

# Financial Aid

**Financial Aid** consists of grants, loans, employment opportunities, and scholarships to help students finance a college education. Financial aid resources are intended to supplement, not replace, the financial resources of the family.

**Merit-Based Financial Aid** is awarded in recognition of special skills, talents, and/or academic ability.

**Need-Based Financial Aid** is established by specific eligibility criteria based on the difference between cost of college attendance and the family's ability to pay.

In order to apply for financial aid, students and parents will need to complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. The earliest you can submit your FAFSA form is January 1, 2012.

Completing FAFSA on the Internet is recommended and much faster.

1. The first step to completing the FAFSA on the web is to request a PIN number, which is used to electronically "sign" your name. You can go to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) for the PIN number. Students and a parent need a pin number.
2. Then students and parents should use the "FAFSA on the Web" worksheet to prepare before going online to apply. These worksheets are available in the counselor's office.
3. Next go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to complete and submit the FAFSA. If you supply an email address, you will receive a link to your Student Aid Report (SAR) in one to five days. If you do not supply an email address, you will receive a SAR Information Acknowledgement within two weeks.

Remember to print copies of all your information including the FAFSA form and the SAR so you may readily access them.

All schools you list on the FAFSA form will receive your financial information. The Financial aid office will use the Expected Family contribution (EFC) to determine how much federal student aid you can get. They will then notify you of your financial aid package for that specific school.

The schools you are applying to may also have campus-based aid programs, so check with them about applications and deadlines. Remember, if you do not meet deadlines you will miss out on aid for your education.

Below are some web-sites and phone numbers that are useful in the financial aid process:

- Resources that cover full range of financial aid topics  
[www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)
- Finding out about Financial Aid [www.ed.gov/prog\\_infor/FSA/FAFSA](http://www.ed.gov/prog_infor/FSA/FAFSA)  
or 1-800-4-FED-AID
- Financial Aid information page [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)
- Texas Financial Aid Information Center [www.collegefortexans.com](http://www.collegefortexans.com) or  
1-877-782-7322