THE FINANCIAL AID PROCESS
Finding financial aid can seem overwhelming when you’re trying to get ready for college or career school. The U.S. Department of Education’s office of Federal Student Aid is here to help you get the money you need to pay for your education.

**PREPARATION**
Scholarships and state aid can help cover the cost of college or career school, but you may find yourself in need of federal assistance.

Many states have college funding programs. Ask a guidance counselor or your college’s financial aid office for more information.

**SAVINGS**
Look for scholarships through your state or career school as well as national and community organizations.

**FAFSA**
The FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and is the only way to apply for federal student aid. The schools you list on your application will see FAFSA information to evaluate your financial need and determine how much federal aid you are eligible to receive. Many states and colleges also use information from the FAFSA to provide their own financial aid.

Complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.gov. Make sure to fill it out and submit the FAFSA each year you are in college.

Each January, the FAFSA is available for the upcoming school year. It is best to fill it out as early as you can because some aid is first come, first served.

When you complete the FAFSA, you’ll need to provide personal and tax information. If you’ve filed your taxes already, you may be able to automatically retrieve the information from the IRS. If you haven’t, just estimate your tax information and update it later.

After you submit your FAFSA, you’ll receive your Student Aid Report (SAR). Your SAR summarizes the information on your FAFSA. Review it and make corrections if needed.

Your FAFSA helps your school determine the types of federal student aid you are eligible to receive.

**TYPES OF FEDERAL STUDENT AID**
As the largest provider of financial aid, the U.S. Department of Education’s office of Federal Student Aid provides grants, loans, and work-study funds.

**AWARD**
Your award letter explains the combination of federal grants, loans, and work-study opportunities being offered. Your letter also contains state and institutional aid. If you receive award letters from multiple colleges or career schools, you should compare them and decide which school works best for you.

**COLLEGE**
Early every fall, millions of new students attend college or career school as the first time. Your college or career school has a financial aid office to help guide you through the process.

**BEYOND EDUCATION**
**WORKFORCE**
When you have completed your education and are Federal Student Aid helps you start your career. It’s setting the foundation for a bright future and success in the workforce.

**REPAYMENT**
Once you leave school, you will need to repay your student loans. Contact your loan servicer to discuss your repayment options.

FederalStudentAid.gov

StudentAid.gov