

An overview of financial aid

As tuition costs continue to rise, it's more important than ever to understand your college funding options.¹ Use this as a guide to get organized for college to set you up for success.



Apply for federal financial aid

Completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form on the Federal Student Aid website, www.fafsa.ed.gov, is the first step toward obtaining financial aid from the federal government. You and your family will include tax and income information, which will help determine whether you qualify for scholarships, grants, and federal loans. Some financial aid is awarded on a first come, first served basis. Completing and sending your FAFSA form as soon after January 1 of each year as possible can increase your chances of receiving the maximum amount of financial aid you qualify for.²

Estimate your costs

Estimate your college costs by visiting your school's website and using their Net Price Calculator to help determine your total costs. This tool can help you understand what types of financing resources may be available and how certain choices, such as your living situation, can affect your costs. This tool can usually be found on a school's website.

Evaluate your options

Tuition payment plans are alternatives to loans that allow you to pay for college in parts instead of one lump sum. Check with your school for more information.

- Federal PLUS (Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students) loans are available to parents of dependent undergraduates, as well as graduate and professional students. These loans can cover up to 100% of remaining education-related expenses. A credit check is required, but the student's current income and debt are not considered.³
- Private loans are available through banks and private lenders. Most are based on your credit and income information.
- Scholarships are offered by public and private groups and usually require an application.

Source: wellsfargo.com

¹The College Board. Trends in College Pricing: 2012. 2012.

²FAFSA Online. "The FAFSA Form Guide" 2012.

³Wells Fargo. "Your financial aid journey in FIVE steps."