

# **Blueprint for Success.®**

## **The Power of Working Together**

### **Education Funding Organization**

1970 West Old Magee Trail, Suite 9201  
Oro Valley, AZ 85704

**Phone: 800.743.4731**

**Fax: 888.743.4731**

**Read this Book often – It will change your life forever.**

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## **Special Thanks**

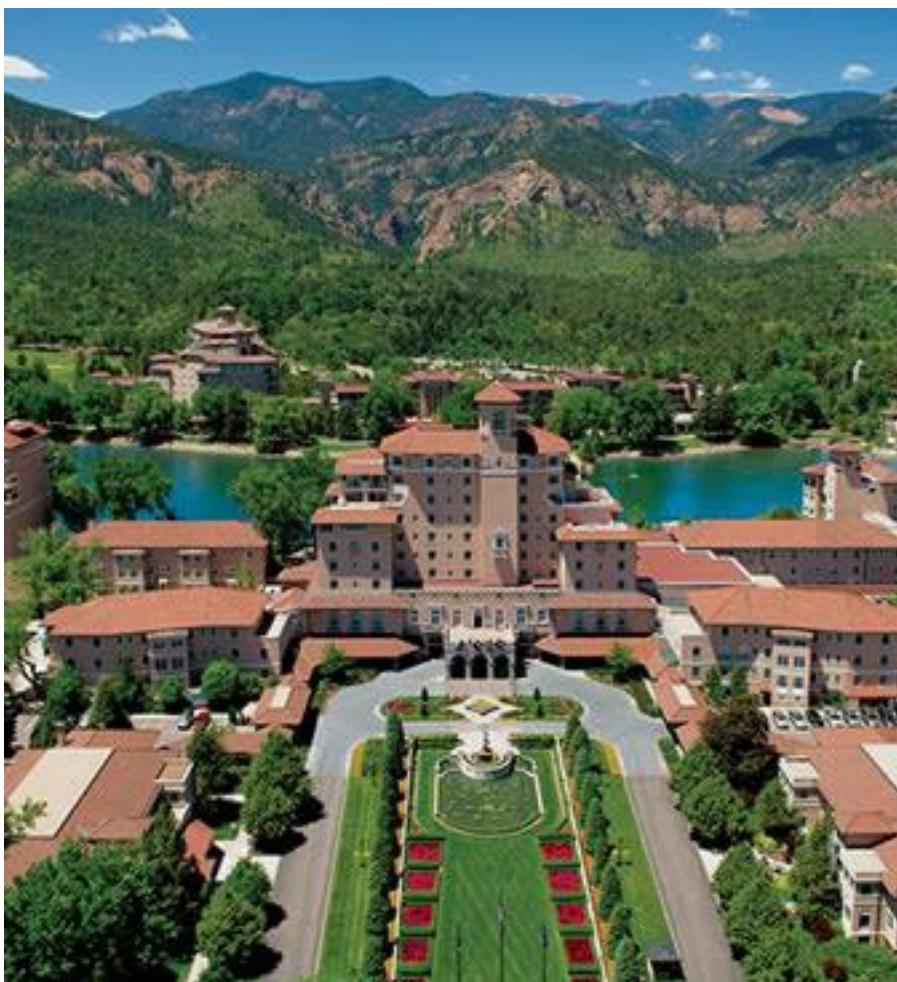
To Our Members and Contributors:

We would like to extend our warm and heartfelt thanks to the hundreds of parents, students, educators, and professionals who have contributed to this award-winning publication. We wish to extend special thanks to our community partners and volunteers whose leadership and dedication have helped our organization grow and prosper.

The years of research and experience are why the *Power of Working Together* has made the college planning and completion process successful for our participants.

Board Members  
Education Funding Organization Team

# Forward



## **Education Funding Founded in 1980**

A group of five families founded us in 1980. The concept and vision began in 1975 through the personal encouragement of Russell Thayer Tutt, Sr. of the [\*\*El Pomar\*\*](#) Foundation of Colorado. With the research and support of a group of interns from Colorado College in the late 1970's, Education Funding Organization makes available valuable information about the process of college selection, application and endowment funding process.

Understanding the process is the first step to a successful admission to the school of your choice. Let us show you every step along the way.

# Blueprint for Success.®

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## **College Endowment Funds**

Colleges earn millions of dollars each year. They generate this income not only through tuition and fees but also through investments. This investment income is not dependent upon their student population. The monies used to make these investments come from gifts, known as endowments, given by alumni and corporations.

The government gives each participant involved in the endowment process special treatment. The persons or companies donating monies may write off the donations on their taxes. In addition, the colleges do not pay taxes on the income they earn from these tax-deductible gifts. As a result, these endowment coffers often become substantial and the college often has discretion on how these funds are used.

Recent information obtained from required filings of the colleges themselves reveals the size of these funds. The following page includes a portion of this information. These figures assume NO contribution from federal funding sources. Colleges control most of the monies available for financial aid—\$42 to \$60 BILLION per year. Colleges use these monies to recruit students that satisfy their academic and demographic requirements.

Through the *Power of Working Together*, you can position yourself to negotiate successfully your share of these monies. Surprisingly, private colleges can cost less than public schools if you know how to approach them.

We have served thousands of families over three decades. We look forward to serving you as well. We will help you connect with and secure funding from the colleges most suited to meet your education goals and objectives.

## **The Power of Working Together**

Rank	Institution	FY 2018 endowment value (in 1,000s)	FY 2017 endowment value (in 1,000s)	One-year change in market
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## Chronicles on Higher Education 2017-2018 \* Values of Endowment Funds

1.	Harvard U.	\$38,303,383	\$36,021,516	6.3%
2.	U. of Texas system	\$30,886,018	\$26,535,095	16.4%
3.	Yale U.	\$29,351,100	\$27,176,100	8.0%
4.	Stanford U.	\$26,464,912	\$24,784,943	6.8%
5.	Princeton U.	\$25,917,199	\$23,812,241	8.8%
6.	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	\$16,529,432	\$14,967,983	10.4%
7.	U. of Pennsylvania	\$13,777,441	\$12,213,202	12.8%
8.	Texas A&M U. system and foundations	\$13,524,947	\$11,556,260	17.0%
9.	U. of Michigan (all campuses)	\$11,901,760	\$10,936,014	8.8%
10.	Northwestern U.	\$11,087,659	\$10,436,692	6.2%
11.	U. of California	\$11,008,035	\$9,638,705	14.2%
12.	Columbia U.	\$10,869,245	\$9,996,596	8.7%
13.	U. of Notre Dame	\$10,727,653	\$9,352,376	14.7%
14.	Duke U.	\$8,524,846	\$7,911,175	7.8%
15.	U. of Chicago	\$7,928,485	\$7,523,720	5.4%
16.	Washington U. in St. Louis	\$7,594,159	\$7,130,514	6.5%
17.	Emory U.	\$7,292,165	\$6,905,465	5.6%
18.	Cornell U.	\$7,230,291	\$6,757,750	7.0%
19.	U. of Virginia	\$6,953,380	\$6,393,561	8.8%
20.	Rice U.	\$6,277,506	\$5,814,444	8.0%
21.	U. of Southern California	\$5,544,267	\$5,130,520	8.1%
22.	Dartmouth College	\$5,494,203	\$4,956,494	10.8%
23.	Ohio State U.	\$5,211,434	\$4,253,459	22.5%
24.	Vanderbilt U.	\$4,608,461	\$4,136,465	11.4%
25.	Johns Hopkins U.	\$4,325,020	\$3,844,918	12.5%
26.	New York U.	\$4,266,000	\$3,992,000	6.9%
27.	Pennsylvania State U. (all campuses)	\$4,264,222	\$3,990,781	6.9%
28.	U. of Pittsburgh (all campuses)	\$4,200,206	\$3,945,687	6.5%
29.	U. of Minnesota and Foundation	\$3,717,476	\$3,493,641	6.4%
30.	Brown U.	\$3,603,848	\$3,245,531	11.0%
31.	U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and foundations	\$3,432,911	\$3,027,227	13.4%
32.	U. of Wisconsin Foundation	\$2,985,251	\$2,746,470	8.7%
33.	Michigan State U.	\$2,907,967	\$2,682,869	8.4%
34.	California Institute of Technology	\$2,879,493	\$2,606,505	10.5%
35.	U. of Washington	\$2,764,166	\$2,529,250	9.3%
36.	Williams College	\$2,749,653	\$2,508,773	9.6%
37.	U. of Illinois and Foundation	\$2,623,389	\$2,441,268	7.5%
38.	Purdue U. (all campuses)-Purdue Research Foundation	\$2,523,770	\$2,424,872	4.1%
39.	U. of California at Los Angeles Foundation	\$2,522,638	\$2,062,573	22.3%
40.	U. of Richmond	\$2,511,584	\$2,373,506	5.8%
41.	Boston College	\$2,477,700	\$2,317,300	6.9%
42.	Indiana U. (all campuses) and Foundation	\$2,397,369	\$2,229,361	7.5%
43.	Carnegie Mellon U.	\$2,385,986	\$2,154,099	10.8%
44.	Amherst College	\$2,377,537	\$2,248,141	5.8%
45.	Pomona College	\$2,273,707	\$2,167,019	4.9%
46.	U. of Rochester	\$2,257,557	\$2,121,390	6.4%
47.	Boston U.	\$2,197,808	\$1,957,021	12.3%
48.	Rockefeller U.	\$2,194,255	\$2,049,395	7.1%
49.	Swarthmore College	\$2,115,768	\$1,955,533	8.2%
50.	Wellesley College	\$2,105,212	\$1,930,752	9.0%

Source: [2018 Nacubo-Commonfund Study of Endowments](#)

Rank	Institution	FY 2018 endowment value (in 1,000s)	FY 2017 endowment value (in 1,000s)	One-year change in market
51.	Georgia Institute of Technology and related foundations	\$2,091,110	\$1,920,332	8.9%
52.	Grinnell College	\$1,991,605	\$1,871,046	6.4%
53.	Virginia Commonwealth U.	\$1,951,337	\$1,843,001	5.9%
54.	U. of California at Berkeley Foundation	\$1,944,306	\$1,794,602	8.3%
55.	U. of Toronto	\$1,925,509	\$1,829,893	5.2%
56.	Case Western Reserve U.	\$1,886,761	\$1,798,790	4.9%
57.	Smith College	\$1,875,093	\$1,767,466	6.1%
58.	Tufts U.	\$1,845,956	\$1,738,706	6.2%
59.	George Washington U.	\$1,798,810	\$1,729,147	4.0%
60.	Georgetown U.	\$1,769,557	\$1,661,745	6.5%
61.	Kansas University Endowment Association (U. of Kansas)	\$1,740,763	\$1,612,337	8.0%
62.	U. of Oklahoma (all campuses)	\$1,735,527	\$1,646,184	5.4%
63.	U. of Florida Foundation	\$1,734,661	\$1,612,003	7.6%
64.	U. of Nebraska system	\$1,723,230	\$1,616,900	6.6%
65.	U. of Missouri system	\$1,675,019	\$1,537,478	8.9%
66.	U. of California at San Francisco	\$1,664,471	\$1,306,564	27.4%
67.	Southern Methodist U.	\$1,632,763	\$1,514,607	7.8%
68.	Bowdoin College	\$1,628,165	\$1,455,909	11.8%
69.	Texas Christian U.	\$1,627,790	\$1,520,622	7.0%
70.	Washington and Lee U.	\$1,603,114	\$1,547,135	3.6%
71.	U. of Iowa and its Center for Advancement	\$1,500,456	\$1,397,658	7.4%
72.	U. of British Columbia	\$1,477,886	\$1,269,851	16.4%
73.	U. of Alabama system	\$1,451,750	\$1,351,160	7.4%
74.	Liberty U.	\$1,432,964	\$1,289,996	11.1%
75.	U. of Delaware	\$1,413,197	\$1,364,057	3.6%
76.	Tulane U.	\$1,384,371	\$1,288,374	7.5%
77.	U. of Cincinnati	\$1,367,426	\$1,282,824	6.6%
78.	U. of Kentucky	\$1,361,246	\$1,285,114	5.9%
79.	U. of Colorado Foundation	\$1,360,521	\$1,220,204	11.5%
80.	Lehigh U.	\$1,353,116	\$1,278,120	5.9%
81.	Syracuse U.	\$1,338,287	\$1,258,728	6.3%
82.	Rutgers, the State U. of New Jersey	\$1,330,011	\$1,220,265	9.0%
83.	Wake Forest U.	\$1,329,255	\$1,205,323	10.3%
84.	Baylor U.	\$1,312,753	\$1,230,958	6.6%
85.	Texas Tech U. system	\$1,306,551	\$1,261,576	3.6%
86.	U. of Tennessee	\$1,298,212	\$1,214,619	6.9%
87.	University System of Maryland Foundation	\$1,297,783	\$1,099,864	18.0%
88.	North Carolina State U. and related foundations	\$1,293,743	\$1,122,899	15.2%
89.	Trinity U.	\$1,292,095	\$1,194,250	8.2%
90.	U. of Georgia and related foundations	\$1,274,343	\$1,151,904	10.6%
91.	Baylor College of Medicine	\$1,272,276	\$1,166,562	9.1%
92.	McGill U. (Montreal)	\$1,256,358	\$1,230,605	2.1%
93.	Saint Louis U.	\$1,222,688	\$1,146,865	6.6%
94.	U. of Arkansas Foundation	\$1,199,303	\$996,019	20.4%
95.	Berea College	\$1,192,078	\$1,150,360	3.6%
96.	U. of Utah	\$1,186,952	\$1,127,686	5.3%
97.	Virginia Tech Foundation	\$1,146,055	\$995,807	15.1%
98.	Middlebury College	\$1,124,144	\$1,073,976	4.7%
99.	Princeton Theological Seminary	\$1,119,689	\$1,066,351	5.0%
100.	U. of Tulsa	\$1,093,042	\$1,026,476	6.5%

Source: [2018 Nacubo-Commonfund Study of Endowments](#)

Rank	Institution	FY 2018 endowment value (in 1,000s)	FY 2017 endowment value (in 1,000s)	One-yea change i market
101.	U. of Alberta	\$1,090,429	\$1,003,725	8.6%
102.	Vassar College	\$1,082,831	\$1,002,570	8.0%
103.	Iowa State U. and Foundation	\$1,063,772	\$838,871	26.8%
104.	Brandeis U.	\$1,046,386	\$976,887	7.1%
105.	Washington State U.	\$1,024,067	\$974,029	5.1%
106.	U. of Miami	\$1,021,508	\$948,579	7.7%
107.	Wesleyan U. (Conn.)	\$990,039	\$897,800	10.3%
108.	Carnegie Institution of Washington	\$983,966	\$967,689	1.7%
109.	Santa Clara U.	\$979,248	\$905,858	8.1%
110.	Berry College	\$976,754	\$959,996	1.7%
111.	U. of California at Irvine Foundation	\$972,186	\$869,491	11.8%
112.	Hamilton College (N.Y.)	\$964,170	\$905,759	6.4%
113.	Oklahoma State U. Foundation	\$962,861	\$903,415	6.6%
114.	U. of Arizona and Foundation	\$959,632	\$843,529	13.8%
115.	U. of Houston system	\$942,793	\$962,297	-2.0%
116.	College of William & Mary and foundations	\$935,544	\$874,081	7.0%
117.	Colgate U.	\$934,827	\$881,323	6.1%
118.	Medical College of Wisconsin	\$930,961	\$875,817	6.3%
119.	Loma Linda U.	\$928,084	\$848,070	9.4%
120.	Rochester Institute of Technology	\$922,463	\$842,305	9.5%
121.	U. of Oregon Foundation	\$912,512	\$828,459	10.1%
122.	Oberlin College	\$905,947	\$838,199	8.1%
123.	Bryn Mawr College	\$893,464	\$845,864	5.6%
124.	Pepperdine U.	\$891,846	\$861,613	3.5%
125.	Louisiana State U. system (all campuses)	\$886,387	\$835,176	6.1%
126.	Carleton College	\$878,494	\$828,168	6.1%
127.	U. of Massachusetts Foundation	\$871,950	\$819,687	6.4%
128.	Bucknell U.	\$851,309	\$800,765	6.3%
129.	Denison U.	\$836,357	\$782,544	6.9%
130.	Claremont McKenna College	\$835,306	\$784,363	6.5%
131.	Northeastern U.	\$831,129	\$778,948	6.7%
132.	Lafayette College	\$830,637	\$790,307	5.1%
133.	Colby College	\$828,013	\$775,129	6.8%
134.	Queen's U. (Ontario)	\$827,855	\$789,167	4.9%
135.	Davidson College	\$821,776	\$730,399	12.5%
136.	U. of South Carolina and affiliated foundations	\$809,937	\$770,782	5.1%
137.	College of the Holy Cross	\$784,264	\$749,737	4.6%
138.	Drexel U.	\$779,762	\$707,650	10.2%
139.	Auburn U. and Foundation	\$778,163	\$738,018	5.4%
140.	Mount Holyoke College	\$777,739	\$729,438	6.6%
141.	University System of New Hampshire and Foundation	\$776,795	\$726,365	6.9%
142.	Macalester College	\$767,522	\$747,748	2.6%
143.	Colorado College	\$765,230	\$743,175	3.0%
144.	U. of Denver	\$761,952	\$711,346	7.1%
145.	St. John's U. (N.Y.)	\$756,099	\$716,485	5.5%
146.	Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Oregon Health & Science U. Foundation and Doernbecher Children's Hospital Foundation	\$747,707	\$711,415	5.1%
147.	Clemson U. Foundation	\$745,744	\$655,992	13.7%
148.	U. of California at San Diego Foundation	\$741,802	\$682,736	8.7%
149.	American U. of Beirut	\$738,174	\$621,440	18.8%
150.		\$731,979	\$604,617	21.1%

Source: [2018 Nacubo-Commonfund Study of Endowments](#)

NACUBO Endowment Study

## THE COLLEGE PROCESS

Unknown to parents and students, colleges accept more students than they can admit. Assume a college wants to admit 500 freshmen. About one-third of the freshmen a college accepts will eventually enroll. Therefore, every year the school must accept 1,500 applicants to enroll 500 freshmen. After the school notifies the 1,500 accepted applicants, the college uses financial aid packages to try to entice the 500 students that the college wants the most.

Colleges use a process to determine not only which student is accepted but also which student receives financial aid. This process prioritizes students through a scoring used to rate applicants. Every college has its own scoring system. Some use a numbered scale. Others use letter grades. It is important to note that colleges do keep score. Each application has different components; each component has its own rating or value. The values of the components are added together to create a composite score. This score often determines the applicant's fate. If your total score is above a certain level, you are automatically accepted. If your score is too low, you are declined admission. Most students fall in the middle; as such, their applications proceed to the admissions committee for review. The higher you place on the college's priority list, the more likely you are to receive funding offers. This process also tracks how thousands of applications received annually compare to prior admissions cycles.

*Recruiting to a class* refers to the admissions process that strives to maintain diversity in the student body. This diversity can take many forms—racial, ethnic, geographic, or economic—depending on the admissions standards set by any particular college. For example, a college may have a gender-balance policy that states that neither sex can be more than 58 percent of the student body. Admissions officers must meet this standard each year. Another admissions standard may be to admit a certain percentage of low-need students. When a university aims to increase its low-need students, admissions officers recruit students from families with higher annual incomes. Because these students will not require federal funding to attend college, more federal grant money will be available to the students who qualify for need-based financial aid.

Subsequently students with lower academic qualifications may receive more federal financial aid than students with higher scholastic credentials. These policies and priorities come into play in the creation of the freshman class. Admissions decisions reflect the colleges' attempts to assemble the appropriate class composition for the best possible student body.

It is important to distinguish yourselves from your peer applicants. Applications are flagged when the student of special interest to the college. Children of alumni receive flags; these students are called *legacies*. A legacy's advantage is often directly proportional to the parents' financial generosity to the school. Students with special talents are also flagged. Under-represented groups receive flags. Once an application receives a flag, it is removed from the common pool of applications to be considered on a separate basis. Flags have helped open many doors to college applicants.

*Preferential packaging* offers the best packages to the best students. The students who are most attractive to colleges get the best financial aid offers, or they receive more grants and scholarships than loans and work-study. Preferential packaging may include large discounts or awarding more aid than needed. In a survey by the National Association of College Admission Counselors, 54 percent of the colleges that responded admitted that they use preferential packaging.

A college often gives its best financial aid package to the students it wants to attract. If a school needs or wants you, it can do a lot to earn your commitment to attend. Colleges give their best offers to high priority freshmen to entice these students to enroll. College is big business.

## **COLLEGE PROFILE**

Imagine you are the admissions officer of a college. During the Fall, you receive thousands of applications from potential students all over the world. How do you sort them out? Which students will be the best fit? Which students will excel? Who in that stack of applications will go on to be successful? The admissions officer has to decide which students will be accepted or denied—not an easy task.

Your job is to make the decision of the admissions officer easy. You want it to be very obvious that you are the candidate that they seek. How do you set yourself apart from all of your peers? To set yourself apart, you need to create what we call your *college profile*. Your college profile is the admissions package that you create to market yourself to colleges. This is your unique journey; you have set out to be successful in your life. It is your opportunity in your middle and high school years to make your profile so unique that you will be sought after by colleges. Your college profile will later become your resume of achievement by which the colleges will evaluate you. This is your chance—your golden opportunity—to rise to the top of the list. Make no mistake: the higher you are on the list, the more likely you are to receive funding offers.

We want to expand on two major components affecting your college profile: *academics* and *extracurricular activities*. All admissions officers consider these two areas to determine which candidates have a high chance of success. These areas are opportunities for you to show that you will be a superb student.

### **Academics**

Colleges and universities have a responsibility to themselves and to you to ascertain whether there is a reasonable probability that you would academically succeed at their institution. They do not want to mislead you into believing you can be successful if the available information about you indicates otherwise. They also assume that you are not interested in enrolling at a school where your chances of success are not very good. As such, the goal is to make good decisions that will help everyone succeed.

The information that colleges and universities need for this purpose is included in your application for admission. Three areas are especially important:

- A) Your high school coursework
- B) Your cumulative grade point average (GPA)
- C) Your ACT and/or SAT scores

There are, however, many widespread misconceptions the role that college entrance exam scores play in the admissions process. The truth may surprise you: at most colleges, your test performance is not the most important consideration in the admission decision. Rather, it is your coursework and grade point average, or a combination of your GPA and test scores that determine your chances for acceptance. College admissions officers know from experience that your grades in high school best indicate your potential for future academic success, not your ACT/SAT scores.

Many colleges make admissions decisions based on grades, coursework, and test scores. Some of the more selective schools, however, may require additional information—letters of recommendation, personal essays, or perhaps interviews with the admissions staff. Community service and special talents also count. If you are seriously considering a highly selective school, then your high school grades as well as your test scores need to be very strong. If you have some ideas of specific schools to which you want to apply, ask your counselor about the admissions standards and whether test scores will be critical in the admissions decision. You may also locate this information on our website. If your counselor does not have adequate information, contact an admissions counselor at the college and ask for help in determining your admissibility (you will need a copy of your high school transcript).

Because we are talking seriously about holistic success in college, this section would not be complete without being straightforward about what success requires. The most critical factors that determine your success in college derive from your commitment and your attitude toward your overall education. Your commitment and attitude reveal

themselves in your study habits and your willingness to work. They reflect the support and encouragement that you have received from your parents. They illustrate how comfortable and adjusted you will feel at college (especially with your college roommates). They illuminate how academics are in balance with the other areas of your life. These factors will be just as critical to your success with the POWT process.

## **Aptitude Tests**

These exams are the most important (and feared) tests that a college-bound student faces because they can figure heavily in whether they are accepted to the college of their choice. Whether these tests demonstrate true aptitude for college success is the subject of much debate. Students preparing to go to college should be aware that most schools have an entrance requirement of one (or more) achievement test to qualify for admission. Each college has its own specific policy as to which test(s) is required. The major tests are:

### **Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)**

PSAT stands for Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test. There are three main sections to this exam: Critical Reading, Writing and Math. This test measures developed mathematical and verbal reasoning abilities important for academic performance in college. It assesses the ability to reason with facts and concepts, rather than the ability to recall and recite them.

The PSAT is administered to juniors once per year in the fall. The scale for each section ranges from 20 to 80. Remember, a disappointing PSAT score indicates that you may need to prepare more for the SAT. Our process provides you with online tools to help you perform better on achievement tests. You can use our test preparation software to practice for the SAT. The PSAT is the qualifying test that determines which students will compete for National Merit Scholarships.

## **Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)**

The College Board developed the SAT. The SAT is a multiple-choice test that consists of three sections: Critical Reading, Mathematics and Writing. The Writing section is relatively new and the results of this section are weighed with more caution than the Mathematics and Critical Reading sections.

The SAT is a three hour forty-five minute test; the scale ranges from 200 to 800 in each section. It is administered seven times per year. Students should take the SAT in the spring of the junior year. Students may take the SAT more than once. The highest score of any given section will be the score considered by your college.

There are college entrance tests known as the SAT II Subject Tests. These exams focus on particular knowledge and mastery of a given area. The five main areas are Languages, English, Mathematics, History and Social Studies, and Science. Often colleges use these to determine course placement.

## **American College Test (ACT)**

The American College Testing Program developed the ACT. The ACT is a multiple-choice test that consists of four sections: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science; there is also an optional Writing section. Whereas the SAT exam assesses basic reasoning abilities, the ACT relates more closely to major areas of curricular instruction.

The ACT is a four-part, two hour and fifty-five minute test; the score ranges from 1 to 36. It is administered five times per year. Students should take the ACT in the spring of their junior year to meet the deadlines of many college scholarship programs. Like the SAT, you may take this test more than once and the highest score counts.

## **Preparing for the PSAT, SAT and the ACT**

There are resources available to you at school and libraries to assist you in preparing for the SAT and ACT tests. *Preparing for the ACT Assessment* and *Bulletin for the SAT Program* are two publications available to students preparing for college entrance

exams. These booklets are available free of charge in high school counseling offices or online at <http://actstudent.org> and <http://sat.collegeboard.com>. You may also purchase books or take courses; books and courses cost money, however, and some can be very expensive.

**As a member of our team, we have the tools to help you achieve as much success as possible on your college entrance exams.** We recommend that you take the online practice test. Our online test preparation helps you identify your weak areas so that you know where to focus. Do not leave your preparation for the last moment. Cramming is ineffective. It is better to prepare over a sustained period. Now is the time to plan for the test preparation that will almost certainly improve your scores.

If you are in middle school, junior high or just starting high school, you prepare for your college entrance exams by taking your studies seriously and keeping up your grades. Choose college-preparatory courses when you register for your classes.

If you are planning to apply to a college or university, you will likely have to take at least one of these college entrance exams. Community colleges generally do not require these exams as part of their application process; they do often encourage applicants to take these exams because the scores are useful in course placement and college advising.

Community college can be a good place to start under certain circumstances but you are quite often able to gain admission to the college you wish to get your degree from for less out of pocket cost than even a local or community college. Our process is about exploring choices and you can always keep your local college choices as an alternate option as most local colleges have to do very little if anything to secure all of the local students they wish to recruit.

## **Beating the SAT / ACT- The Six Essential Steps**

There are six essential steps that a student can take to prepare for the SAT or ACT. Following these simple steps to achieve the highest possible score:

1. **Get** a real SAT / ACT test from your guidance office and become familiar with the procedures
  - ❖ Review how the test looks and what it comprises
  - ❖ Learn how the test is structured so that there are no surprises
2. **Take** the practice SAT / ACT test using official timing procedures to achieve an accurate result
  - ❖ Make sure to obtain a real test
  - ❖ Make sure to use official time limits
3. **Diagnose** your weakest skills
  - ❖ Pinpoint problem areas
  - ❖ Analyze your weakest areas of knowledge
4. **Review** your weak math skills
  - ❖ Complete additional problems in your weak math areas
5. **Review** your weak critical reading skills
  - ❖ Complete additional problems in your weak reading areas
6. **Rework** the wrong answers on your original sample test
  - ❖ Recognize the original errors and understand why you made them
  - ❖ Remedy the errors with improved skills

Following these practice steps. Prepare to take the official SAT or ACT exam at least once, possibly twice. Take the exam(s) for the first time in the spring of your junior year. This will ensure that you achieve the highest possible score.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

Colleges look for students that participate in events around them. You become more interesting to colleges when you participate in activities. The more involved that you become, the more likely that the colleges you select will realize your potential and offer you admission. When they see that you contribute to your community, they believe that you will contribute to their school—now and in the future.

There are countless extracurricular activities. Your school is the first place to look for activities. Consider joining a debate club or participating in the drama program. Sports are a great avenue to build team skills. Cheerleading is an excellent extracurricular activity. Try to get involved in your student council. Learn to play an instrument. Excel at what you do! Each community, no matter how small, provides opportunities for involvement. Religious organizations offer many chances to volunteer: one can become a youth leader or help at a soup kitchen. There are martial arts programs in almost every community. Your town might have a young professional group such as the Yard Patrol Squadron. Check to see if there is a Volunteer Center in your area.

Colleges also like to see individuals who have experience in the job market. An employment record shows that you value dedication and commitment. It also indicates that you have some real world experience and thus understand the value of the dollar. Work commitments develop character traits that universities love to see.

You want your college profile to radiate leadership and confidence.

## CAREER PLANNING

Colleges like to see students who have a love for what they do. They want to see a fire in your eyes, hear enthusiasm in your voice and experience excitement in your attitude as you talk about what you want to do with your life.

Choosing a career path is one of the most important decisions that students face today. Lack of planning forces many students into a five- or six-year college degree. Many students receive degrees in declining-growth fields, or fields with a surplus of applicants, and cannot find employment after graduation. Wise choices can lead to rewarding occupational experiences, opportunities for personal growth and the security of adequate income. It will also allow the family to maximize their educational investment in the student.

When you enter the workforce on a full-time basis, we want you to be enthusiastic about your career. Unfortunately, many individuals are not satisfied at all with their occupation. They find themselves simply putting in time and do not feel like they contribute anything significant. We want you to be happily satisfied living your dream. It may take courage to ask yourself what is that you really, really want to do. It is, after all, your life. We want you to be successful in the most fulfilling way.

Most people want to accomplish two things in career planning: 1) to have certainty that their occupational choice is right for them, and 2) to know that they have not overlooked a desirable occupation. No test or individual can guarantee to help someone find the right occupation. You can take some steps that will reduce the risk of an unsatisfactory outcome in your career/educational exploration.

As a member, you have access to some of the most helpful research materials available. You can narrow your career potentials in a more systematic way using the online tools that we provide you. We want to either reassure you about your occupational choice or reveal new possibilities that are worth exploration. If these tools

fail to support a choice that you have tentatively made, do not immediately change your plans. Instead, investigate to make sure that you understand the career you have chosen. Check them multiple careers to see whether they may interest you further. After you have gathered all of your information, make a decision. Investigate the educational requirements for the occupations that interest you. Where could you obtain training? Is it financially possible? Is it reasonable in terms of your ability, age, and family situation? Consider any health or physical limitations. Do you have any limitations that might affect your choice of a career?

Seek more information about your preferred occupations from local counseling centers, school guidance offices, libraries, and employment services. Read articles and books that describe occupations or attempt to explain current knowledge about occupational choices.

Talk to people employed in the areas in which you are especially interested. Most people enjoy talking about their work. Remember, however, that they may have personal biases. You might even consider obtaining part-time work experience that is similar to the occupations that you are considering, even if you must work without pay.

Many factors in your background affect your results. Such factors include your age, your parents' occupations, ethnic or racial influences, and your experience with people in various occupations. Try to examine whether any of these influences have influenced your choice of occupations.

# **Job Satisfaction Survey**

## **A FIVE-STEP ACTIVITY TO HELP YOU THINK ABOUT WORK VALUES**

As you begin the career exploration process, there are two broad areas that deserve your attention. One area is YOU—all of those characteristics that make a distinct and unique individual. The other is the WORLD OF WORK—all of the information that describes different careers.

The first area—YOU—include a number of characteristics that are important considerations in the career decision-making process:

I. Who You Are

- a. Personality Traits
- b. Interests, Preferences
- c. Values and Beliefs

II. What You Can Do

- a. Aptitudes and Abilities
- b. Education and Skills
- c. Special Talents

The second area—the WORLD OF WORK—includes so much information that it is difficult to find a starting point. You may begin by learning how various occupations group into career clusters or career families. Another approach might focus on a specific career. You may choose to talk someone working in that career; this is called an informational interview. You might also research career choices in school libraries, career centers or public libraries. One of the best resources is the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.

(<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>). Compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the reference includes information about:

- A. Nature of Work
- B. Working Conditions
- C. Employment
- D. Training and Other Qualifications
- E. Job Outlook
- F. Earnings
- G. Related Occupations
- H. Sources of Additional Information

The following exercise will help you to think about how well specific occupations might satisfy your interests and work values.

**STEP 1:**

Consider the following definitions of fifteen basic work values:

- A. Job Security—a steady job from which you are unlikely to be fired
- B. Prestige—a job which gives you a great deal of status and respect
- C. Good Salary—a job that pays you well for your work
- D. High Achievement—able to do things of importance or succeed in a difficult job
- E. Routine Activity—work that is uncomplicated and organized with the same tasks
- F. Variety/Diversity—opportunities to do many different things
- G. Creativity—a job where you can use your imagination and be inventive
- H. Working With Your Mind—work that offers intellectual stimulation
- I. Independence—work that lets you be your own boss
- J. Working With People—work in close contact with people
- K. Leadership—responsible for, and manage, the work of others
- L. Physical Activity—work that calls for using physical strength and exertion
- M. Work Under Supervision—work under the direction of others
- N. Work With Your Hands—a job where you can use your hands, machines, or other tools to make or repair things
- O. Leisure—work that leaves you a lot of time to do other things

**STEP 2:**

In the following chart, place an X next to each item to according to the following scale:

*How important is this work value for my personal job satisfaction?*

- KEY:
- 1—very important
  - 2—somewhat important
  - 3—not very important
  - 4—not at all important

	1	2	3	4
Job Security				
Prestige				
Good Salary				
High Achievement				
Routine Activity				
Variety/Diversity				
Creativity				
Work With Your Mind				
Independence				
Working With People				
Leadership				
Physical Activity				
Work Under Supervision				
Work With Your Hands				
Leisure				

**STEP 3:** Think of a specific occupation in which you are interested. If you do not have much information about this type of work, it would be helpful to do a little research. Check the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* for information about the specific career that you have in mind.

**STEP 4:**

Return to the chart in Step 2. Mark each work value with an O according to the following scale:

*From the information that I have about this job, how much of this work value is present in this job?*

KEY:      1—High  
              2—Medium  
              3—Low  
              4—None

For example, if you were interested in being a factory assembly-line worker, you would likely assign 1 to *Routine Activity*, 2 or 3 to *Good Salary*, 3 or 4 to *Variety/Diversity*, and 4 to *Prestige*.

**STEP 5:**

The Xs in the chart indicate your personal work value ratings, and the Os indicate what characteristics the job may offer. Study the patterns and the relationship between the Xs and Os.

- o How close are your Xs and Os in each line?
- o What might be some advantages in this job for you?
- o What might be some disadvantages?
- o Does this type of work seem to fit your interests and values?
- o Do you need more information about this occupation to answer these questions?
- o Do you need to consider other career areas as well?

## **Conducting Further Research into Career Paths**

Choosing a career often requires making a considerable commitment in time and expense to your education and training prior to entering the field. Plenty of people have paid for four or more years of college only to find that the field for which they trained does not provide them with mental, physical or monetary benefits. Having made the investment in time and money, however, they feel obligated to continue along the same path. **Contact your coach for special services we can help with.**

Some students decide to change their major or career interest after one or two years in college. Because many of their college credits are not relevant to their new major, they must spend additional time and money to achieve a bachelor's degree. Given the high cost of today's college environment, you cannot have too much information, or spend too much time researching, to properly plan and prepare for your career field. You should gather additional information through independent research and sources.

You should consider discussing your prospective interests with a counselor from your high school guidance department or local community college. You should also read business publications or trade and professional journals associated with your career to learn about the latest news and trends within the field or industry. Look for indications as to whether the field will expand or decline. For further research into your areas of career interest, consider the following resources:

The American Legion. *Need a Lift?* (<http://www.needalift.org>)

Bolles, Dick. *What Color is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers.* Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Field, Shelly. *100 Best Careers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.* Lawrenceville, NJ: ARCO Books.

Likoff, Laurie and Neil Romanosky (Editors). *The Encyclopedia of Career and Vocational Guidance.* New York: JG Ferguson Publishing.

Romaniuk, Bohdan (Editor). *Job Hunter's Sourcebook: Where to Find Employment Leads and Other Job Search Resources (Job Hunters Sourcebook).* Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Cengage.

## The Top 100 Careers

- |                                 |                                   |                                  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Actuary                      | 35. Industrial Designer           | 69. Psychologist                 |
| 2. Software Engineer            | 36. Petroleum Engineer            | 70. Physical Therapist           |
| 3. Computer Systems Analyst     | 37. Medical Laboratory Technician | 71. Mechanical Engineer          |
| 4. Biologist                    | 38. Occupational Therapist        | 72. Dental Laboratory Technician |
| 5. Historian                    | 39. Insurance Underwriter         | 73. Set Designer                 |
| 6. Mathematician                | 40. Purchasing Agent              | 74. Author                       |
| 7. Paralegal Assistant          | 41. Physiologist                  | 75. Hotel Manager                |
| 8. Statistician                 | 42. Nuclear Engineer              | 76. Zoologist                    |
| 9. Accountant                   | 43. Audiologist                   | 77. Stockbroker                  |
| 10. Dental Hygienist            | 44. Broadcast Technician          | 78. Cosmetologist                |
| 11. Philosopher                 | 45. Market Research Analyst       | 79. Public Relations Executive   |
| 12. Meteorologist               | 46. Librarian                     | 80. Attorney                     |
| 13. Technical Writer            | 47. Anthropologist                | 81. Teacher's Aide               |
| 14. Bank Officer                | 48. Architectural Drafter         | 82. Tax Examiner/Collector       |
| 15. Web Developer               | 49. Vocational Counselor          | 83. Janitor                      |
| 16. Industrial Engineer         | 50. Archeologist                  | 84. Respiratory Therapist        |
| 17. Financial Planner           | 51. Museum Curator                | 85. Podiatrist                   |
| 18. Aerospace Engineer          | 52. Social Worker                 | 86. Architect                    |
| 19. Pharmacist                  | 53. Speech Pathologist            | 87. Industrial Machine Repairer  |
| 20. Medical Records Technician  | 54. Chemist                       | 88. Optician                     |
| 21. Sociologist                 | 55. Personnel Recruiter           | 89. Physician Assistant          |
| 22. Stenographer/Court Reporter | 56. Chiropractor                  | 90. Veterinarian                 |
| 23. Medical Secretary           | 57. School Principal              | 91. Bookbinder                   |
| 24. Bookkeeper                  | 58. Receptionist                  | 92. Engineering Technician       |
| 25. Astronomer                  | 59. Optometrist                   | 93. Photographic Process Worker  |
| 26. Economist                   | 60. Typist/Word Processor         | 94. Orthodontist                 |
| 27. Physicist                   | 61. Jeweler                       | 95. Newscaster                   |
| 28. Dietitian                   | 62. Musical Instrument Repairer   | 96. Clergy                       |
| 29. Parole Officer              | 63. Judge (Federal)               | 97. Dentist                      |
| 30. Medical Technologist        | 64. Electrical Engineer           | 98. Psychiatrist                 |
| 31. Motion Picture Editor       | 65. Publication Editor            | 99. Conservationist              |
| 32. Geologist                   | 66. Electrical Technician         | 100. Nurse (Registered)          |
| 33. Civil Engineer              | 67. Forklift Operator             |                                  |
| 34. Computer Programmer         | 68. Bank Teller                   |                                  |

Krantz, Les. *Jobs Rated Almanac: The Best and Worst Jobs—250 in All—Ranked by More than a Dozen Vital Factors Including Salary, Stress, Benefits and More.* Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade Books. (<http://www.careercast.com>)

# The Top College Majors

## Agriculture

- ❖ Agribusiness
- ❖ Agronomy
- ❖ Animal Sciences
- ❖ Entomology
- ❖ Food Sciences
- ❖ Horticulture
- ❖ Soil Sciences

## Architecture & Design

- ❖ Architecture
- ❖ Urban/Regional Planning
- ❖ Interior Design
- ❖ Landscape Architecture

## The Arts

- ❖ Arts Management
- ❖ Dance
- ❖ Dramatic Arts/Theater
- ❖ Film Arts
- ❖ Graphic Design
- ❖ Music/Music Business Mgt.
- ❖ Photography
- ❖ Studio Art

## Biological Sciences

- ❖ Biochemistry
- ❖ Biology
- ❖ Biophysics
- ❖ Biotechnology
- ❖ Botany
- ❖ Marine Biology
- ❖ Molecular Biology
- ❖ Science Education
- ❖ Wildlife Management
- ❖ Zoology

## Business/Management

- ❖ Accounting
- ❖ Business
- ❖ Administration
- ❖ Finance
- ❖ Human Resources Mgt.
- ❖ Insurance/Risk Mgt.
- ❖ International Business
- ❖ Labor/Industrial Relations
- ❖ Information Systems
- ❖ Marketing
- ❖ Real Estate

## Communications

- ❖ Advertising
- ❖ Communications
- ❖ Journalism
- ❖ Public Relations
- ❖ Broadcasting

## Computer Sciences

- ❖ Information Sciences

## Education

- ❖ Elementary Education
- ❖ Physical Education
- ❖ Secondary Education
- ❖ Special Education

## Engineering

- ❖ Aerospace
- ❖ Agriculture
- ❖ Chemical
- ❖ Civil
- ❖ Computer
- ❖ Electrical
- ❖ Mechanical
- ❖ Petroleum

## Health Sciences

- ❖ Athletic Training
- ❖ Clinical Sciences
- ❖ Dental Hygiene
- ❖ Health Services
- ❖ Management
- ❖ Medical Record
- ❖ Administration
- ❖ Medical Technology
- ❖ Nursing
- ❖ Occupational Therapy
- ❖ Pharmacy
- ❖ Physical Therapy
- ❖ Speech Therapy

## Home Economics

- ❖ Day Care Administration
- ❖ Fashion Merchandising
- ❖ Food Sciences
- ❖ Hotel/Restaurant
- ❖ Administration
- ❖ Human Development
- ❖ Nutrition
- ❖ Textiles and Clothing

## Humanities

- ❖ American Literature
- ❖ Chinese
- ❖ Creative Writing
- ❖ English
- ❖ French
- ❖ German
- ❖ History
- ❖ Japanese
- ❖ Linguistics
- ❖ Philosophy
- ❖ Russian
- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Spanish

## Ethnic Studies

- ❖ Ethnic Studies

## Mathematics

- ❖ Mathematics
- ❖ Statistics

## Physical Sciences

- ❖ Astronomy
- ❖ Meteorology
- ❖ Chemistry
- ❖ Geology
- ❖ Geophysics
- ❖ Oceanography
- ❖ Physics

## Social/Behavioral Sciences

- ❖ Anthropology
- ❖ Criminal Justice
- ❖ Economics
- ❖ Geography
- ❖ Gerontology
- ❖ Political Science
- ❖ Psychology
- ❖ Public Administration
- ❖ Social Studies
- ❖ Social Work
- ❖ Sociology

## Theology

- ❖ Bible Studies
- ❖ Theological Studies

## **Interview a Professional**

An excellent way to learn more about an occupation is to talk with various people in that particular field. Call a professional in the fields that you find interesting and request an informational interview. Explain that you are very interested in this particular field and, before you decide to commit to this college major, you would like to get an expert opinion on this field. **Contact your coach for additional service provided to our members.**

Many professionals will consider your assertiveness astute and refreshing. This is an extremely important step in your decision-making process. Most workers in the U.S. are not happy in their present occupation. Do not get caught in that difficult position. Here is a list of suggested questions to ask these professionals:

**Dr./Mr./Ms.:**

**Telephone:**

**Occupation:**

**Company:**

How long have you been in this field?

Why did you decide to work in this field?

How did you get your first job in this field?

How has this field changed since your first job?

Do you know what the outlook is for this field?

How competitive is this field?

---

What do you **like** about your occupation?

---

What do you **dislike** about your occupation?

---

What are your primary duties during a typical day?

---

What kinds of education or training are required in this occupation?

---

What are the entry-level salary and benefits in this occupation?

---

What are the expected salary and benefits in this occupation after ten years?

---

What are the chances for advancement in this occupation?

---

What additional training or educational is needed for advancement?

---

Where else can I look for information pertaining to this occupation?

---

Additional Questions:

---

## **Ranking Your Career/Major Interests**

List three career paths or objectives that you wish to pursue. Begin with your top choice.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## **COLLEGE SELECTION**

Choosing the right college that fits your personality is the most important decision in the college process. The right fit ensures the ease of transition and increases the probability that you will graduate with a degree. Students often overlook many important factors about a school. This section will help you analyze these factors to determine the ideal ten colleges for you.

Your successful selection of an ideal college can be achieved through proper research. This research should center on a group of factors to determine which of these factors hold the most importance to you and your family.

As a member of the coaching team, we will assist you with your college selection process. After you have submitted your College Selection Application online to our service center, our research team will locate colleges that fit your requirements. We will contact these schools on your behalf. We will save the list of schools in your online profile so that you may have access at anytime. Keep in mind that we will contact some schools due to their history of providing funding for students like you. Although we hope that you will keep an open mind about all college offers, we understand that you may choose to use some offers solely as a negotiation tool. Do not be too hasty to close the door on any college that expresses an interest in you. It is to your advantage to allow each school to make its best offer. The final decision will always belong to you.

You should base your final college choices on the information that you gather during your research and your college visits. Use the question and answer analysis from each college to determine which colleges best fit your personality, meet your priorities (as well as your parents'), and offer your family a good value based on the true cost of attendance. Use the following step-by-step process to rank your top college choices

**Contact your coach for additional service provided to our members.**

## College Selection Factors

The most important step in this process is research. Analyze and grade these based upon your major interest. Use numbers 1 through 10.

- |                     |                          |                           |                |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| • Location          | • Co-op Programs         | • Faculty with PhDs       | • Diversity    |
| • Size              | • Job Placement          | • Campus Setting          | • Greek System |
| • Athletic Programs | • Religion               | • Campus Safety           | • Housing      |
| • Talent Programs   | • Attrition              | • Alcohol/Drug Policy     | • Food         |
| • Special Programs  | • Student/Faculty Ratios | • Student Body Reputation | • Weather      |

1. **Location**—Does the location of this college satisfy your needs?
2. **Size**—Does the size of this college satisfy your needs?
  - *small*—less than 3,000 students
  - *medium*—between 3,000 and 10,000
  - *medium/large*—between 10,000 and 20,000
  - *large*—greater than 20,000 students
3. **Athletic Program**—Does this college have a sports program that meets your needs (as an athlete or a spectator)?
4. **Talent Program**—Does this college have a talent program that meets your needs (theater, newspaper, debate team)?
5. **Special Programs**—Does this college have the special programs or facilities that you need (learning disabilities, special medical facilities)?
6. **Co-op Programs**—Does this college have an academic co-op (study/work) program in your major that can reduce your college costs and help you achieve employment after graduation?
7. **Job Placement**—Does this college have a placement office that places a high number of students in jobs before and after graduation?
8. **Religion**—Does this college have a religious program that fits your needs?
9. **Attrition**—Does this college have a high number of freshmen that graduate within four years?
10. **Student/Faculty Ratio**—Does this college have a low student to faculty ratio to guarantee more personal faculty attention for the student?
11. **Faculty with PhDs**—Does this college have a high number of faculty with PhDs?
12. **Campus Setting**—Is this college located in a desirable area or neighborhood?
13. **Safety**—Does this college's campus have adequate security and a good safety reputation?
14. **Alcohol/Drug Policy**—Does this college's alcohol/drug policy fit your requirements?
15. **Student Body Reputation**—Does this college's student body reputation fit your personality?
16. **Diversity**—Does the student mix at this college fit your personality?
17. **Greek System**—Does the role that fraternities and sororities play at this college fit your needs?
18. **Housing**—Does the housing (and housing policy) satisfy your needs?
19. **Food**—Does the on-campus food at this college satisfy your needs?
20. **Weather**—Is this college located in a climate that satisfies your needs?

<u>Major Factors</u> College Name	Location	Size	Athletic Program	Talent Program	Special Programs	Coop Programs	Career Services	Relation	Attrition	Student/Faculty Ratio	<b>TOTAL</b>
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
19.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
20.	<input type="checkbox"/>										

<u>Major Factors</u> College Name	Faculty with PhDs	Campus Setting	Safety	Alcohol/ Drug Policy	Student Body Rep	Diversity	Greek System	Housing	Food	Weather	<b>TOTAL</b>
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
19.	<input type="checkbox"/>										
20.	<input type="checkbox"/>										

Rank your top college choices.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Keep in mind that applying to a large number of colleges may be the single most overlooked opportunity to evaluate the college marketplace. It will also give you the advantage to negotiate. Do not limit your opportunities by letting one college be your only choice; you will be at the mercy of the school when it comes to funding offers. If the school does not have to compete for your enrollment, chances are they will not make any significant funding offers.

## The Campus Visit

The main function of the campus visit is to ensure that the personality of the college fits with your personality. Once you have identified your colleges of interest, a direct campus visit will offer a clearer understanding of each school's programs, policies, and social settings. Only during this visit can you experience the environment in which you will live and work during the next four years.

You want to prepare for your visits so that you find the information you need. You have a limited amount of time to make a good impression. When you visit with eagerness and professionalism, you can make an outstanding impression. Not only are you interviewing them, they are interviewing you.

While on campus, you should ask questions, including those from the following questionnaires:

1. Admissions Office
2. Financial Aid Office
3. Career Placement Office
4. Faculty
5. Students

Based upon your evaluation of the responses, you will have a clearer understanding of the operations of each college. By asking the same questions at different schools, you will have a method by which to compare the strengths of each school. Ultimately you will be able to determine which college best fits you based on its value, employment opportunities, and affordability to your family.

You may actually get the school to pay for all or a portion of your visit by using our special visitation request. **To receive a copy of our request for funding for college visitations, send an email message to your coach for additional details.**

## **Admissions Office**

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE

Date:

College:

Mr./Ms./Dr.:

Telephone :

1. What are the criteria used for admissions at your college?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How do you rank these criteria?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How important is the ACT/SAT test in the admissions process?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the college's admissions deadline?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the student to faculty ratio at the college?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What percentage of the faculty hold doctorate degrees?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the average enrollment of the freshman class?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What percentage of the freshmen class will graduate?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What percentage of graduates will continue on to graduate school?

10. Overall impression:

## **Financial Aid Office**

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE

Date:

College:

Mr./Ms./Dr.:

Telephone :

1. What is the total cost of college or financial aid budgeted cost?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What forms are used by the college to determine financial aid eligibility?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the college's financial aid deadline?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How does the college financially reward a good student?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What percentage of my financial NEED will be met by the college?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What percentage of this NEED met will be in the form of Gift Aid? In the form of Loans? In the form of Work/Study?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What other non-need or merit grants and scholarships are available?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. If any private outside scholarships are awarded, will the school use these to replace their own?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What is the average debt incurred by each student upon graduation?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Overall impression:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Career Placement Office**

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE

Date:

---

College:

---

Mr./Ms./Dr.:

---

Telephone :

---

1. How many full-time staff members work in the placement office?

- 
2. What job placement services are provided by the placement office?

- 
3. How long do job placement services remain in effect after graduation?

- 
4. What percentage of graduates will be employed prior to graduation?

- 
5. What are the most popular majors of graduates receiving employment?

- 
6. Which companies and organizations recruit your graduates?

- 
7. What are the credentials of those graduates receiving employment?

- 
8. What is the starting salary of graduates in my field or major?

- 
9. What is the future employment outlook of my field or major?

- 
10. Overall impression:

## **Faculty or Department Head**

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE

Date:

---

College:

---

Mr./Ms./Dr.:

---

Telephone :

---

1. What is unique about this department's programs over other colleges?

- 
2. What is the likelihood of graduating from this program in four years?

- 
3. What department facilities and special technology are available?

- 
4. How does the faculty advising system work?

- 
5. How accessible are the professors in this department?

- 
6. How many full professors are on the faculty?

- 
7. What percentage of full professors teach introductory classes?

- 
8. What is the average size of classes?

- 
9. Can I sit in on a class?

- 
10. Overall impression:

## Students

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS PAGE

Date:

---

College:

---

1. What are three things do you most **dislike** about this college/university?

a)

---

b)

---

c)

---

2. What are three things do you most **like** about this college/university?

a)

---

b)

---

c)

---

3. What are the dorms like?

---

4. What are the classes like?

---

5. What are the professors like?

---

6. What is campus life in general like?

---

7. How difficult is it to get to assigned classes?

---

## **Rank the Colleges after the Visits**

Rank your college choices based on the strategic information that you have gathered. Use the question and answer analysis from each college visit to determine which colleges best fit your personality, meet the parents' priorities, and offer the family a good value based on its true cost.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_

## **College Interview Checklist**

Use the following checklist as a guideline for successful admissions interviews.

- ❑ Practice for your interview. Be prepared to answer obvious questions. Consult your guidance office for these standard questions and review them with your counselor or parents.
- ❑ Practice makes perfect. Arrange your first interviews at the colleges in which you are least interested in attending.
- ❑ Relax and be yourself.
- ❑ Be alert and to the point. Make the interview easy for the interviewer.
- ❑ Make sure that you are neat and presentable.
- ❑ Provide the interviewer with a copy of your Resume of Achievement.
- ❑ Display your abilities and talents. Stay positive.
- ❑ Ask the questions included in the Visits section. The appearance of a solid game plan for admissions is impressive. Document the name, date, and response.
- ❑ Do not dwell on a particular question. Show consideration for their time.
- ❑ Do not make lofty statements about yourself. Be humble, but self assured.
- ❑ Avoid negative statements about yourself. Make no excuses.
- ❑ Avoid question traps such as, "describe your ideal college" or "which other colleges are you considering?" or "which college is your top choice?" Be prepared for these questions.
- ❑ Send a thank-you note to each interviewer within two days. E-cards are fine too.

# **ADMISSIONS PROCESS**

As you plan to attend college, facing the enormous process called Admissions is inevitable. Applying and receiving acceptance to a college need not be stressful. Except for the Ivy League and some very selective schools, colleges today admit a much higher ratio of applicants. Even the most prestigious colleges are spending huge sums to market to prospective students. Indeed, you can be very selective about the colleges that you wish to attend.

There are many aspects to the admissions process with which to familiarize yourself. We suggest that you explore each topic. By the end of this section, you will have a very good idea of what to expect as you apply to colleges and choose which college to attend. We have included two checklists that will assist you in this process.

## **College Admissions Criteria**

Listed below are the top ten factors considered in Admissions. As you work on advancing your college profile, you have control over many areas that influence the success of your application. Other Admissions criteria are, for the most part, beyond your control (e.g., residency or heritage or background).

- Academic Merit (GPA)
- Class Rank
- ACT/SAT Scores
- Special Abilities (Athlete, Creative, etc.)
- Essays
- Interview
- Extracurricular Activities
- Community Service
- Letters of Recommendation
- State Residency
- Diversity of Applicant (Minority, Legacy, Geographic Location, etc.)

Each college puts its own unique emphasis on the criteria that it values most. A university that specializes in art and photography may pay special attention to an applicant who demonstrates creativity. In contrast, a university that prides itself on research probably will want its applicants to show a high degree of analytical aptitude.

One of the most overlooked criteria regards state residency. Colleges want a diverse student body. If an applicant in Midwest shows interest in attending a school on the east or west coast, then the applicant will likely receive higher funding offers from east and west coast schools looking to diversify their freshman class. These letters can be used as leverage in the negotiation process.

## **Admissions Strategy**

We want to you to have a successful admissions campaign. Many applicants make the common mistake of narrowing their approach to college applications. They only consider colleges with which they are familiar--because a relative is an alumnus, the school is local, or the tuition is inexpensive. We want you to dream big. Think outside of your usual box. Where do you want to go?

Make sure that the colleges to which you apply have a solid reputation for quality education. Not all economics departments, or nursing departments, or psychology departments, to name a few, are of the same quality. Too many students err in attending schools that do not offer the majors that they find interesting. This critical mistake leads to transferring to another school - which will cost more time and money.

We are all unique. You seek the college that corresponds with your unique needs. Not everyone is suited for a college in downtown Chicago. Similarly, not everyone will enjoy studying at the rural schools of South Dakota or Iowa. Many applicants often overlook private schools that may provide a great fit. **A vital part of your success is to get accepted to multiple colleges, especially to schools that fit your personality and situation.** Our college selection process guides you through this approach.

Many view college admissions as a competition with other students. Our POWT process will give you the insight to understand why the colleges should compete for you. Success in the admissions process includes going to a college that meets a high percentage of your financial need. A clearly defined admissions strategy will help you achieve the success you deserve. **Check with your coach for additional details and follow directions precisely.**

## **Admissions Deadlines and Acceptances**

The admissions timeline has two main points that you need to consider: the admissions deadline and the admissions declaration. When you begin the POWT process, you have already separated yourself from many of your peers. All too many students find themselves at the end of their senior year scrambling to beat admissions deadlines. By researching admissions deadlines now, you will have the information that you need to submit your applications on time. Colleges post admissions deadlines on their websites. You will find specific requirements and deadlines on each of the applications.

## **Admission Deadlines**

List the application deadlines of ten college choices.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Admissions Acceptance**

Some colleges use specific dates under which an application must be received. This is simply called *regular admissions*. Other colleges have no posted deadlines; they admit students throughout the year in a process known as *rolling admissions*. A student with financial, personal, or work-related concerns can often defer or postpone their enrollment for up to one year. Contact your admissions office for details.

Colleges may admit students under different admissions processes. With *early entrance*, you may be accepted, admitted, and enrolled prior to your high school graduation. Many colleges use early entrance to attract better students. Students who apply under *early decision* are bound to meet an early deadline and, if accepted, commit to attending. If you would rather not enter a binding agreement, apply under *early action*; you will still meet an early deadline but, if accepted, you will not be obligated to attend. Colleges may use *deferred admissions* to postpone enrollment for up to one year for special circumstances.

If you are late in applying to a school, do not hesitate to contact admissions and ask if they are still accepting applications. Not all accepted students will commit to attend. Colleges do not want to have seats available in their freshman class. An empty seat does not bring revenue to the school; colleges want to have a full enrollment.

## **Admission Essay**

Colleges often have their prospective students write an admissions essay. Admissions officers look to the essay to learn more about you and evaluate your communication skills. Use the following checklist as a guideline to writing successful admissions essays.

- Your essay should highlight both your writing ability and your personality.
- The topic of your essay should always allow the reader to learn more about YOU. Relate your insights, qualities, interests, passions, reactions, satisfactions, or disappointments. Discuss a subject that means something to YOU.
- The topic should always be a particular or specific event or activity involving you. Avoid generalities such as world events, religious affiliations, or philosophies.
- Your writing should reveal that you are an interesting and mature person.
- You should demonstrate your intellectual curiosity, your dedication to work, your sustained commitment to goals, and your ability to complete tasks; illustrate your ability to move from dependence to independence.
- Your writing style should always be clear, direct, and easily understood.
- A good writer and speller should always review your writing style.
- Expand upon, but do not repeat, prior information.
- Never write beyond the recommended length or word limit.
- Do not use large, difficult words in an effort to impress.
- You should never use exclamation points (!).
- Do not overuse words.

# Admissions Checklist

Use the following as a guideline to a successful admissions campaign.

- Write or phone directly to the college to request up-to-date applications. Start early. Do not wait until the last minute.
- Get organized. Use a separate file folder for each college application.
- Make sure to read the application thoroughly and answer each question, as asked. Type or Print each application (preferably in black ink). No longhand.
- Proofread each application. Spelling and grammatical errors are unacceptable. Make sure to include ONLY those extracurricular activities that are impressive to the college. Your activities should demonstrate leadership and reinforce the academic and the career goals that you highlighted in your application.  
**Make a copy of each completed application.**
- Request your letters of recommendation early (three week advance preference).
- Choose teachers or **others suggested by your coach** that best know you.
- Provide deadlines and the proper forms. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- Send your letter writers a thank you note and keep them informed of your results. Make sure to arrange with your guidance department to distribute your high school transcript to your prospective colleges.
- **Request a copy of our application fee waiver letter by contacting your coach for details.** You will include this letter with every paper application that you submit. Note that some institutions will waive application fees if you apply online, others may offer FREE application procedures. **Check with your coach for special directions.**

## **Resume of Achievement**

Each year thousands of students fill out admissions applications in an attempt to gain entrance into the college of their choice. Many attempt to enter prestigious colleges with the understanding that, even though their high school record is impeccable, there are thousands of other students as good, or better, competing for the same privilege. How can you place yourself above the masses to receive your letter of acceptance?

Admissions officers review thousands of applications. Help make their job easier. A two page *resume of achievement* accomplishes this goal with style. A resume allows for a quick review of your background by highlighting your abilities and talents. It also saves the admissions review committee time. Showing consideration for their time may give you the edge you need to gain acceptance.

Similar to a job resume, your resume of achievement should quickly illustrate:

- ◊ Well roundedness
- ◊ Leadership capabilities
- ◊ Organization
- ◊ Confidence and maturity
- ◊ Capability of assuming additional responsibilities
- ◊ Motivation to achieve a goal
- ◊ Qualities that colleges seek
- ◊ DESERVES ACCEPTANCE

The following example may guide you in constructing your personal resume.

**Tom Thomas**

1234 Main Street  
City, State 85737  
(000) 000-0000  
tomthomas@email.com

**Educational/Career Goals:**

My educational goal is to obtain a Bachelor's Degree in Communications. My career goal is to become a writer.

**Academic History:**

School:	Ironwood Ridge High School Tucson, AZ - Graduate 2004
Class Rank:	15 <sup>th</sup> of 389 students
GPA:	3.45
Curriculum:	College Preparation Advanced Placement English Advanced Placement History Three Honors Classes
Achievements/Honors:	National Honor Roll Kiwanis Top 10 Honoree National Merit Semifinalist Outstanding Senior Award Who's Who of American High School Students Gemini Technology Award
Scores:	ACT   Composite   26   Percentile   89 SAT   Math        600   Verbal        600

**Extracurricular Activities:**

Editor-in-Chief, School Publication  
All-City Choir  
Drama Club  
International Thespian Society  
Spanish Club  
Student Council  
Football (3 years)

**Community Service:**

Habitat for Humanity Volunteer—City, State  
Faith Mission Soup Kitchen Volunteer—City, State  
Inner City Camp Counselor—Union Wesleyan Church, City, State  
Bible School Counselor—Union Wesleyan Church, City, State  
Red Cross Blood Donor—City, State  
I CAN Building Program Volunteer—New Orleans, Louisiana

**Employment:**

Aide, ABC Daycare, Tucson, AZ (4 summers)  
Cashier, McDonald's, Tucson, AZ (3 years)

**Personal Interests:**

Reading  
Writing  
Music  
Travel

**References:**

Martin Holland, English Teacher & School Newspaper Advisor  
Main High School  
9335 Hoover Road  
City, State 85700

Jim Lester, Owner & President  
McDonald's #XXXX  
16 Main Street  
City, State 85700

Reverend Jerry Lyman  
Union Wesleyan Church  
123 Central Road  
City, State 85700

# High School Timeline and Checklist

CHECK OFF EACH BOX AS YOU COMPLETE THE TASK.

## Freshman Plan

- Develop a recommended class schedule of college preparatory courses according to your planned college major. See your guidance counselor for assistance.
- Establish strong study habits and commit to consistent study routines.
- Work on effective time management techniques.
- Work to enhance your vocabulary skills and your writing abilities.
- Learn to use the library effectively, including computer research.
- Investigate possible extracurricular activities for your resume of achievement.
- Begin to think about your sophomore class schedule.
- Consider community service projects.

## Sophomore Plan

- Continue to keep your grades up; a B or better (3.0+) is preferred.
- Sign up for extracurricular activities.
- Aim for leadership roles.
- Consider the teachers from whom you will request recommendations.
- Plan your junior class schedule.
- Begin to look for a summer job to help pay for college
- Develop your reading skills over the summer—include newspapers and magazines

CHECK OFF EACH BOX AS YOU COMPLETE THE TASK.

## Junior Plan

### Fall Semester

- Take the PSAT in October.
- Attend a local College Fair.
- Talk to your parents about possible career options.
- Review your cumulative grade point average.
- Review the *EFC Guide* to initiate timely strategies.

### Spring Semester

- Register for the ACT/SAT exams.
- Review Career Searches to evaluate career paths.
- Discuss possible career interests with parents.
- Review the ACT/SAT Test Prep process.
- Take the ACT/SAT Achievement Tests.
- Request catalogs and admissions/financial aid information.
- Review the College Selection process and develop your priorities.
- Develop a list of potential colleges and begin your college selection process.
- Review the College Visitation process.
- Begin to plan your college visits.

CHECK OFF EACH BOX AS YOU COMPLETE THE TASK.

## Senior Plan

### Fall Semester

- Review the EFC Guide to ensure that you have followed all recommendations.
- Review the career search process.
- Begin your career analysis, research, and informational interviews.
- Review the college visitation process.
- Continue your college visits, including the various career interviews, to narrow your prospects.
- Review the ACT/SAT test prep process.
- Re-take the ACT/SAT exams, if necessary.
- Review the Admissions process and clarify any gray areas.
- Request your letters of recommendation.
- Develop a list of references for your resume.
- Prepare a list of extracurricular activities for your resume.
- Write your applications essay(s).
- Prepare your resume of achievement.
- Apply for admissions to at least six colleges to increase your opportunity for funding offers.
- Be aware of the filing deadlines for both admissions and financial aid.
- Request your high school transcript for each application.
- Check with your guidance department to apply for local scholarships.

CHECK OFF EACH BOX AS YOU COMPLETE THE TASK.

## Senior Plan

### Spring Semester

- Review the *negotiating* process for all relevant strategies.
- Review the FAFSA process to ensure an accurate filing.
- Pick up the necessary financial aid applications from the Guidance Department or by calling 1-800-4FED AID.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid online (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>).
- Review the Student Aid Report (SAR) and make note of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).
- If the SAR is incorrect, make corrections.
- Review all financial aid packages sent from the colleges.
- Review the recommendations for *negotiating* and implement all remaining strategies.
- If housing deposit is NOT mandatory, request an extension until you make your final decision.
- If housing deposit is mandatory, make sure to send any requests for refunds before the deadline.
- Review final financial aid award offers and make your final decision.
- Return your signed offer and your SAR to your final college choice.
- Send your tuition deposit and final transcript to your final college choice.
- Send all pertinent loan applications to your final college choice.

CHECK OFF EACH BOX AS YOU COMPLETE THE TASK.

## Transfer Plan

### Fall Semester

- Review the EFC Guide to ensure that all recommendations have been followed.
- Review the career search process.
- Begin your career analysis, research, and informational interviews.
- Review the college visitation process.
- Continue your college visits, including the various career interviews, to narrow your prospects.
- Review the Admissions process and clarify any gray areas.
- Request your letters of recommendation.
- Develop a list of references for your resume.
- Prepare a list of extracurricular activities for your resume.
- Write your applications essay(s).
- Prepare your resume of achievement.
- Apply for transfer admissions to at least six colleges to increase your opportunity for funding offers. More are better when it comes to choices.
- Be aware of the filing deadlines for both admissions and financial aid.
- Request your college transcript for each application.
- Check with your undergraduate financial aid office to apply for local scholarships.

CHECK OFF EACH BOX AS YOU COMPLETE THE TASK.

## Transfer Plan

### Spring Semester

- Review the negotiating process for all relevant strategies.
- Review the FAFSA process to ensure an accurate filing.
- Pick up the necessary financial aid applications from the Guidance Department or by calling 1-800-4FEDAI.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid online (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>).
- Review the Student Aid Report (SAR) and make note of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).
- If the SAR is incorrect, make corrections.
- Review all financial aid packages sent from the colleges.
- Review the recommendations for negotiating and implement all remaining strategies.
- If housing deposit is NOT mandatory, request an extension until you make your final decision.
- If housing deposit is mandatory, make sure to send any requests for refunds before the deadline.
- Review final financial aid award offers and make your final decision.
- Return your signed offer and your SAR to your final college choice.
- Send your tuition deposit and final transcript to your final college choice.
- Send all pertinent loan applications to your final college choice.

CHECK OFF EACH BOX AS YOU COMPLETE THE TASK.

## Graduate or Professional Plan

### Fall Semester

- Review the EFC Guide to ensure that you have followed all recommendations.
- Take the GRE/GMAT/MCAT/LSAT exams.
- Review the Admissions process and clarify any gray areas.
- Request your letters of recommendation.
- Write your statement of purpose and revise your writing sample(s).
- Prepare your curriculum vita.
- Ask your undergraduate department which graduate/professional schools you should most consider.
- Apply for admissions to at least six graduate/medical/law schools to increase your opportunity for funding offers.
- Be aware of the filing deadlines for both admissions and financial aid.
- Request your college transcript(s) for each application.
- Check with your graduate department to apply for local scholarships.

### Spring Semester

- Review the negotiating process for all relevant strategies.
- Review the FAFSA process to ensure an accurate filing as an independent student.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>).
- Review the Student Aid Report (SAR) and make note of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC); if the SAR is incorrect, make corrections.
- Review all funding offers sent from the schools.
- Review the recommendations for negotiating and implement all remaining strategies.
- Review final offers and make your decision.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

College funding is probably the most misunderstood aspect of financial planning overall. Success at this venture will save you money. Poor planning might result in excessive loans that need to be repaid. Many families contribute their hard earned dollars needlessly when the college of their choice would be willing to contribute endowment funds toward the cost of the student's education. These lost dollars could have been used for future retirement plans, vacations, a second home, or a first home for the student.

We want to familiarize you with the financial processes used at different colleges. We will introduce you to the federal and institutional methodologies. We will touch upon financial instruments such as grants, loans, work-study, and private scholarships. As a member, you will learn how negotiation can raise your value to colleges and give you a competitive advantage. This advantage leads to higher award letters and a better negotiating position.

There are many kinds of financial aid. Grants, loans, work-study, awards, scholarships, gifts, veteran benefits, and employer-based tuition reimbursement programs are all forms of financial aid. There are many sources from which to obtain financial aid. These include federal and state agencies, individual college sources, non-profit organizations, and commercial lenders. These sources award two types of funding—need-based and merit. The Federal Government determines that households with lower incomes qualify for need-based financial aid. In contrast, academic achievements determine merit-based awards; to a large degree, these awards are independent of your estimated family contribution (EFC).

The government calculates your EFC using data that you enter on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The EFC is the amount that your family is required to pay before you are eligible for financial aid. When you apply to a school for financial assistance, the financial aid office calculates your tuition, room and board, and miscellaneous expenses. These expenses comprise your initial costs for the school year. The college then receives your EFC. Your financial need is based upon the difference between

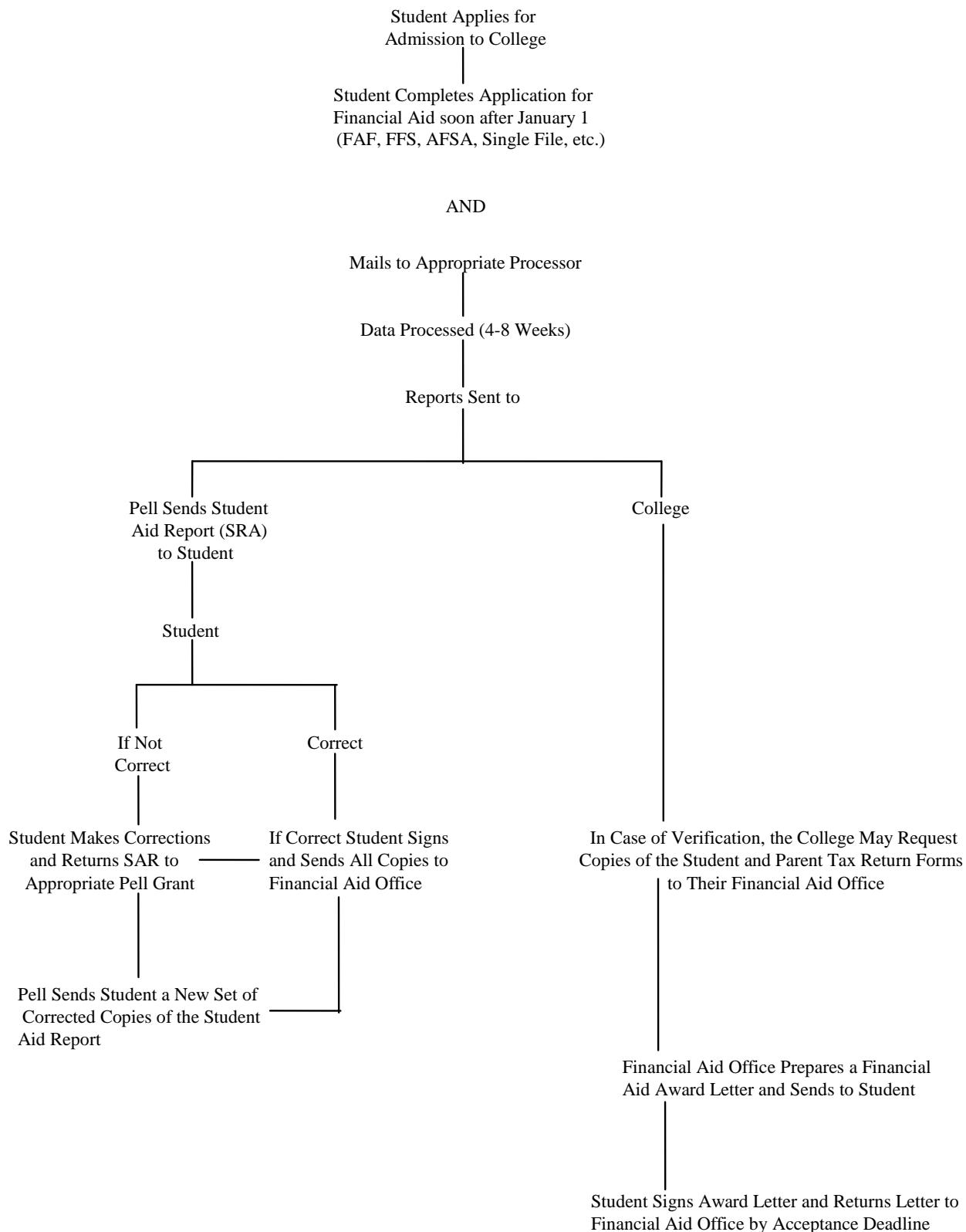
your college costs and your EFC. Since each school sets its own policies and parameters regarding financial aid distribution, you can negotiate some components. The financial aid administration can draw on funds under its control (grants, FSEOGs, Perkins Loans, etc.). The administration may also certify student eligibility for money not under its direct control (Stafford and PLUS/SLS loans, etc.). When colleges want to recruit you, they may reach into their endowments to make additional funding offers to you. These offers are usually independent of your EFC.

We encourage you to establish early communication with your financial aid administrator for several reasons. You can ask questions, express preferences, and learn about any innovative funding programs that the school may offer. During your campus visit, a financial aid officer will supply you with basic information on how the school awards funding. Be aware of application deadlines—some state and college-based programs have very early deadlines.

Do not make the mistake of limiting yourself to less expensive schools based *only* on what you think your family can afford. The difference between what your family can contribute toward the cost of attendance at a particular school will determine your financial need and, therefore, greatly influence the financial aid package offered to you. Do not confuse the terms *financial aid* and *financially need*. Financial aid refers to all resources used to bridge the gap between your EFC and the actual cost of attendance. Dig hard for financial aid resources and diligently pursue every avenue that you discover.

Obtaining financial aid seems like a daunting task to many students and their families. We want you to understand the process so that you can find success within it. The financial aid system can be extremely complex for the first time applicant. The following flowcharts reduce these complexities and give you a simple illustration of how the system really works.

## FINANCIAL AID PROCESS AND TIME LINE



## Need Calculations

To get started, use the worksheet to supply realistic financial figures.

### STEP 1: CALCULATE YOUR COSTS

A. Add the following costs for one semester/quarter at the school that you plan to attend:

Tuition	_____
Student Fees	_____
Application Fee (one time only)	_____
Housing	_____
Meals	_____
Books and Supplies	_____
Other expenses (travel, laundry, parking permit, health insurance, childcare, recreation, clothing, personal expenses, computer, etc.)	_____
NOTE: Make sure all expenses are listed somewhere. Be realistic with your estimates. If you cannot survive without pizza once a week or a haircut once a month, add them to the budget.	_____

SUBTOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

B. To calculate the total cost for one year, multiply your subtotal from above by the number of semesters or quarters you will attend in one year.

\_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_  
SUBTOTAL                    TOTAL SEMESTERS                    COST FOR ONE YEAR

### STEP 2: CALCULATE YOUR AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR EACH YEAR

Add the following:

- A. Amount of money you can contribute toward your higher education costs each year
- \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Amount of money your parents/guardians/spouse can contribute
- \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Other funds
- \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 3: CALCULATE YOUR FINANCIAL AID NEEDED FOR EACH YEAR

Subtract your total available funds from the subtotal of STEP 1:

- A. Step 1 subtotal
- \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Total available funds
- \_\_\_\_\_

FINANCIAL AID NEEDED PER YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

## The Federal Methodology

The federal methodology uses the FAFSA—a four-page financial aid application processed by the federal government and required by all colleges—to award federal, state, college, and other funds to students in the form of financial aid. The FAFSA calculates the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) based upon a formula that uses the parents' and student's income and assets to determine the family's ability to pay for college. The government includes your EFC when it generates your Student Aid Report (SAR).

Your EFC is the single most important factor that influences your financial aid package. Your EFC, tied directly related to the IRS tax code, determines your financial aid eligibility. Families with the lowest EFCs qualify for the greatest financial assistance.

Having worked with families for many decades, it is our sincere recommendation that you do not try to complete the FAFSA on your own. Even financially savvy individuals make mistakes that trained POWT Team consultants easily avoid due to training and experience. The FAFSA is not as simple as it may appear. It is one thing to complete the form and quite another to understand the consequences of the data that you submit. It is important to have the FAFSA work for you. Through the Power of Working Together, we have the necessary expertise and experience to aid you in completing the FAFSA so that you receive maximum benefits.

The government considers numerous factors when evaluating your FAFSA. Some questions determine whether the student classifies as independent; if so, the parents' income and assets are not counted. The student must qualify for independence under federal guidelines. Even if the student has not lived at home or been cited as an exemption on the parents' income tax forms in the past two years, s/he is still may not qualify for financial independence according to federal guidelines.

For divorced or separated families, only enter the income of the parent with whom the student applicant lives more than half of the year. If that custodial parent is remarried, the step-parent's income and assets must also be included on the FAFSA.

Make sure to include any grandparents or other children that will be living with at home while the student attends college. Include any parents or older children that plan to attend college at the same time. One additional family member in college can significantly reduce your EFC. The minimum attendance requirement for this additional student is six credit hours for one term.

Many financial aid deadlines are February 15 or sooner. Few families have tax forms completed by this time. Because colleges distribute financial aid on a first-come/first-serve basis, your chances to receive financial aid will increase by estimating the financial information on the FAFSA and reporting actual figures as corrections to your Student Aid Report. Your adjusted gross income (AGI) on your SAR should match the data that you report to the Internal Revenue Service. If you estimate your income on the FAFSA, please use the prior year's tax data as a guideline for your answers.

Income earned from work affects your EFC in two ways: social security taxes and employment expense allowances. As the total amount of these two items increase, total expenses also increase; this increased expense could potentially benefit your family by decreasing your EFC.

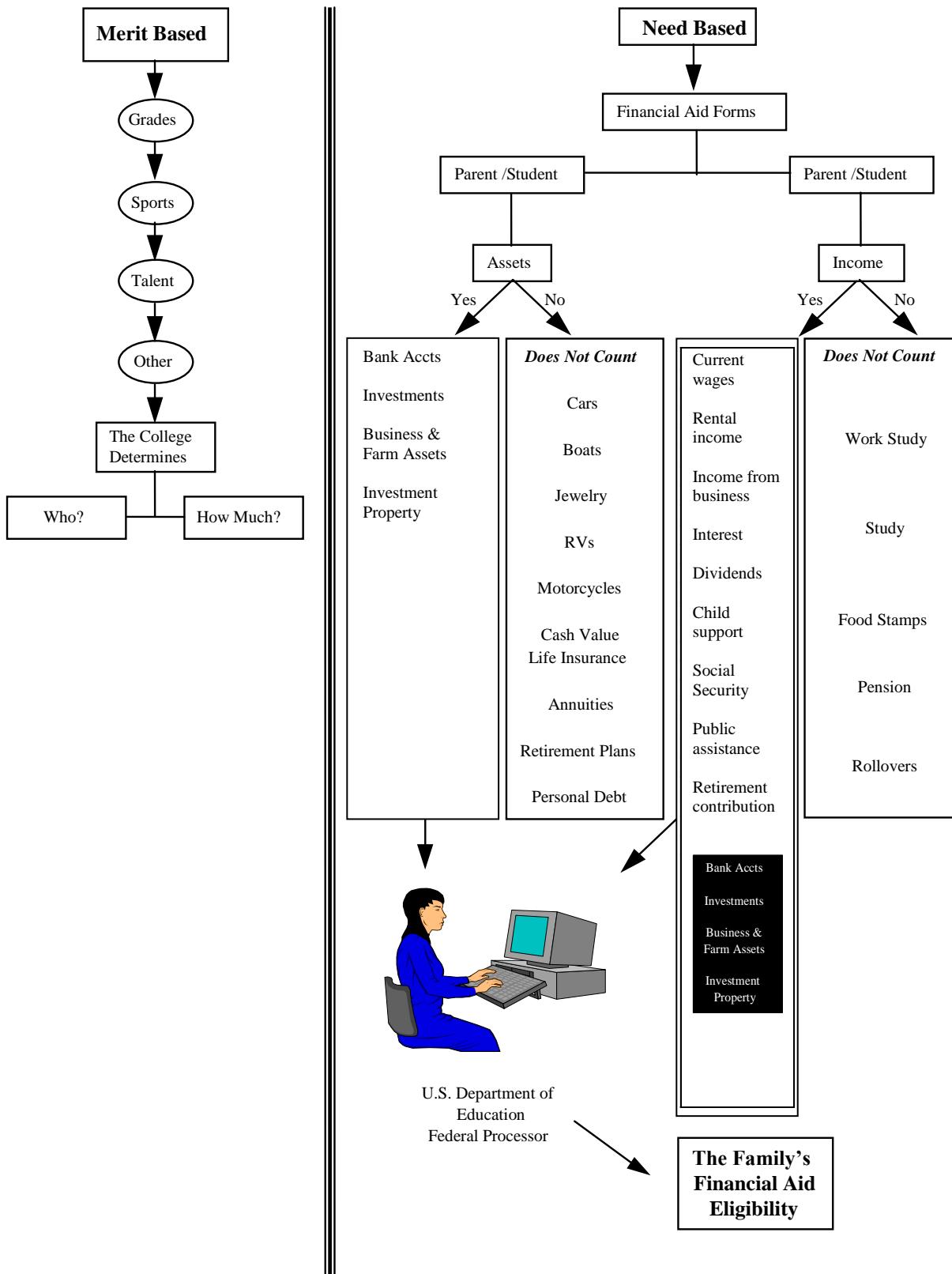
Although the federal government excludes retirement assets from assessment for financial aid purposes, income contributions in the prior year to your 401(K), 403(B), IRA, SEP, or KEOGH retirement program are included. You may want to consider discontinuing these contributions to allow for additional cash flow for college expenses. Parents with young children should consider maximizing their contributions in the early years and then discontinuing payments later to free cash flow for college expenses.

If the student earns income during their college years under the work/study program, for tax purposes this income will be included in your AGI. Line 64 of the FAFSA allows you to deduct these work/study earnings from your eligible income.

Your home value is not counted as an asset on the FAFSA application. If you have other real estate investments, consider consolidating your properties into a business, company, or corporation; report these properties under the business value/debt category. Business assets receive special consideration under the federal formulas. Properties listed as business assets will have lower assessed values than property listed as personal assets.

If your home is located on your farm or if you actively participate in farm production (you file your farm income on Schedule F of your income tax return), do not report the farm value/debt on the FAFSA application. If you passively participate in farm production (you file farm income under Schedule E of your income tax return), know that farm assets receive the same special consideration as business assets under the federal formulas.

The following chart may help you understand the FAFSA items that are included or excluded in the parents' and student's income and assets.



As a member, you will receive our financial planning worksheets. We create an initial FAFSA for you before you submit it to the government. We provide you with a Confidential Financial Aid Planning Report. You will need to weigh the cost of the proposed strategies versus the opportunity to increase your eligibility for financial assistance. Send an email to our coach to receive a copy of our financial planning worksheets or call them for details.

## **Expected Family Contribution Reduction Strategies**

Consider implementing the following strategies to lower your EFC. Lower EFCs lead to higher awards. Results could vary with different financial circumstances. You should base the strategies that you implement, if any, on your own comfort level and the sound advice of financial professionals and legal advisors. Please check with your professional advisor prior to implementation. Keep in mind that these strategies are geared to maximize the financial aid awarded to your family. Some colleges will view these strategies differently than others. Some schools may even use their own institutional formulas to evaluate financial aid eligibility.

Your Planning Report will demonstrate the financial benefits you might obtain by using the indicated strategies. We generate our results from published formulas. Your specific case may vary depending upon your student and the colleges involved. Using the suggested strategies to lower your EFC will allow you to evaluate which colleges offer the greatest opportunities to maximize your educational dollars.

After reviewing the proposed strategies, you can see the opportunities that sound educational financial planning can bring. Implement whatever is best for you. Your local consultant is experienced in this area and can suggest several possibilities that will meet your needs while maximizing your funds. Your family situation may involve unusual circumstances or require personal attention. If so, you may want to consider more detailed and comprehensive college planning. Again, your advisor can suggest a course of action that will best suit your needs. Plan wisely and take advantage of the benefits of good planning.

<b>Check, if possible</b>	<b>Our family can ...</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reposition Student's Assets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reposition Student's Income
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reposition Investment Assets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reposition Investment Property
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reposition Business Income/Assets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reposition Farm Assets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revalue Personal Residence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refinance Home Mortgage
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reposition Personal Debt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use Simplified Methodology
<input type="checkbox"/>	Claim Another College Student
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appeal Special Circumstances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Additional Negotiation Available)

You may reduce your EFC. If you implemented the above strategies:

<b>Current EFC</b>	<b>Total Reduction</b>	<b>New EFC</b>
<b>\$23,613</b>	<b>\$16,055</b>	<b>\$7,558</b>

Reducing your EFC may lead to substantial increases in your financial aid packages. A \$5,000 financial award over four years, for example, reduces out-of-pocket expenses by \$20,000. If your household is financially affluent, do not presume that you cannot reduce your EFC to a level that would increase your award eligibility. Some very basic considerations could result in sizable benefits for your family.

## **Student Aid Report**

After you submit your FAFSA online, the federal government generates a Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR is a six-page form that verifies the information you recorded on your FAFSA. You will receive your SAR by postal mail; the colleges that you list on your FAFSA will receive an electronic copy.

The Student Aid Report serves two (2) important functions:

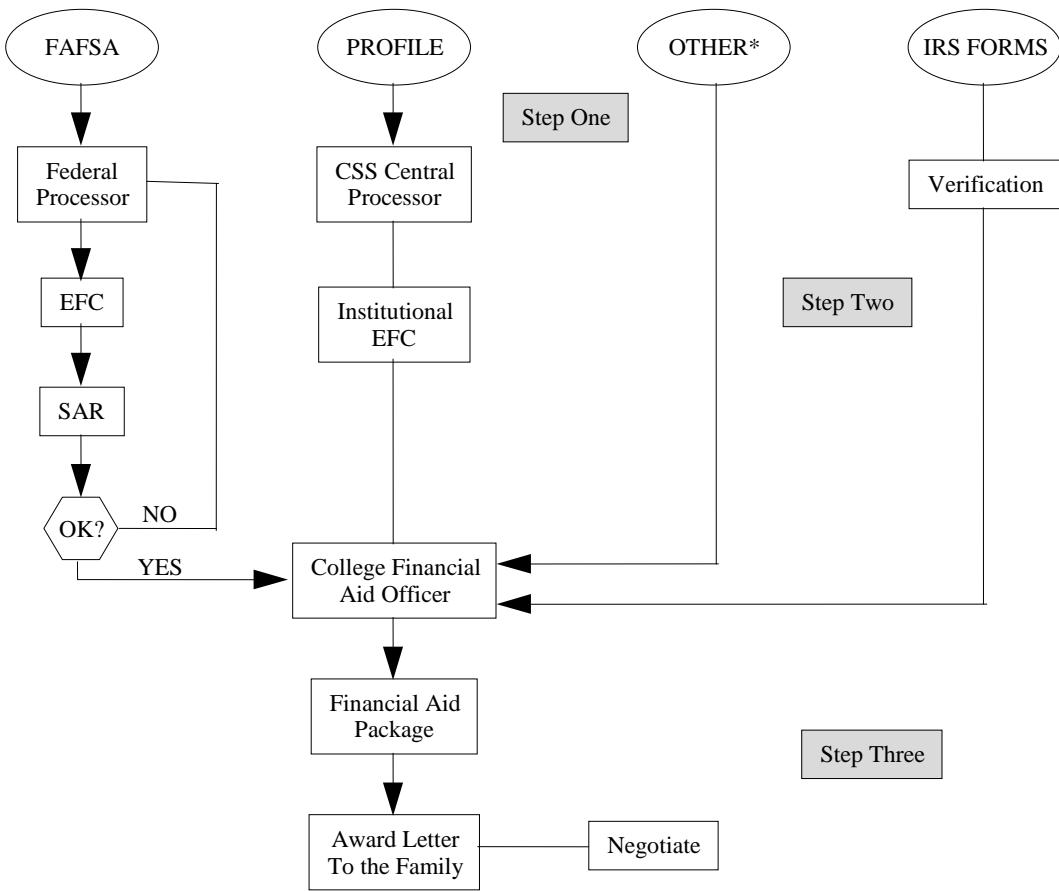
- The SAR displays the data you recorded on the FAFSA and allows you to correct any errors to the information that you provided. New information generates a new SAR. You may add colleges to your FAFSA at this time. You and the colleges that you listed on your FAFSA will receive an updated SAR.
- The SAR displays the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) number based upon your FAFSA. The EFC is located in the upper right hand corner near the date of the application; it is a five-digit number (e.g., EFC 07852).

The SAR must represent the most accurate data available to you at the time that you file. In addition, an asterisk located next to your EFC number (EFC 07852\*) indicates that your application has been selected for verification. You will receive a two-page Verification Report. This report requires that you verify the data that you provided on the FAFSA. Make sure to make copies of all financial aid applications for your records so that you may accurately complete the report.

The following is a list of the documents that you will need to gather prior to completing your financial aid applications. Since many college deadlines are prior to February 15, financial aid administrators assume that your current tax forms are NOT complete; use estimated data.

- A copy of the previous year's federal income tax return
- Your last pay stub of the current year
- Your current W2(s), if available
- All 1099 statements
- Estimated business income (if sole proprietor, partner, or S Corp stockholder)
- Estimated rent or royalty income
- Estimated capital gains or losses from the sale of property or investments
- Records of any other taxable income (unemployment, lottery, etc.)
- Records of untaxed income (social security, child support, welfare, tax exempt, etc.)
- Records of medical or dental expenses not covered by insurance
- Bank statements
- Brokerage statements
- Mortgage statements
- Business or farm financial statements
- Rental property financial statements

The next chart gives an overview of the flow of financial data used in the college process. The left column depicts the federal methodology. The center columns show the institutional methodologies. The fourth column traces the previously mentioned verification process.



**\* Includes:**

- 1) Institutional financial aid forms
- 2) Business/farm supplement for business/farm owners
- 3) Divorce/separated supplement for non-custodial parents

# The Institutional Methodology

## CSS Profile

The CSS Profile Application is a multi-page financial aid application (258 possible questions) processed by the College Scholarship Service (CSS) for colleges that request additional information prior to awarding grants and scholarships. **Many colleges, both public and private are asking for both Profile and FAFSA.** This application has three (3) sections:

- The Registration: A one-page form that registers basic information with colleges that require the CSS Profile (the colleges listed on your FAFSA will receive your CSS Profile)
- The Application: A four-page form that provides standard financial information to colleges requiring the CSS Profile
- Section O: A one/two page form that provides special financial information to colleges that require the CSS Profile

This financial aid profile calculates your EFC using the institutional methodology. The institutional EFC is a calculation based upon more detailed information regarding the parents' and student's income and assets (including the house and family farm). Many questions on the CSS Profile merely duplicate the information that you provide on the FAFSA.

Complete the FAFSA worksheets and send them to our Service Center. We will generate a report that will match the information that you provided on the FAFSA. Use this report to complete your CSS Profile. The institutional methodology seeks to add additional asset and income information to your EFC. The information that you provide on your FAFSA and CSS Profile should be consistent.

## **Institutional Financial Aid Form**

The institutional financial aid form is a financial aid application processed by those colleges (mostly private) that require additional information, over and above the data provided by the FAFSA, prior to awarding grants and scholarships. This application is used instead of the CSS Profile. Like the CSS Profile, this form calculates the institutional EFC based upon more detailed information regarding the parents' and student's income and assets (including the house).

Each college has its own unique institutional questionnaire, but many questions on these Institutional forms are merely duplications of the information that you will provide on the FAFSA and/or CSS Profile. Note the following universal concepts when completing these applications:

- Most of your income items on the institutional form are used to audit the information that you provide on the FAFSA, especially regarding your Adjusted Gross Income
- The balance of each asset category on the institutional form must equal each asset category on the FAFSA and/or CSS Profile
- The recognized standard value of your home used by most colleges is equal to the original cost plus three-percent (3%) annual appreciation from the date of purchase
- The total number of family members attending college at least halftime for one term during the student applicant's college year must be the same as the answer provided on the FAFSA and/or CSS Profile

## **Business/Farm Supplement**

The Business/Farm Supplement is a two-page form processed by those colleges (mostly private) that require additional information about business or farm income and assets. The Business/Farm Supplement provides a much more detailed (itemized) look at the parents' and/or student's business or farm income and assets. The total of all business income/assets must match the answers you provided on the FAFSA, CSS Profile and any institutional form.

## **Divorce/Separated Supplement**

The Divorce/Separated Supplement is a two-page form processed by those colleges (mostly private) that require additional information about the income and assets of the noncustodial parent and/or step-parents (if applicable). The FAFSA and CSS Profile applications only request information about the custodial parent's income and assets.

Because this information is not required on the FAFSA, CSS Profile, or institutional forms, requests for this form usually indicate the intention to include the noncustodial household income in the EFC. Most private colleges will not request this form if the divorce/separation occurred at least five years prior to the student's financial aid application.

## Financial Aid Form Deadline Schedule

You may find specific form requirements and deadlines on college websites, admissions applications, and brochures.

COLLEGE	FAFSA	CSS PROFILE	OTHER	IRS FORMS
	YES    NO	YES    NO	YES    NO	YES    NO
1. _____ Is this a required form? What is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
2. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
3. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
4. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
5. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
6. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
7. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
8. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
9. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			
10. _____ Is this a required form? When is the due date?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			

## **Grants**

Grants are awards given to students to help pay for their higher education expenses. Unlike loans, grants do not have to be repaid. Grants may be funded through federal, state, or private programs, and are **usually awarded based on financial need**. You will automatically apply for federal grants when you submit your FAFSA. Your EFC will determine whether you qualify. Federal grants include the Pell Grant and the Education Opportunity Grant (EOG). Grants that are not federally funded may require separate applications; schools may charge a minimal fee for these applications.

### **Federal Pell Grant**

Pell Grants are need-based federal funds awarded only to undergraduates. The amount awarded is determined by your EFC. You may receive two (2) federal Pell Grants in one twelve-month period. Check with your school of choice for further information.

### **Federal Student Education Opportunity Grant**

Student Education Opportunity Grants (SEOG) are also need-based, federally funded awards available to undergraduates. Unlike Pell Grants, SEOGs are often campus-based, like federal college work-study programs and **federal Perkins Loans (discontinued in 2017)**.

Campus-based financial aid refers to specific federal funds distributed annually to colleges and universities. As with Pell Grants, colleges are responsible for administering these funds. The funds awarded depend on the total amount of federal funds received and the number of students with funding requests. When the monies are exhausted, the school awards no more federal grants.

Each school has its own financial aid application deadline. Check with each school and apply as early as possible. This may affect the timeframe in which you submit your FAFSA since your EFC also determines whether you qualify for SEOG funds.

You must demonstrate exceptional financial need to qualify for SEOG funds. Federal Pell Grant recipients receive priority. The grant amount (up to \$4,000 per year) will depend on the availability of funds, financial need, and other aid awarded in your financial aid package. At the school's discretion, part-time students may receive SEOG funds. Check with your school.

A new provision ensures that non-traditional students (those over 24 years of age) can receive grant funding. In addition, institutions have the authority to consider special conditions, or significant changes in your financial situation, when awarding federal Pell Grants. Apply for financial aid as soon as you can after January 1 if you plan to enroll in the fall. Some school deadlines must be met early in the calendar year to receive certain funds. If you have not heard from your processor within four weeks after submitting your FAFSA, contact:

Federal Student Aid Information Center  
<http://studentaid.ed.gov>  
1-800-4-FED-AID

**FEDERAL PELL GRANTS**  
(for undergraduates)

Grant—no repayment

Students must have Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of \$2,100 or less to be eligible

Maximum award amount received depends on enrollment status and length of enrollment

Must apply no later than June 30

Students paid directly or school account is credited

**FEDERAL SEOG**  
(for undergraduates)

Grant—no repayment

For students with exceptional financial need—priority given to federal Pell Grant recipients

Maximum award is generally \$4,000, depending on funds available at each school

Schools set application deadlines

Students paid directly or school account is credited

**FEDERAL WORK-STUDY**  
(for undergraduates/graduates—undergraduates can receive aid for more than one undergraduate degree)

Provides jobs on- or off-campus

Amount earned cannot exceed financial need; earnings limits also depend on funds available at each school

Schools set application deadlines

Undergraduates paid by the hour; graduates paid by the hour—all students paid at least monthly

## Loan Negotiations

Because so many students use borrowed money to pay for college, you may negotiate with many employers to exchange service for loan payments. You may wish to suggest this option to an employer: accept a lower pay scale and apply the difference to your student loans. Employers are not used to having employment applicants ask for less money in exchange for loan forgiveness; they may even gain special tax advantages by paying educational costs for their employees. **Your coach can explain in more detail how.**

You may find that the low interest federal loans are a better alternative to using your invested capital or resources that may provide a greater rate of return. Ask your financial advisor about these options or consult your accountant. By borrowing money to meet educational costs, you will invest in your future. As with any investment, you should thoroughly investigate all options before affixing your signature. The following are a few tips:

1. Learn the language. Go over terms and definitions. Banks and credit unions offer free pamphlets that explain borrowing.
2. Determine how much money you really need to borrow. Have you exhausted all other sources of financing? Could you cut your expenses, or work another job and borrow less? You do not have to borrow the maximum amount available.
3. Determine how much you will be able to repay. You may not want to borrow as much for your undergraduate education if you expect to borrow money for graduate school later. Estimate your starting monthly salary when you finish college to determine how much debt you should reasonably assume. Ask your bank or college financial office to estimate the monthly payment you will face with various levels of debt.
4. Shop around. Loans subsidized by the government tend to cap interest rates and offer provisions for deferred payments. **Some loans may even be forgiven or negotiated away** if you commit to certain service work after graduation.
5. Know all the facts before you commit. What is the simple interest rate on the loan? When does repayment begin? What will be the monthly payment? Are there extra charges involved, such as on origination fee? Are there any conditions or restrictions on the loan?

6. Loans may be a wise option even if you have other funds available. Consider whether you might choose a career that may provide loan forgiveness or experience investment returns that exceed the cost of the low interest loans.

## **College Work-Study**

Your eligibility for college work-study (CWS), another federal program, is determined by your EFC. Like the SEOG, CWS is campus-based; the schools distribute the funds allocated by the government. Most CWS is need-based aid that provides jobs for undergraduate and graduate students. In recent years, higher income families often receive these awards.

**Speak with your coach to learn how to apply even if you don't think you may qualify.**

Undergraduates earn hourly wages but never less than the federal minimum wage. Graduate students may be paid hourly or receive a salary. The school is your employer for most on-campus work. Off-campus jobs usually involve work that is in the public interest; off-campus your employer may be a private or non-profit organization, or a local, state, or federal agency. Occasionally schools have agreements with private, for-profit organizations, but the student's work must be academically relevant. The school decides the size of your financial award, arranges the job, and pays your wages. Your earnings cannot exceed your CWS funding award.

## **Other Programs**

Cooperative education, junior fellowships, and internships offer additional opportunities.

**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION:** This program combines formal studies with work related to your major. In most cases, the money you earn will cover college costs. You may participate in three ways:

1. Work part time and attend class part time.
2. Work full time for one semester; attend school full time for the next semester; continue to rotate work and school.
3. Attend school in the evening and work full time during the day

You can learn more by researching the National Commission for Cooperative Education at <http://www.co-op.edu/>.

FELLOWSHIPS are probably the least marketed programs. With over 5,000 openings for students with financial need who rank in the top ten percent of their class, fellowship vacancies average around 1,900. These programs provide students with the opportunity to work for a federal agency during their calendar breaks in the winter, spring, and summer. A major benefit is that after graduation a professional position may be available with the federal government:

<http://www.usajobs.gov/studentjobs/>

INTERNSHIPS: Internships are like cooperative education programs except that they often last only one summer or academic term. Internships do not necessarily earn you wages.

Consider searching for an organization in your major; offer to work for tuition payments. If majoring in accounting, for example, you might approach an accounting firm about paying your tuition; in exchange, you would work for that firm before and/or after graduation. Many employers will also consider paying down student loans in exchange for your work commitment. They may even receive valuable tax incentives that make recruiting you much more attractive than other candidates who do not present this creative strategy.

## **Private Scholarships**

Private scholarships may be the first thing that comes to mind when families begin thinking about financing a college education. While scholarships do exist, only a small percentage of students receive partial scholarships and even fewer receive full scholarships.

The smart student will investigate potential scholarships while working hard to secure other financial assistance. We recommend that you identify and apply for every major program for which you may be eligible. Compare the financial aid packages offered by your schools of choice to see how you might enhance your financial aid eligibility. Note that any scholarships received are usually designated as part of your total financial aid package; schools do not deduct the value of the scholarship from your EFC.

As with grants and loans, some scholarships are offered by religious, professional, and service organizations, ethnic groups and businesses, or talent and field-specific entities. Your library, school bulletin boards, local newspapers, and websites have information on scholarships. Some college departments award scholarships. Many schools offer automatic limited scholarships to attract students to their school or particular departments.

## **Scholarship Searches**

Computerized scholarship search companies claim that billions of scholarship dollars and grant money go unclaimed each year because students do not know how to access the funds. This is simply not true. Colleges control most of the available college scholarships and grants; less than two percent (2%) is available from outside sources. Beware of any guarantee of receiving a certain sum. Private scholarships cannot be guaranteed. These so-called guarantees require copies of rejection letters from the recommended scholarship funding sources. No credible scholarship provider sends rejection letters. Do not pay for a private scholarship search. You should instead start your own free scholarship search online:

<http://www.fastweb.com>

## Conduct Your Own Local Scholarship Search

Scholarships and grants from local organizations are more likely to fit your profile; your odds of success increase dramatically when you apply for local, private sector monies. Many colleges, however, subtract the amount of these PRIVATE awards from what they would give you. **Always check with your coach to learn the BEST awards to apply to and receive.**

You may start your search here:

1. High school guidance department
2. Parent/Teacher Association
3. Chamber of Commerce
4. Local libraries
5. Local community/technical college
6. Yellow Pages (under Foundations)
7. Churches
8. Clubs
9. Unions
10. Trade associations
11. Fraternal organizations
12. Service organizations
13. Employers
14. Pageants or competitions
15. Nonprofits

Once you locate possible funding, use the chart on the next page to record the information that you gather. Submit your applications by the appropriate deadlines. **Ask your coach how you or someone you know may sponsor a local scholarship for a fraction of the actual award. Our organization will often coop with you on the awards through our current programs.**

## **Local Scholarships & Grants**

## **Writing Scholarship Applications**

Determine the requirements of each scholarship. Apply for scholarships with requirements that you meet.

- Request information for each scholarship. Ask for all information including forms, specific requirements, and deadlines.
- Apply early. Start the application process six to eight weeks in advance of the deadline. In some cases, you will be asked to document financial need. You may need to complete worksheets that determine financial need, adding four to six weeks to your processing time. Remember to give your recommendation writers plenty of time to honor your request for a letter. You need to be assertive and follow up to make sure that they complete the task. Include a stamped, addressed envelope.

## **Writing a Letter of Application**

An application letter is one of the most important factors in applying for a scholarship. These written statements, in most cases, are equivalent to an interview. Substituting generic statements or resumes will usually generate a less favorable picture of you. Essays and letters are the way by which you earn outside scholarships. The essay is a persuasive piece—you persuade the readers to award you a scholarship. The following tips may assist you in preparing a well-written statement:

- Be personal. Address the letter or essay to the scholarship committee. Make sure to address the specific committee (e.g., National Hispanic Scholarship Committee). If you can, get the names of individual committee members.
- Follow all directions. Analyze questions or statements; make sure that you understand what is required of you.
- Emphasize your accomplishments. Self-perception is important. If you do not emphasize your good points, the committee will never know that they exist.

- Write a rough draft. Ask a writing teacher at your school or another professional to critique your letter. Make the work your own. Colleges know if someone else did it.
- Use concrete examples and specific experiences. Show, don't just tell.
- Use organization that flows well. Remember that the committee will evaluate your organization, logic, and reasoning abilities.
- Stick to the point. Select only those ideas, opinions, experiences, or feelings that address and reinforce your point.
- Adjust the length of your essay to the amount of white space that the form allows. Obey all word limits. You may write under the limit but do not exceed the limit.
- Keep it simple. Do not use big words to impress the committee. Use your own voice.
- Keep it clean. Avoid choppy, awkward sentences. Read your own writing aloud. If it does not sound right to you, it will not sound right to your readers.

## **Recommendations**

- Package together your resume, recommendation forms, and addressed, stamped envelopes.
- Give the package to individuals who agree to write a recommendation letter on your behalf. Make sure to ask only those teachers or individuals who can attest to your character. Your letter writers should know you well and recognize the importance of writing a good letter.
- Ask for recommendations approximately six to eight weeks in advance of your deadlines.
- Follow-up with the individual in three weeks to see if there is additional information that you may provide.
- Send thank-you notes to every letter writer.

## **Five Common Essay Topics for Scholarships**

Scholarship applications will generally ask you to discuss your background, achievements, educational goals, career goals, financial need, or any other information deemed relevant. Five common essay topics include:

1. Discuss how we might develop school curricula to encourage cross-cultural understanding.
2. Discuss a science topic important to humanity (e.g., climate change).
3. Submit a true, moving story, poem, or article based on your personal experience.
4. Discuss an individual's right to work.
5. Submit a scientific research project (e.g., theories regarding cold fusion).

## State Scholarship/Grant Deadline Information

<b>State</b>	<b>Application Deadline</b>
Alabama	None
Alaska	Check with Financial Aid Administrator
American Samoa	Check with Financial Aid Administrator
Arizona	Determined by School
Arkansas	March 1
California	March 2
Colorado	Determined by School
Connecticut	February 15
Delaware	April 15
District of Columbia	May 25
Florida	Must be processed by May 15
Georgia	Determined by School
Guam	Check with Financial Aid Administrator
Hawaii	March 1
Idaho	Determined by School
Illinois	First Time Applicants - October 1 Continuing Applicants - June 1
Indiana	March 1
Iowa	April 20
Kansas	March 15
Kentucky	For Priority Consideration - April 1
Louisiana	April 1
Maine	May 1
Maryland	March 1
Massachusetts	For Priority Consideration - May 1
Michigan	First Time Applicants - February 15 Continuing Applicants - March 15
Minnesota	May 2
Mississippi	Determined by School
Missouri	May 15
Montana	For Large Schools - March 1 For Small Schools - April 1
Nebraska	Determined by School
Nevada	Determined by School
New Hampshire	May 3
New Jersey	Tuition Aid Grant Recipients - June 1 Fall & Spring Terms - October 1 For Spring Term Only - March 1
New Mexico	Determined by School
New York	May 1
North Carolina	March 15
North Dakota	April 15
Ohio	September 30
Oklahoma	May 31
Oregon	None - Contingent Upon Funding
Pennsylvania	State Aid Recipients - May 1 All Other Applicants - August 1
Puerto Rico	May 2

<b>State</b>	<b>Application Deadline</b>
Rhode Island	March 1
South Carolina	June 30
South Dakota	Determined by School
Tennessee	For Priority Consideration - July 1
Texas	Determined by School
Utah	Determined by School
Vermont	For Priority Consideration - March 1
Virgin Islands	Check with Financial Aid Administrator
Virginia	Determined by School
Washington	Determined by School
West Virginia	March 1
Wisconsin	None - Contingent upon Funding
Wyoming	Determined by School
Federal States of	
Micronesia	Check with Financial Aid Administrator
Marshall Islands	Check with Financial Aid Administrator
Northern Mariana Islands	Check with Financial Aid Administrator
Palau	Check with Financial Aid Administrator

## A National Database of Scholarships & Grants

Although the private sector produces only 1% to 2% of the available college financial aid, many families still wish to pursue every possible source of funding to reduce their costs. What are the common traits of respectable computerized scholarship searches?

1. Low cost—Many scholarship searches are free (e.g., [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)). It is worth the time and effort to complete your own database research.
2. No guarantee—No respectable scholarship search will guarantee funding.
3. Annually verified list of sources—Every foundation or company that offers a scholarship, grant, or endowment usually operates its program under a non-profit status (IRC 501c3). As such, funders must register each year with the Internal Revenue Service. Credible search companies will annually verify the continuing status of each source.
4. Credible—if the database used by the search company is also used at libraries and colleges, you mostly likely have found a credible resource.

Remember that many colleges will subtract the amount of your private awards from any financial aid package. Use this source sparingly and never at the expense of the time that should be devoted to college selection efforts.

# **Military Educational Opportunities**

## **Can I really get an education through the military?**

Military educational benefits are broad, varied, financial, and worth your consideration. There are programs and incentives available prior to, during, and following military service. It is very possible to serve in a branch of the military and gain a baccalaureate degree debt-free; it is also possible to let the government pay for your master's degree or doctorate. If you are interested in a military career . . . this can work. Military service, however, is not the ONLY educational option.

## **Military Academies**

If you would like consideration as a candidate for a military academy, contact your U.S. Representative or Senator in your junior year of high school. You will need to score 1800+ on the SAT, plus demonstrate leadership qualities, excellent health, athletic skills, and involvement in extracurricular activities. Competition is tough, so diversify your options.

## **What about ROTC?**

Reserve Officers Training Corps is a training program designed to provide the military with college-educated officers. College students who participate in ROTC will graduate as Second Lieutenants. There are two-year plans, four-year plans, scholarships, financial assistance, and Veterans benefits available.

## **How does the four-year program work?**

The four-year program has two parts: the Basic Course and the Advanced Course. The military provides uniforms, textbooks, and materials at no cost to the student. Students usually take the Basic Course, consisting of military science classes, during their first two college years. Students are then eligible to apply for the Advanced Course, normally taken during the final two years of college. If accepted to the Advanced Course, students attend Advanced Camp, a paid training session usually completed during the summer after the junior year of college. To be accepted into the Advanced Course, students must sign a contract and agree to assume about eight years of military service obligation. Students receive a subsistence allowance in the Advanced Course.

### **What about the two-year program?**

Community college graduates, students at four-year colleges who did not take ROTC during their first two years, students entering a two-year post-graduate course of study, and high school students planning to attend military junior colleges may enroll in the two-year program. To enter the program students must attend a paid six-week Basic Camp. After successfully completing Basic Camp, students who meet all the necessary enrollment requirements may enroll in the Advanced Course.

### **Does ROTC offer scholarships?**

ROTC offers two, three, and four-year scholarships on a competitive basis to the most outstanding students who apply. Scoring 1800+ on the SAT will enhance your chances for a scholarship. The scholarships provide for college tuition and fees, a textbook allowance, supplies and equipment, as well as a subsistence allowance. The military prioritizes students pursuing degrees in nursing, engineering, the physical sciences, and other technical skills currently in high demand. For further information, contact your local recruiter for information on the ROTC program.

### **Military Medical Programs**

If you are considering medical fields, visit the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences website at <http://www.usuhs.mil/>. For scholarship information, download the F. Edward Hébert Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) fact sheet at <http://www.goarmy.com/amedd/docs/hpsc.pdf>.

### **Already in the service?**

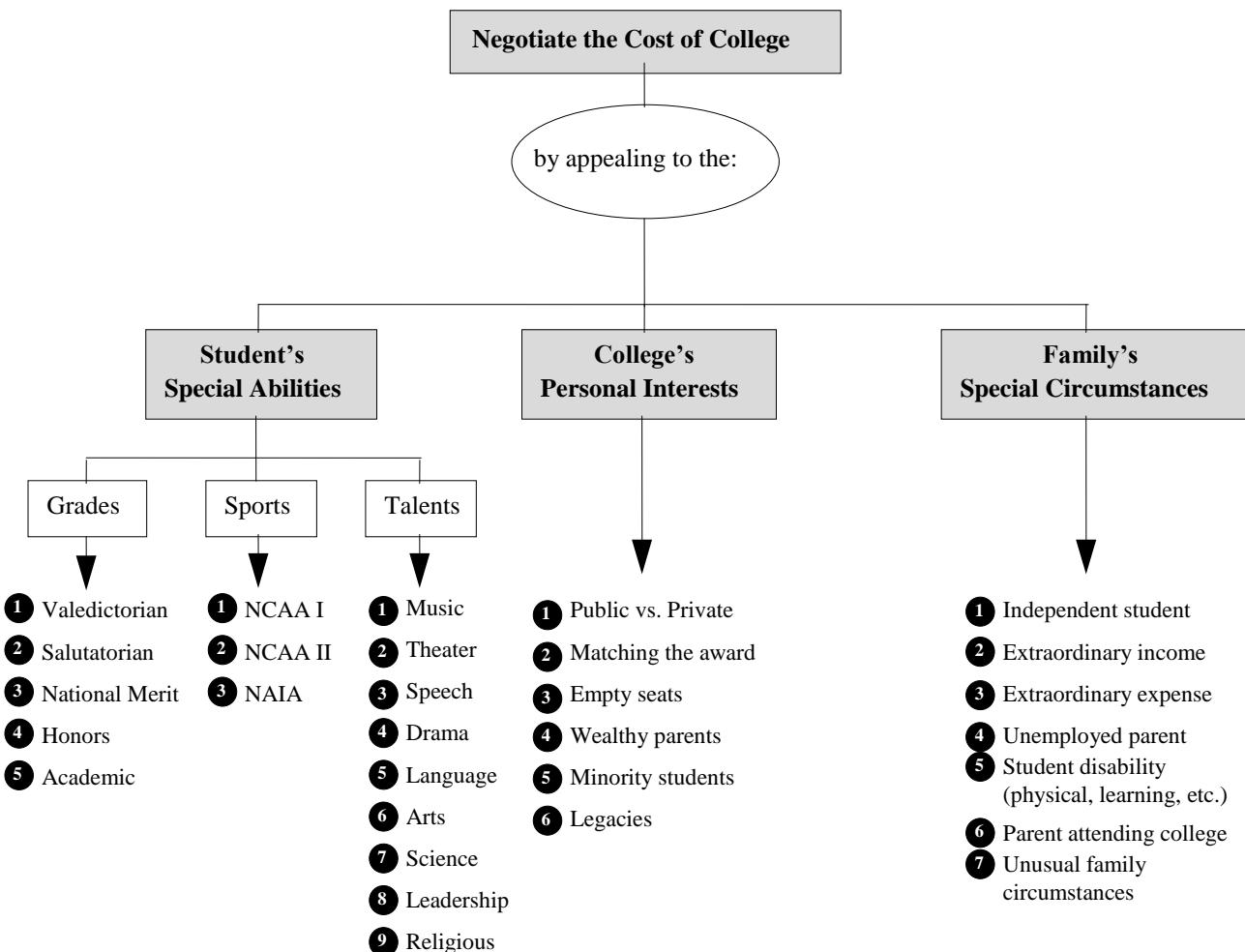
All branches of the service encourage off-duty college coursework. The military will pay a portion of your tuition while you are in the service. Remember that job duties come first. Job changes, such as transfers, remote assignments, and unusual hours may interrupt your education plans. The Servicemember's Opportunity College (SOC) is a program that helps servicemen who move frequently or receive remote assignments. The SOC is a consortium of national higher education associations with more than 400 institutional members. The SOC consortium functions, in cooperation with the Department of Defense (DOD) and the military services, to help meet the voluntary higher education needs of service members. Any institution in the SOC accepts credits from any other institution in the SOC.

**For a list of military associations sponsoring student aid programs, download the American Legion's *Need a Lift?* publication at <http://pdf.needalift.org/>.**

# NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES

**College costs can be negotiated.** Heavy competition for students exists between schools. As such, an outstanding award from one school will give you the opportunity to negotiate a better award from competing schools. Use the following section to navigate the award process. We will also guide you through the process for negotiations and appeals. Many schools (mostly private) have empty seats that they must fill to meet their operating budget. Private schools must compete with lower cost, state-subsidized public universities. The following flowchart illustrates the negotiating process.

**NO ONE should pay FULL PRICE for college !**



## Negotiation Strategies

The following is a listing of possible strategies that you might use to negotiate the high cost of college.

### Special Abilities of Student

Category	Negotiating Hints
Grades & Talent	<p>Improvement in your grades and test scores can score big points with the colleges. Even if your grades are average, a great senior year can increase your opportunities to receive funding.</p> <p>Many colleges accept credit for CLEP or Advanced Placement (AP) courses and <i>postsecondary option</i> programs (college classes taken while in high school). Do not overlook these opportunities for reducing your college costs.</p> <p>Make sure you understand the requirements for the merit scholarships available at each college.</p> <p>Acceptance to an Honors program may reduce your tuition liability and can be an added bonus on your resume.</p>
Sports	<p>Send a solid resume of sports achievement to numerous small colleges. Many NCAA II and NAIA colleges offer sizable grants for athletes.</p> <p>NCAA Division III schools cannot offer athletic grants to students. The coaches, however, may influence the decisions made by the Office of Financial Aid. Do not be afraid to ask the coach for help.</p>

## Interests of Colleges

Category	Negotiating Hints
Public vs. Private	<p>Despite common beliefs, a private college education may be within reach. Private colleges find it difficult to compete with public universities. To attract good students, private schools often give sizable tuition discounts. One inquiry to the Office of Financial Aid may result in additional funding. Ask the financial aid officer, "How do you reward a good student?"</p> <p>Make sure to apply to competing colleges in the same location, athletic division, or intellectual specialties. Apply to many colleges to increase your opportunities for funding.</p>
Matching the Award	<p>By applying to eight to ten colleges, you can compare similar offers and request that your college of choice match any offers that you receive. Make sure to include copies of your award letters.</p>
Empty Seats	<p>Due to high costs in a struggling economy, many private colleges today have suffered lower attendance rates. Empty seats do not meet operating costs. Find the quality schools that have declining enrollments and ask for additional funding.</p>
Wealthy Alumnus or Contributor	<p>Upper middle class or wealthy families often assume they must pay full price for college. In truth, there are many unadvertised grants used to attract future benefactors. Potential donors receive special consideration. Make sure that the financial aid officer is aware of your status as a future donor.</p>
Minority Students	<p>Almost every college today has grants and scholarships available for minority students and underserved populations. If you qualify, make sure to ask about these funds.</p>
Legacy	<p>Some colleges target the children of their alumni. If your child decides to attend your alma mater, do not forget to review these potential legacy grants.</p>
First Generation	<p>Some colleges offer funding for students considered <i>first generation</i>. If you are the first in your family to attend college, this may be an opportunity to reduce your college costs.</p>

## Special Circumstances

Category	Negotiating Hints
Independent Student	Few students can claim independent status and thus exclude the parents' income and assets from their EFC. However, financial aid officers do have the discretion to declare a student <i>independent</i> if the family has a history of social impropriety. This will require a letter of verification from a psychologist, minister or other professional.
Extraordinary Income	The Office of Financial Aid may include one-time income sources (tax only entries, bonuses, etc.) as assets, not income, and reduce your EFC. Document your situation and make an appeal, if necessary.
Extraordinary Expenses	Financial aid officers may include unusual expenses (tuition, medical, dental, etc.) when calculating your EFC. Document your situation and make an appeal, if necessary.
Unemployed Parent	If a parent is unemployed during the student's academic year, document the situation and make an appeal. The Office of Financial Aid has the discretion to make changes to an award at anytime.
Student Challenges	There are many special facilities and grants for students with physical and/or learning challenges. Make sure to check with the Office of Financial Aid at each college.
Parent Attending College	You may reduce your EFC if your parent attends college at the same time. Your parent's minimum enrollment requirement is six (6) credit hours for at least one term during the year.
Unusual Family Circumstance	Some families may experience unique circumstances that affect the student progress (divorce/separation, death, etc.). These circumstances may offset poor grades or test scores. Provide documentation.

**Contact your coach and follow their recommendations carefully. You should never pay full price for college.**

# Understanding Your Award Letters

Prior to accepting your financial aid package, there are basic award letter terminologies you should understand. Understanding how these awards affect your family will allow you to be more effective in negotiating for additional funding.



## Gift Aid

- o **Federal Pell Grants** assist low-income families.
- o **Federal SEOGs** provide additional aid to low-income families that receive the Pell Grant.
- o **State Supported Grants** are determined by your Board of Regents; check for qualifications.
- o **National Merit Scholarships** reward those with high PSAT scores and GPAs.
- o **Direct College Scholarships** vary; these awards reward merit and include Benefactors, Deans, Endowment, Honors, President, Founder, Trustees, Faculty, Valedictorian, Salutatorian, Emeritus, Distinguished or Academic Scholarships.
- o **Direct College Grants** vary; usually used to recruit students with athletic, talent, or leadership abilities.
- o **Tuition Discounts** provide need based grants.

## Self Help

- o **Federal Perkins Loans** are low interest (5%), need based **student** loans; interest is **subsidized** (paid for) by the federal government while in school and up to nine months after graduation.
- o **Federal subsidized Stafford Loans** are subsidized by the federal government while in school and up to six months after graduation.
- o **Federal unsubsidized Stafford Loans** are **not** subsidized by the federal government. The interest must be repaid immediately; otherwise, any deferred interest payments will continue to accrue; all unpaid interest will be capitalized (added to the principal) when full payments begin six months after graduation.

Academic Year	Direct Subsidized (Undergraduate)	Direct Unsubsidized (Graduate)
2016-2017	3.76%	5.31%
- o **PLUS Loans** are **parents'** loans **not** subsidized by the federal government. The interest must be repaid immediately; otherwise, any deferred interest payments will continue to accrue; all unpaid interest will be capitalized (added to the principal) when full payments begin immediately upon graduation.
- o **Federal Work Study** refers to campus jobs that the college is obligated to fulfill on a first come, first serve basis. The student should register for work study during the first week on campus.

# Sample Award Letter

The University of USA is pleased to offer you the following financial assistance for the 2010/2011 academic year.

<b>Awards &amp; Resources:</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>
Federal Pell Grant	Free Money	\$ 520	\$ 260	\$ 260
Federal SEOG	Free Money	1,000	500	500
Deans Scholarship	Free Money	2,000	1,000	1,000
U of USA Grant	Free Money	10,135	5,067	5,068
State of Choice Grant	Free Money	500	250	250
Federal Work Study	Campus Work	1,500	750	750
Federal Stafford Loan	Loans	2,625	1,313	1,312
Federal Perkins Loan	Loans	1,500	750	750
PLUS Loan (Optional) <sup>1</sup>	Loans	<u>1,820</u>	<u>910</u>	<u>910</u>
Total Awards		<b>\$21,600</b>	<b>\$10,800</b>	<b>\$10,800</b>

<sup>1</sup> A PLUS loan (Parents Loan for Undergraduate Students) is not need based financial aid; any family can receive a PLUS loan for the total cost of college enrollment, less any financial aid received.

## University of USA Award Letter Analysis

Needs Analysis		Student Award	
Total Cost	\$21,600	Gifts	\$14,155
EFC	<u>\$1,820</u>	Need Based Loans	\$4,125
Need	\$19,780	Work/Study	<u>\$1,500</u>
Need Based Aid	<b>\$19,780</b>	<b>Total Need Based Financial Award</b>	<b>\$19,780</b>
% Need Met	100%		
% Gift Aid	72%	PLUS Loan	<u>\$1,820</u>
% Self Help	28%		
<b>True Cost</b>	<b>\$7,445</b>	<b>Total Award</b>	<b>\$21,600</b>

## Comparing Your Award Letters

The following schedule will help you determine the true cost of each college and the college award that provides you with the least amount of out-of-pocket expenses. For every award letter, record the total amount in each category and compare the results.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>E<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>F<sup>3</sup></b>	
<b>College</b>	<b>Total Cost of College</b>	<b>Total Grants/ Scholarships</b>	<b>Total Work Study</b>	<b>Total Loans</b>	<b>True Cost</b>	<b>Out-of-Pocket Expenses</b>
<b>University of USA</b>	<b>\$21,600</b>	<b>\$14,155</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>\$4,125</b>	<b>\$7,445</b>	<b>\$1,825</b>
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

<sup>1</sup> Do not include PLUS or unsubsidized Stafford loans in this total

<sup>2</sup> True cost = Column A minus Column B

<sup>3</sup> Out-of-Pocket Expenses = Column A minus (Column B and Column C and Column D)

## Negotiating Your Award Letters

Once you have compared your award letters and determined how much you will pay for college, you must negotiate. **Send an email to your coach for sample negotiation letters.** You need to be straightforward with the school. Keep it simple, clear, appealing, and persuasive.

It is advantageous to have award letters from a variety of schools. (10 or more is best) Award letters from schools that you have no intention of attending may carry the impact that you need for your school of choice to increase its funding offer. You also want to have award letters from schools that compete with your school of choice. Rivals do not like to lose students to their competition. **Your coach can show you the best approach.**

By using **time-tested strategies for college selection**, your coach can make certain you apply to right pool of colleges. Applying to random colleges or limiting your choices to a restricted geographic location will have substantial negative influence your outcomes.

**Knowing which schools to apply to and how to best approach them is the key.**

This is the heart of making college affordable and the first step in being “smart” in the art of negotiations. Do not allow yourself to fall into the trap of applying only to local or state schools or applying just where your friends are going. Remember, this is where you will be



## **Example of a terrible appeal letter**

Ms. Linda Anderson  
Director of Financial Aid  
Name of College  
1234 Main Street  
City, State Zip Code

RE: Financial Award Package for Heather Smith

Dear Mrs. Anderson:

Per our recent telephone conversation, enclosed is our Student Aid Report and a copy of (Any College)'s award letter. As I mentioned in our conversation, given our family's current financial situation, it would be financially very difficult for Heather to attend your school unless there is a major adjustment to her financial aid package. You stated that you would do everything possible to provide additional assistance for Heather and suggested that we send you the enclosed documents.

As you know, Heather is a very talented young woman. She desperately wants to attend your school; however, as the (Any College)'s award letter demonstrates, other schools have committed substantially more funding toward Heather's education.

Both my wife and I recently obtained new jobs; we are trying to catch up with the debt we incurred while unemployed over the past year. This has forced us to take a serious look at the (Any College)'s award as an economically viable alternative to your school. However, Heather would dearly love to attend (Name of College).

If there is any way you can meet or exceed (Any College)'s award, Heather will commit to attending your school. Please contact me as soon as possible so that we may make the appropriate arrangements for Heather's future.

Sincerely,

Heather Smith

## **Arrange a session with your parents and coach!**

The letter was written by the parent on behalf of their student. WRONG!

The letter is “begging” for more money from the parent’s perspective, with no involvement by the student. WRONG!

It is confrontational and demeans the school and its current position. WRONG!

It shows no determination that the student is convicted to attending that school. WRONG!

It relinquishes control to the admissions or financial aid office instead of the student maintaining control. WRONG!

## **Negotiation is NOT begging!**

If you the student have followed the systematic protocol for applying and negotiating as outlined by your coach, **you** will be the one in control . . . not the school. **You** are the prize. You are the commodity that the school will benefit by recruiting. If you find yourself feeling as if they have “done you a favor” to recruit you to the college, you better think hard and reevaluate the premise under which you selected that school. Was it to impress friends or family members who always wanted you to go there? **This is not a good premise for building your future.**

Do not leave the most important component to this life changing decision up to chance or attempt to learn this process by “trial and error”. Your coach understands the process and how best to help you to succeed. Ultimately, **you the student** should make the final decision based on your personal confidence in the research and choices you have made.

This is ALL ABOUT YOU and you should consider all factors to make the very best decisions. Rely on your own instincts and the input from your family and those who love and care about you who will have your best interests at heart. Eventually **YOU** are ultimately responsible for your destiny and future. This process is ALL ABOUT YOU!

## **Final Tips: Negotiating the Cost of College**

Regardless of the strategies unique to you and your family's profile, you must take several steps to maximize the success of your financial and educational negotiations.

- Set your goal to place in the top 25% of the incoming freshmen class academically.
- Emphasize the talents and leadership abilities that you will bring to college.
- Make sure your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is as low as possible.
- Apply for financial aid as early as possible after October 1 each year.
- Apply to at least six or more colleges to increase opportunity to negotiate.
- Apply to colleges that historically offer the highest awards to students like you.
- Ask for more money. If you do not ask, you cannot receive. **NEGOTIATE!**

If you follow these simple routines, you will likely receive the very best educational opportunities for the least possible cost.

## **Additional Considerations**

This section lists alternatives to consider regarding your financial investment in higher education. It is not our intention to provide one solution for every family. Rather, we would like to encourage you to employ your own creative thinking toward financing higher education. Use creativity to discover cost-reducing alternatives, new financing directions, and other viable options. Consult your local financial professional for recommendations.

### **Is it okay to have a large home equity?**

A large equity can be beneficial because you can borrow for educational expenses using your home assets as collateral. Home mortgage interest is still deductible under the latest tax laws; interest on other consumer debts, such as car loans and credit cards, is not deductible. The law allows you to borrow up to \$100,000 against your principal or second residence. The IRS considers interest paid on this loan *mortgage* interest; as such, the interest paid on this loan is tax deductible. Of course, this does not mean that a bank will loan you maximum funds. The amount of your equity will determine the loan amount for which you qualify.

You may use a home equity loan to prepay tuition, pay off a car loan, or finance the purchase of student housing. You may also tap your home equity via a second mortgage or a home equity credit line.

A second *mortgage* is just what the name implies. In addition to the original mortgage on your home, it is another, new mortgage, based on your equity.

Example: You have lived in your house for 12 years. A bank loans you \$10,000 based on the appreciation of your home and the total amount that you have paid against the original loan principal. Because your home is collateral for the loan, you now have an additional or second mortgage and, accordingly, additional monthly payments.

Obtaining a second mortgage may incur hefty charges and the interest rate may be higher than the rate on your original mortgage.

Numerous lenders now offer home equity lines of credit. These credit lines allow you to borrow against your equity. Like second mortgages, your house is collateral and the cost of establishing the credit line can be substantial. The credit line may be set for a limited or indefinite number of years. The lender establishes the credit limit based on your equity. You can draw on this credit line whenever needed and pay interest only on the amount that you borrow. Offers vary so you should compare lender rates and terms. An equity line of credit can be a convenient and flexible loan arrangement. Be certain that you understand the fine print. Remember that you risk your home when you use it as collateral for a loan. A lending organization may foreclose if you are unable to make payments.

### **Can you get into a salary reduction plan?**

Participating in a salary reduction plan, such as a Tax Shelter Annuity or 401(k), can be advantageous in several ways. Speak with your financial advisor or coach for details.

- It can reduce your EFC.
- You will build a nest egg.
- It can enhance your aid eligibility.

Under such arrangements, you withhold a specific amount of from each paycheck and deposit the pre-tax funds directly into your plan. The IRS does not consider these funds when determining your EFC. Furthermore, you only pay taxes on the funds that you withdraw from the plan. Check with your employer to find out if such plans are available or consult your financial advisor.

### **Take Advanced Placement (AP) courses.**

Take college courses for credits while in high school. Earn credits for scoring well on an advanced placement examination. Each credit hour that you earn now can save you significant money in the future.

### **Maximize your financial aid need.**

Make sure that your financial aid officer has all the facts with which to calculate your true cost of attendance. Are you taking a long term, expensive prescription medication that you forgot to include? Did you break a leg over the summer and now require physical therapy? Did you forget to mention travel home for the holidays and academic breaks? These facts will not affect the amount of your EFC. You might, however, increase your financial need and qualify for a larger student aid package.

### **Can the family pay its contribution in installments?**

To help decrease the strain on family budgets, many schools now offer installment plans. Ask your financial aid officer if your potential school has such a plan.

### **Can two really live as cheaply as one?**

Perhaps, if two or more family members attend college at least half time during the same semester; the family will allocate its financial contribution across multiple students. Your EFC will remain the same but you will double the aid for which you are eligible.

Now may be the perfect time for mom or dad to obtain a degree or participate in continuing education. If two children will be entering college only one year apart, it may be advantageous for the older child to attend a less expensive school until the sibling also enrolls. Incidentally, **some schools offer tuition discounts when two or more family members simultaneously enroll.**

### **What about buying student housing?**

Instead of paying for room and board, become a landlord. Many parents have saved money by purchasing a condominium or house near the school. The student receives free rent in exchange for performing managerial duties—finding and overseeing roommates. The rent payments help offset mortgage payments and other property expenses. In addition, the mortgage interest is tax deductible. When the student graduates, you may sell the real estate, often for a profit.

### **Consider locking in tuition fees.**

Schools are not exempt from inflation. Tuition fees often increase on an annual basis. Some schools will allow you to avoid such increases by paying for all four years of college at the beginning of the Freshman year. A home equity loan might be a good source for this strategy. Check with your financial advisor to explore this option if it appeals to you. In some circumstances where equity counts as available assets for college, this strategy can bring **triple** advantages. Lowers your equity position while securing a discount on college costs and increase the home interest deductions for income tax purposes

### **Does the school offer a guaranteed tuition plan?**

Many colleges offer a guaranteed tuition plan. Some plans may require maintaining a set sum on deposit in the school account. Other plans may involve a prepayment. Some cover only the years that you prepay. Others guarantee no tuition increases in the third and fourth years. Ask your financial aid officer what plans are available to you.

### **Understand the fine print.**

Keep in mind that consumer debt interest is not tax deductible. You may not wish to borrow money, even at reasonable rates, just to buy into a guaranteed tuition plan. If you do borrow to lock in tuition, consider a tax-deductible home equity loan. You should also consider whether increased tuition rates will surpass the interest that your money would earn if invested elsewhere.

### **What about paying tuition in installments?**

Many schools have developed tuition installment plans. Every school applies its own creativity to such plans so you need to check with each school that you might attend.

### **Can you defer a portion of the tuition payment?**

Some schools offer deferred tuition payment plans. You may defer a portion of tuition for a limited time at a reasonable interest rate.

**Take advantage of tuition discounts.**

Most colleges offer a percentage discount if semester tuitions are paid in full by a certain date, usually two to four weeks before the first day of classes. Always ask.

**Investigate innovative student aid programs.**

Many schools have devised student aid programs to assist with the burden of financing higher education. Some offer low-interest loans to parents who do not qualify for need-based aid; these loans use funds generated from interest on endowment funds or state tax-exempt bonds. Schools use different strategies to allocate money. Be open minded.

Some schools offer tuition breaks to the children of alumni. Other schools offer a variety of incentives for academic achievement. Some may match non-federal, non-state scholarships. Others may convert loans to scholarships if you maintain a certain grade point average.

Schools usually provide room and board to residence hall assistants and supervisors in exchange for a certain number of work hours per week. Establish yourself as a campus leader, such as a student body officer or newspaper editor; school leadership may lead to free tuition. Check with your career placement office; many use innovative approaches in helping students secure work.

**Consider commercial college tuition payment plans.**

Offered under many different names by many different companies, commercial college tuition payment plans offer an alternative funding option. You decide how much you will need to borrow at the beginning of each semester. The lender sends the money to you or the school; you make monthly payments to the lender. When the account is in your favor, you earn interest. When the account favors the lender, you pay interest. Some plans include life insurance to cover outstanding debt in the event of death or disability.

### **Should we Invest in a 529 plan?**

A 529 plan is an education savings plan operated by a state or educational institution designed to help families set aside funds for future college costs. Created in 1996, it is named after Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code. As long as the plan satisfies a few basic requirements, federal law provides special tax benefits. Some states offer tax incentives as well.

529 plans can be used to meet costs of qualified colleges nationwide. In most plans, your choice of school is not affected by the state your 529 savings plan is located. You can be a California resident, invest in a Vermont plan, and send your student to college in North Carolina. Check to see if your institution is eligible and governed by 529 rules. Every state now has at least one 529 plan available. It is up to each state to decide whether it will offer a 529 plan and what the plan will look like so 529 plans can differ from state to state. You should research the features and benefits of your plan before you invest.

529 plans are usually categorized as either prepaid or savings plans. Savings plans work much like a 401K or IRA by investing your contributions in mutual funds or similar investments. The plan will offer you several investment options from which to choose. Your account will go up or down in value based on the performance of the particular option you select.

Prepaid plans let you prepay all or part of the costs of an in-state public college education. You may also convert the funds for use at private and out-of-state colleges. The Independent 529 Plan is a separate prepaid plan for private colleges. Educational institutions can offer a 529 prepaid plan but not a 529 savings plan. The private-college Independent 529 Plan is the only institution-sponsored 529 plan. You may invest in a 529 plan directly with the 529 plan manager or through your financial advisor.

### **Can you borrow from your retirement plan?**

Does your company allow you to borrow against your pension or profit sharing plan? Terms vary from plan to plan, of course, but often the interest rate can seem like a bargain. **The downside is you may bankrupt your retirement when there were probably better choices.**

Unless you use the loan to buy your principal residence, the law restricts the length of such loans to five years. In addition, unless you borrow less than \$10,000, these loans are confined to an amount equal to one-half of your vested dollar interest in the plan, up to \$50,000.

If you retire or die before the loan is repaid, the outstanding balance will be deducted from the retirement payout. As such, you should consider the consequences to you and/or your beneficiaries. In addition, the IRS will tax any amount that you fail to repay within the required time limit.

### **Can you borrow against your life insurance?**

Have you owned whole *life* or permanent life insurance long enough to accrue cash or surrender values? Your life insurance may provide an inexpensive loan. Check with your insurance agent or financial advisor. You may be able to borrow against your life insurance at a reasonable interest rate. If you do not repay the loan before you die, the loan principal plus any accrued interest will be deducted from the payment to your beneficiary. If the policy is modest, you could significantly compromise your intention of ensuring your family's security in the event of your death. **Some policies are designed for this purpose.**

### **Do you own stocks or bonds?**

Banks accept most securities as collateral on loans. On the other hand, you might consider borrowing against securities on *margin*. Ask your broker. Margin loans (up to 50 percent of market value) are available on most actively traded stocks and convertible bonds. You may be able to borrow against other types of bonds as well. Broker rates vary; make sure you are aware of all charges that you may incur.

Also understand the risk involved. If the market value of your securities drops, you will need to put up more money or collateral to secure your loan. If you are unable to comply, your broker may sell your stock at its current market value to meet your loan obligations. Some banks offer investment accounts that include a provision for margin borrowing. Make certain that you understand the charges and interest rates that apply.

### **What about a bank line of credit?**

Most banks offer a line of credit based on the true value of your accounts on deposit. Although essentially a long-term loan, the bank uses the interest earned on your accounts to offset some of the loan interest. Credit lines vary so it pays to shop around. If necessary, relocate your accounts.

Keep in mind that you will pay consumer debt interest on the money that you borrow; this interest is not tax deductible. If possible, it may be to your advantage to establish a home equity line of credit.

### **Can the grandparents help?**

Grandparents (or others) can make a cash gift in any amount with no gift taxes incurred as long as they apply the gift directly to tuition payments. You may also receive gifts or interest-free loans, up to \$12,000 each year, that are exempt from gift taxes.

### **Higher education is six or more years away**

When college is more than six years away, how do I use these years wisely? You have time to do some long range planning. Look at the impressive results that you can achieve by simply saving \$10 a week:

Years Until College	SAVINGS GROWTH (Interest Rate, Compounded)			
	6%	8%	10%	12%
5 years	\$3,042	\$3,208	\$3,385	\$3,575
10 years	7,147	7,991	8,963	10,085
15 years	12,688	15,125	18,156	21,937

Begin saving now. You will not regret it.

### **Interested in U.S. Treasury bills or notes?**

Treasury bills and notes are limited-risk savings vehicles with a minimum \$10,000 investment. You may purchase bills and notes directly through the Federal Reserve Bank without incurring commission fees; alternatively, you may purchase through banks and stockbrokers. Treasury bills carry up to one-year maximum maturities; if you avoid commissions, you may net a slightly higher yield than you would in money market funds. Treasury notes are available with maturities up to ten years and, therefore, generate a higher yield. You will pay a small commission if you choose to sell a Treasury before its maturity but there are no penalties. As with bonds, you assume a loss if interest rates rise between purchase and sale.

### **What about insurance as a saving vehicle?**

You can purchase an annuity or insurance policy for your child. You defer taxes on the appreciation until the annuity payments begin. You will also pay for some insurance coverage in addition to the accumulation vehicle. Check with your advisor for input.

### **Give a gift through the Uniform Gift to Minors Act (UGMA), (UTMA) Uniform Transfers To Minors Act**

The UGMA provides for custodial control of monetary gifts until the minor reaches the age of majority. These funds are considered the asset of the student who will have control of these assets upon maturity. Make certain you understand the rules compared to your intentions. Your student may choose to spend the money in a way you did not intend.

Each state determines custodial qualifications and the age of majority. Although the donor can be the custodian, estate tax and other complications often make this arrangement undesirable. Upon reaching the age of majority, complete ownership and control of the gift transfers to the child. In all states, the gift is irrevocable once transferred. It is easy and inexpensive to establish a UGMA through any bank or other savings institution. Ask your bank or advisor for more information on UGMA.

### **Should the gift be placed in a trust?**

If there may be negative factors or consequences to your child receiving full control of a gift at the age of majority (such as immaturity, lack of judgment, or tax disadvantages), it may be more appropriate to establish a trust. There are administrative costs involved. Administered by one or more trustees, a trust holds, manages, and/or disposes of property for the benefit of one or more persons or charities. A trustee may be an individual (you or your spouse) or a corporation (your bank). Sometimes trustees include both individuals and corporations. You, as the trust grantor, may select the trustee. Additionally, the trust retains control of the fund for whatever duration stipulated by the donor. Your bank or an attorney can provide further information regarding trusts.

### **Put your savings dollars into your mortgage**

Boosting your mortgage payments each month provides another excellent way to save money. Your lender will apply any additional amount paid beyond the required premium to the principal. An extra \$100 to \$200 per month will not only save you thousands of dollars in interest but it will also shorten the length of your mortgage. Assuming there is no prepayment penalty, you may consider paying off your mortgage in the year that your child enters college so that you will be free of mortgage payments. You will also accelerate your gain in equity should you decide to initiate a home equity loan.

### **Interested in the stock market?**

Common stocks with dividends reinvested have averaged about 11% annual growth since World War II. Depending on skill and timing, different investors have experienced everything from fortune to destitution. The variant results indicate the risks involved due to the volatile nature of the stock market.

### **Word of caution**

Whatever your approach to building education savings, remember the value of diversification to offset losses. It is prudent to stay aware and flexible; be willing to move in or out of investments as economic situations change.

Evaluate the element of risk in all investments. You could lose a portion, or all, of your principal. U.S. Government EE bonds are one of the most secure education financial planning options. The rate of return, however, is commensurate with the amount of risk.

You may prefer to reduce your risk by investing in the stock or bond market through a mutual fund; professionals manage and diversify these investments are diversified among many securities.

**It's Up to You!**

Stay focused. You have the guidelines; now you must do the work. With commitment and diligence, you will reap positive results. **Contact your coach with any questions.**

# **APPENDIX**

## **Independent Living for the College Student**

The information in this section, aimed at students attending college in the U.S., will help you make informed decisions.

### **HOUSING**

#### **DORMITORY LIVING**

Most colleges/universities have dormitory (or residence hall) rooms available. Meals and linen services may be provided. Dormitories can make it easier to make friends but, if you prefer to be more private or wish to cook your own food, you may want to look for an apartment. Some colleges have coed housing where females/males live together in a building; other private/religious universities forbid female/male living arrangements. Check with your school of choice.

#### **APARTMENT/ROOM RENTING/HOUSES**

You will usually find it cheaper to share expenses with a friend. Check bulletin boards or school newspapers under *roommates* or *rooms for rent*. You may be able to share or rent a room from a local family. Walk through the neighborhood and look for *For Rent* or *Vacancy* signs. The number of bedrooms and bathrooms in apartments vary but they will have a kitchen and a living room. Efficiency or studio apartments provide an inexpensive alternative if you want to live by yourself; they are very small and often combine the living, sleeping, and kitchen area into one room. Houses are usually very expensive to rent unless you share expenses with three or four other people. In addition, utilities, gas, water, and garbage removal will be an added monthly expense. Rent might be higher if the apartment is furnished. If you are an international student, or if you plan to be in the United States for a short period, renting a furnished apartment may be more economical than providing your own furnishings. If you do need furniture, check thrift stores, garage sales, local classifieds, [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org), and [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

Your school should also have a database of off-campus resources. The housing office should be able to recommend areas that are generally considered safe.

## **RENT DEPOSITS**

A deposit is a sum of money all tenants pay to guarantee against damages. If, at the end of your stay, there is no damage and the apartment is clean, most or all of the deposit is returned. A lease is an agreement which stipulates your legal obligations regarding:

1. Rent
2. Deposit
3. How long you are required to stay
4. Utilities that are expected to be paid
5. How many days of notice you must give before moving
6. Rules with which you must comply (e.g., no pets)
7. Services the landlord agrees to perform (e.g., yard work and or repairs)

## **LEASE AGREEMENT**

Your lease is a binding contract. Make sure that you read the lease carefully before you sign. If you decide to have a roommate, both parties should sign the lease agreement. Make an outline of the responsibilities that each party has before you sign a lease. You should discuss the following prior to signing a lease:

1. How much rent and what utility payments are expected
2. What household chores are expected
3. Whether you will purchase food and cook together or separately
4. What hours you are allowed to have guests or play the stereo loudly
5. Policies on drinking and smoking in the house

Never sign an agreement if you are unsure of what you are signing.

Property owners seldom rent by the month. Most require you to stay for six months, one year, or a school term. Often property owners ask for first and last month's rent. You will lose your last month's rent, and possibly your deposit, if you move out before the lease expires.

Some landlords will require that you pay the terms of the entire lease even if you move out. It may be possible to have someone else stay under your lease (called subleasing), but you will still be responsible for damages. If you feel like your landlord is not being fair, seek help from the student legal services at your college; these services are often available for free.

Before you move into any rented housing, take pictures of every room in the house. Be careful to record any holes in the walls, the condition of the floors, or other damages for documentation. When you move out, take pictures again so that there is no question of the condition in which you left the premises. Most states now require smoke and fire alarms in all rental housing. If smoke alarms are not installed in your building, feel free to ask your landlord to install them; it is for your safety. Make sure there is a fire escape in the building. Make sure all EXIT signs are lit and passages are clear. Have an escape plan in case of emergency. Feel free to ask the landlord to walk you through the escape route.

## **RENTAL INSURANCE**

Despite the fact that the landowner has property insurance, it is wise, if possible, to purchase rental insurance. Rental insurance is inexpensive and well worth the investment if you have valuables that could be stolen or damaged. Take an inventory of your assets. Make sure you have a list or pictures of all items for documentation.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **SUBWAY**

There are several forms of public transportation available. If you are in a city, you may take a subway; usually only larger U.S. cities offer rapid transit. Maps and schedules are available from the ticket office. Some subways run 24 hours. You may receive discounts by purchasing multiple tickets or a monthly pass.

### **CITY BUSES**

Buses are inexpensive transportation. Maps and schedules should be available from the bus driver. Buses usually run only certain hours of the day. Coins or monthly passes pay fares. Many bus systems offer student discounts; make sure that you ask for a student pass.

## **SHUTTLE BUSES**

Shuttle buses run in the immediate area around the campus. These are often free.

## **TAXIS**

Taxis are more expensive. Use a taxi only when necessary. A 15% tip is customary.

## **TRAINS**

Train service is usually provided from all major cities. It provides a new and wonderful way to see the country. It can be cheaper than air travel. Check with your train station. Compare the price of tickets against other kinds of travel that you might take. Traveling by train can take longer, but it can be also very exciting. See <http://www.amtrak.com> for more information about train travel in the U.S.

## **UBER OR SIMILAR SERVICES**

In all public transportation, always be aware of your surroundings. Keep your personal items within your sight.

## **CAR ON CAMPUS**

It might be cheaper to ride a bicycle or walk to class than to keep up with license, registration, gas, and parking expenses. If you are planning to stay in the U.S. for a short period, you probably will not need to a car. Check with the campus parking and transportation office for information regarding parking permits. Universities rely on revenue from parking tickets. If you risk parking on campus without a permit, know that it will only be a matter of time before you will receive a ticket.

## **CAR REPAIRS**

If your car needs a tune up, ask for a list of standard services that they tune up includes. If the mechanic has no established definition of a tune up and cannot provide a list of services, consider another mechanic. A good review of your owner's manual will tell you what you need to know about servicing. Unless it is absolutely necessary do not pay a repair shop to run a diagnostic test on your car.

## **CAR INSURANCE**

Most states require insurance on your car. This insurance protects you as well as other drivers on the road. Check with an insurance agent to receive advice on what coverage you need and what it will cost.

Insurance on your vehicle might decrease if you take a defensive driving course. (You could receive a 5 - 10% discount on coverage in your state.) If you have an antitheft device, you may receive a 5 - 50% discount on your comprehensive premium, depending on the device.

## **ROADSIDE PROTECTION**

Check the water level in your vehicle frequently. Overheating can leave you on the side of the road. Check your tires for inflation. Any gas station can assist you with the proper air pressure that your tires require. Improperly inflated tires can lower your gas mileage or, worse, result in a blow out. Rotate your tires regularly to even the wear.

Regularly check all hoses. The rubber should be smooth and pliable, not hard nor cracked. If cracked, replace immediately or you may find yourself stranded. Test all belts to see if they are worn, loose, or cracked. A worn or loose belt can slip, reducing fan and alternator efficiency, possibly overheating your engine. A cracked belt might break. To check the belt tightness, press down on it with your thumb at a point about halfway between the pulleys. You should be able to push the belt about half an inch. Check for leaks under your car. Check the wiper blades. They should bend back and forth; the rubber should be soft to the touch. If the blade is soft, but the edge is glazed or hard, run some sandpaper over the edge to expose a more pliable surface.

Check your spare tire monthly. A blowout is doubly frustrating if your spare is also flat. Make sure your jack is working and your lug wrench is in the trunk. When possible, check the exhaust system. A bad exhaust can leak carbon monoxide into the passenger compartment, causing the driver to feel drowsy or even faint.

## **PERSONAL SAFETY CAUTIONS**

Check with your school about areas that might be dangerous because of high crime rates. Park in well lit areas. Always have your keys ready to open your car door before you get to your car. Look in the back seat before you enter. Lock all doors immediately upon entering your car. If you notice someone following you, drive to the nearest police station or a well-lit, busy area.

## **DRIVER'S LICENSE**

If you do not have a driver's license, apply for a learner's permit; a permit allows you to drive any car as long as a licensed driver is in the car. To obtain a permit, take your passport or another form of identification to the local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). You will need to pass an eye test; make sure that you wear your corrective lenses (if any).

Once you have driving experience and know the state laws, apply for your driver's license. You must pass an eye examination, a written exam on state driving laws, and a driving exam. If you fail any portion, you may retake the exam on another date. If you have a driver's license from a different country, you will only have to pass the written and eye examinations. International students must have a valid driver's license from their home country in order to waive the driving test.

## **HITCHHIKING**

You may see people standing along the road with their arm outs and thumbs extended (the signal for hitchhiking). It is never wise to hitchhike or to pick up a stranger in the U.S.

## **TELEPHONES**

If you live in a dormitory, you will likely have local phone service. If you live off campus, consider a prepaid cell phone. Prepaid cell phones are available at retail stores.

## **AIR TRAVEL**

You may purchase tickets from the airlines, through a travel agency, or on consolidator websites (e.g., [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com), [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com), [www.vayama.com](http://www.vayama.com)). If you know where and when you will travel (check your school calendar for scheduled breaks), call your travel agent and ask for the best deal. If you travel a lot, enroll in frequent flyer programs. You may earn a free airline ticket or a seat upgrade when you fly enough miles. Do not wait until the last minute to purchase tickets. The best deals are 30, 14, and 7 days in advance. Different airlines have different rules; some airlines, however, offer discounted fares for student passengers. Make sure that you ask for your student discount when you book your ticket.

## **U.S. TIME ZONES**

There are different time zones—from east to west—in the United States: Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific. Don't forget to check time zones for HI and AK.

For daylight savings, remember to spring forward one hour in March and fall back one hour in November. The **Mountain Standard Time** zone does not observe daylight savings time in some jurisdictions. (**AZ for example**).

## **BANK ACCOUNTS**

Open checking and savings accounts at a local bank. Balance your statement each month. Protect your ATM card and personal identification number. Some advisors offer financial education courses as a service to their community. Check with them to see if they do.

## **EMERGENCIES**

In the front of your phone book will be a list of emergency telephone numbers for fire, police, ambulance, and poison control. In most places, you may dial 911 for emergencies. If you need emergency medical care for an injury or sudden illness, you can go the emergency room of the nearby hospital.

**QUESTIONS?** Feel free to call our service center to talk with one of our consultants.

**The only foolish question is the question that you do not ask!**

# Glossary of College Terminology

**American College Testing (ACT):** a need analysis service center located in Iowa. Responsible for processing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); ACT also administers the ACT exam.

**Academic Year (AY):** fiscal year—July 1 through June 30—consisting of either semesters or quarters.

**Accrued Interest:** interest that accumulates on loans, specifically federal PLUS and Stafford, and must be repaid later.

**ADC or AFDC:** Aid to Dependent Children or Aid to Families with Dependent Children is a government benefits program.

**Adjusted Gross Income:** the dollar amount entered on IRS income tax forms and required on financial aid applications.

**Allocation:** the amount of money given to an institution by the U.S. Department of Education to fund a campus-based program.

**Asset Protection Allowance:** an asset allowance, determined by the age of the oldest parent, used in the calculation of the EFC.

**Award Letter:** the official notification to financial aid applicants of the assistance offered; the award letter details the types and amounts of aid offered as well as specific program information, student responsibilities, and the conditions that govern the award; the award letter also provides students with the opportunity to accept or decline the aid.

**Award Year:** fiscal year—July 1 through June 30.

**Base Year:** the period starting January 1 and ending December 31 of the year preceding the application period.

**College Scholarship Service (CSS):** a need analysis service center, located in New Jersey, that distributes the Financial Aid Profile, a financial aid form used mostly by selective private colleges; CSS also administers the SAT exam.

**College Work Study (CWS):** a federal program that provides college funding to students in exchange for work service to the university, state, or nonprofit agency.

**Default:** when a borrower fails to make payments on a loan or has failed to comply with other terms of the loan agreement.

**Deferred Admission:** students with financial, personal, or work-related concerns may defer or postpone their enrollment for up to one year.

**Dependent Student:** a student, under the age of 24, who is at least partially dependent on the parents to provide support.

**Deferment:** contractually suspending the payment of a loan; unpaid accrued interest will be added to the loan balance.

**Dislocated Worker:** a person who has been laid off from work, or who was self-employed (such as a farmer) but is now unemployed because of poor economic conditions; the financial aid officer has the discretion to determine dislocated worker status.

**Early Action:** the student can apply to a college by an early deadline to guarantee admission without obligation.

**Early Decision:** the student can apply to a college by an early deadline to guarantee admission with the binding obligation to attend that college if accepted.

**Early Entrance:** the student can be accepted, admitted, and enrolled prior to high school graduation; many colleges use early entrance to attract better students.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** commonly referred to as the ability to pay, the EFC is the amount of money a student, spouse, and family are expected to pay toward college expenses; the figures submitted on the FAFSA determine the EFC.

**Federal Direct Loan:** federal college loan program in which the lender is the federal government; the college administers the loans direct to the student.

**Federal Family Educational Loan Program:** federal college loan program in which the lender and the administrator is a bank, credit union, or other private lender.

**Federal Methodology:** formula developed by the U.S. Congress, defined by statute, and used to assess both the parents' and student's income and assets to determine the EFC; the home and family farm are not considered assets.

**Financial Aid Budget:** a breakdown of how the college determines the total cost of attendance.

**Financial Aid Profile (PROFILE):** an institutional information form distributed by the CSS; some colleges may require the PROFILE in addition to the FAFSA to help them determine their offer of financial aid.

**Financial Aid Form Acknowledgment (FAFACK):** a letter acknowledging that CSS has processed the PROFILE; mailed separately from the SAR, the acknowledgment provides a list of the colleges to which the SAR was sent and which colleges require additional information; students may use this form to request that financial information be released to additional colleges.

**Financial Aid Form Need Analysis Report (FAFNAR):** a CSS report, containing information from the PROFILE, transferred electronically to the college.

**Financial Aid Officer (FAO):** the college financial administrator responsible for determining financial aid packages.

**Financial Aid Package:** the total amounts, and type, of aid that a student will receive; packages may include federal- and state-funded grants and loans, college-based programs, and/or any additional aid programs.

**Financial Aid Transcript:** a form used by post-secondary institutions to collect data about prior attendance at other post-secondary institutions, financial aid awards received at the institution providing the transcript, and the status of eligibility criteria involving default and repayments; transfer students applying for aid must submit this form.

**Fiscal Year (FY):** July 1 through June 30.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** the only financial aid form used to calculate the EFC; the EFC is used to determine the amount of federal and state funds the student is eligible to receive.

**Full-Time:** enrolled for at least twelve (12) hours during one quarter or semester.

**GPA:** grade point average.

**Gift Aid:** financial aid that does not require repayment or work in exchange (e.g., grants and scholarships).

**Grace Period:** begins when a loan recipient graduates or ceases to be enrolled at least half-time and ends when the repayment period starts, usually six months; interest does not accrue and no payments are required during this period.

**Graduate and Professional School Financial Aid Service (GAPSFAS):** a need analysis service dealing exclusively with the graduate or professional student.

**Guaranty Agency:** a state or private institution or organization that administers student loan, insurance, or governmental guarantor programs for the federal government.

**Half Time:** enrolled for at least six (6) hours during one quarter or semester.

**Housing Index Multiplier Table:** a verification formula used by the FAO to determine the value of a home based on the national average; called the Implicit Price Deflator, the formula uses the year the home was purchased and the purchase price to establish current value.

**Independent Student:** a student not dependent upon parents for financial support; independent students must satisfy one of the following: (1) at least 24 years of age by December 31 in the impending academic year; (2) responsible for legal dependents other than a spouse; (3) both parents deceased or declared a ward of the court; (4) veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces; (5) married; (6) graduate or professional student; or (7) deemed independent by the FAO due to unusual circumstances.

**Institutional Methodology:** an alternative method of need analysis used mostly by private colleges to take a more detailed look at the family's income and assets prior to disbursing grants and scholarships; the home and the family farm are considered assets.

**Merit-Based Aid:** financial aid based primarily on talent (e.g., academics and athletics); also referred to as non need-based aid.

**Need:** difference between the total cost of college and the EFC.

**Needs Analysis:** method used to determine financial assistance needed to meet educational expenses.

**Needs Analysis Form:** collects data to calculate financial need; the most common forms are the FAFSA and the PROFILE.

**Need-Based Aid:** financial aid awarded exclusively based on financial need.

**Off-Campus Student:** used as a budget classification, refers to students who live in a house or apartment during the academic year.

**On-Campus Student:** used as a budget classification, refers to students who live in student housing during the academic year.

**Origination Fee:** processing fee charged to the student and deducted from the loan proceeds prior to disbursing the balance to the college.

**Parent Contribution (PC):** based on the parents' income and assets, one of two factors that determine the EFC ( $PC + SC = EFC$ ); information submitted on the FAFSA determines the PC.

**Pell Grant:** federal grant program; annual maximum published yearly as limits change from year to year; minimum is \$400.

**Perkins Loan:** need-based, 5% loan subsidized by the federal government; repayment begins six months after the student graduates or leaves school.

**Professional Judgment:** a rule that allows the FAO to adjust the EFC, based upon unique or special circumstances, to provide a more accurate assessment of the family's financial situation.

**Regular Admissions:** admissions under stated deadlines.

**Rolling Admissions:** admissions throughout the year; no deadlines.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress:** required to maintain financial aid eligibility.

**Self-Help:** aid that must be repaid either through financial obligation or service to the university or state (e.g., loans or work-study).

**Simplified Need Test:** provides an exception to the federal methodology; individuals that earn under \$50,000 AGI per year and use 1040 EZ or 1040 to file can use the Simplified Need Test to determine financial aid eligibility; this test does not include the parents' or students assets when determining the EFC.

**Student Aid Report (SAR):** the official notification that details the EFC; students must review, sign, and submit their SAR to their financial aid office to receive disbursement.

**Student Contribution (SC):** based on the parents' income and assets, one of two factors that determine the EFC ( $PC + SC = EFC$ ); information submitted on the FAFSA determines the SC.

**Subsidized Stafford Loan:** a federally-subsidized, need-based, low-interest loan; interest and payments begin after the student graduates or leaves school.

**Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG):** a grant for undergraduate students based on exceptional financial need; SEOGs range from \$100 to \$4000 range.

**Supplemental Loan for Independent Students (SLS):** a loan available to both graduate and undergraduate independent students to help finance college costs.

**Unmet Need:** after deducting the EFC and total financial aid awarded, the remaining funds necessary to meet the total cost of college.

**Unsubsidized Stafford Loan:** a loan available to students regardless of financial need; the interest begins to accrue immediately and is not subsidized by the federal government.

**Verification:** process of verifying the accuracy of the information provided on the FAFSA; the federal government requires colleges to verify thirty percent (30%) of their financial aid applications.

**NOTES:**

## About the Authors

Our planning guide is a compilation of information and strategies implemented by one or more of our members and have produced the desired results. We share the information for the exclusive benefit of the members of our Power of Working Together Team and the communities they serve. We partner with college planning professionals nationwide.

Our community volunteers provide more than  
5,000 hours of community service per year.

The strategies included were developed for our members and reflect years of research and planning experience which is shared with each new member family.

We know the process and through the Power of Working Together . . .  
You will too.



# Blueprint for Success.®

1970 West Old Magee Trail, Suite 9201  
Oro Valley, AZ 85704

Phone: 800.743.4731

Fax: 888.743.4731