bank or another source. Loans need to be paid back, usually over an agreed period of time. You will most likely also have to pay interest on a loan — a fee for borrowing the money. **Subsidized:** Some federal loans are subsidized, which means the government pays the interest on the loan while you're in college.

Merit Aid

Financial aid given to students based on their personal achievements. Most scholarships are considered merit aid, as they are generally awarded for success in school, the arts, athletics or another area.

Need-Based Financial Aid

Financial aid (grants, scholarships, loans and work-study opportunities) given to students because they and their families are not able to pay the full cost of attending a certain college. This is the most common type of financial aid.

Need-Blind Admission

A policy of making college admission decisions without looking at applicants' financial circumstances. Colleges that use this policy may not offer enough financial aid to meet a student's full need.

Net Price

Net price is the true amount a student will pay for a college. In other words, it is the **full cost of attendance** at a college (including room and board, supplies, and other expenses) minus the gift aid and education tax benefits.

Net Price Calculator

An online tool that gives you a personalized estimate of what it will cost to attend a specific college. Most colleges are required by law to post a net price calculator on their websites.

Scholarship

A kind of "gift aid" — financial aid that doesn't have to be paid back. Scholarships may be awarded based on merit or partially on merit. That means they're given to students with certain qualities, such as proven academic or athletic ability.

Student Aid Report (SAR)

The report sent to your family after you submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that tells you what your expected family contribution (EFC) is.

Work-Study

A program that allows students to take a part-time campus job as part of their financial aid package. To qualify for the Federal Work-Study Program, which is funded by the government, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Some colleges have their own work-study programs.

Source: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-glossary-learn-the-lingo>

FINANCIAL AID TEMPLATE LETTERS

Tips for Requesting a Recommendation

- ☐ When asking people to write recommendations, be sure to ask those who will write you an outstanding recommendation.
- ☐ Give all of the needed information to the person from whom you request a recommendation (recommendation deadline, what the recommendation should highlight, how to submit it), and don't list this person as a reference until you have received permission to do so.
- ☐ You should waive your right to access the recommendation, if you are given the choice.
- ☐ Sometimes you will be given a copy of the recommendation. If so, keep it with your other college application materials. You may need another recommendation, and then you can ask the original letter writer to use his/her letter over again for another scholarship.
- ☐ Be sure to give the person plenty of time to write the recommendation and tell him/her how much you appreciate his/her help.
- ☐ Write a thank you note as soon as the person writing the recommendation completes it.

Sample Financial Aid Request

Date

Financial Aid Office

Name of University

Address of University

City, State, ZIP Code

Dear Financial Aid Officer:

I am interested in attending your university in the fall of 20XX. Can you please point me in the direction of any scholarships or grants that the university offers to students? Also, are there any special loans that the school offers that students should be aware of?

Please include priority or deadline dates required by your institution.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

(Signature here)

Name

Sample Thank You Letter to the Writer of a Letter of Recommendation

(Date)

(Name of Person)

(Address of Person)

(City, State, Zip)

Dear *(Name)*:

Thank you for the Letter of Recommendation you wrote for me. I really appreciate your supportive effort in writing the letter. I know there will be many applicants and the Scholarship Committee gives serious consideration to Letters of Recommendation. My sincere appreciation for your help.

Sincerely,

(Signature here)

Name