

College Financing - Getting financial help for College

In today's job market, a college degree is an extremely valuable asset. Many entry-level job openings require candidates to have at least a bachelor's degree. Luckily, the government realizes the importance of a college education. There are more federal programs to finance college than ever. Anyone can finance a college education with enough research and planning.

Choosing the Right University for You

When you consider universities, try to keep your options open. Consider attending a cheaper public university along with the big-name schools that interest you. A successful stint at a public university will ultimately help you just as much as a degree from a more expensive university.

Also consider spending part of your university career at a much less expensive community college. This is a great way to save up for university tuition. And if your academic credentials are less than stellar after high school, you can boost them with success at a community college. You could then attend a better university and become eligible for more scholarships and better financial aid.

The Financial Aid Process

The first step towards gaining financial aid is filling out the **Free Application for Student Assistance (FAFSA)**. You can fill out the FAFSA form online [here](#).

[Free Application for Student Assistance form](#)

The FAFSA determines how much student aid you qualify for. It takes into account factors such as your available funds and your financial need.

After you send in your completed FAFSA, you will receive your **Student Aid Report (SAR)**. Your SAR lists how much financial assistance you qualify to receive from the government and your **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**, or how much money your family will be expected to provide. Your university then tries to make up the difference between your SAR and EFC by creating your financial

aid package. It is extremely important to file your FAFSA as early as possible. University aid is limited, and those who file early are likelier to get more assistance.

Scholarships

The key to an effective scholarship search is diligence. Use every resource at your disposal to find scholarships. Then apply to as many as possible. Even if you do not win a scholarship worth a lot of money, you could benefit just as much from winning several smaller ones. Pay special attention to local scholarships because you will stand a better chance of winning them.

There are a number of ways to go about your search. Try looking on the internet, using sites such as www.fastweb.com and www.brokescholar.com. You can also try looking through scholarship directory books like the College Board's Scholarship Handbook.

Be sure to be mindful of scholarship scams. Be suspicious of scholarship programs that require an application fee or programs that guarantee you will be awarded tuition. **Never send your personal information, like your bank account number or social security number, to a scholarship program.**

Conclusion

Your college education is an invaluable investment in your future. However, this does not mean that you should overwhelm yourself with debt in order to attend college. Educate yourself. Be sure to find the right school for you. Also work hard to secure the loans and awards you will need. All your effort will be rewarded several times over.