

# WHAT SENIORS WANT TO KNOW ABOUT FINANCIAL AID AND GOING TO COLLEGE?



## WHEN SHOULD I APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID?



You must apply for aid each academic year and can do so anytime after January prior to the start of fall semester. We suggest that you apply as early as possible, as many post-secondary schools have deadlines to complete the financial aid process and many programs have limited funding that will go only to early applicants.

## WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)?

Personal information from both student and parents will be needed to complete the form. If you are filing a federal income tax return, it is recommended that you complete it before filling out the FAFSA. However, you do not need to file your income tax return with the IRS before you submit the FAFSA.

Carefully read the FAFSA before completing it and review your information before sending it to the Department of Education. You can add up to six college/school codes for the post-secondary schools that you might attend, be sure you put your first choice and others just in case you do not attend your first choice.

The federal processor for the FAFSA matches your name and Social Security Number with a variety of federal agencies. Agency matches are performed against the files of Social Security, Immigration and Naturalization Services, Selective Service and the National Student Loan Data System. If any discrepancies or questions about your information occur, you will be asked to provide additional documents or take additional action to confirm your eligibility for federal assistance. The federal processor will notify the school and you of the results of these matches and whether additional information is required.



The federal processor selects some applications for an accuracy review called "verification". If you are selected for this process, you will also be required to complete a Verification Worksheet and provide copies of the tax returns for individuals whose income was included on your application. The federal processor will notify you and the school if you are selected for verification.

## AM I ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL AID?

Most financial aid programs require financial need and are based on family income. In addition to need, you must meet the following criteria:

- ▶ Be accepted as a degree seeking student to a degree program.
- ▶ Be making satisfactory academic progress.
- ▶ Be a US citizen, national or permanent resident alien.
- ▶ Be enrolled at least half-time (6 credit hours) for most programs.
- ▶ Not be default on a prior student loan, not have been convicted for sale or possession of illegal drugs.
- ▶ Not owe a repayment or overpayment of a federal grant.
- ▶ Not have an existing financial obligation to a school.
- ▶ Be registered for selective service if required.
- ▶ Have a high school diploma or GED certificate.

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO THE POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL OF MY CHOICE?

Contact the school you are interested in and follow their application process. Every institution has a different agenda. It is recommended that you visit the campus and sign up for an orientation presentation. Be sure to add their Department of Education, DOE School Code to your FAFSA.

## HOW CAN I OBTAIN FORMS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT A SCHOOL OF MY CHOICE?

Get information from the school personally by going in person to the Admissions, Financial Aid and Counseling Offices, and/or email questions to a Financial Aid Specialist or Department. Most schools have a website that can answer your questions and provide forms that you can download.

## HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR THE BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM?

It is recommended that you and your parents visit the State of Florida website at: [www.MyFloridaEducation.com/brfuture](http://www.MyFloridaEducation.com/brfuture) to learn all about this program. The website is very comprehensive and can answer all of your questions. Visit your high school guidance counselor to determine if you are eligible for a Bright Futures Scholarship and make sure you apply and follow all of the steps required for eligibility.

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR A BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP?

You must complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA), during your last year in high school at [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org). This will give the Department of Education permission to evaluate your high school transcript to determine your eligibility. This is very important, before you graduate, during your last year in high school, you must apply or you will forfeit all future eligibility for a Bright Futures Scholarship.



## WHAT DO I DO ONCE I HAVE BEEN AWARDED A BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP BY THE STATE OF FLORIDA?

Once you know what Florida Post-Secondary School you will be attending, contact the State of Florida Bright Futures Office to notify them that you will be attending a particular school. Notify the State of Florida by calling them at 1-888-827-2004 or visit the website with the special PIN number issued to you by the State of Florida to declare the school you will be attending. Once you are on the website, the school of your choice through automation will award you.



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ADMINISTRATORS