FAFSA® Tip Sheet

Filing the FAFSA & Getting Financial Aid

PHEAA
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) is the most important application you must complete in order to qualify for almost all types of financial aid including federal, state, local, and private grants and scholarships.

→ How to Apply

Visit **studentaid.gov/FAFSA**, or download the myStudentAid app to complete and submit your application for FREE.

FSA **myStudentAid** 4+
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Federal Student Aid
Free

FAQs

Why complete a FAFSA?

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) uses the information provided on your FAFSA to determine your eligibility for aid from federal student financial assistance programs. In Pennsylvania, the FAFSA is used to determine PA State Grant eligibility. Schools also use FAFSA data to award their own financial aid.

What are the deadlines?

Financial aid deadlines vary by school, state, program of study, and more. To ensure that you are considered for all financial aid programs, the FAFSA should be filed by the earliest application deadline date for each school you are considering attending. Check with your school for details.

You must complete a new FAFSA Application each year. **For PA State Grant applicants, the FAFSA deadlines are:**

MAY 1 – For students attending colleges, universities, and college-transferable programs (excluding community colleges) and for all renewal students

AUGUST 1 – If you plan to enroll in a community college, a Business, Trade, or Technical school, a Hospital School of Nursing, an "Open-Admission" institution (visit **PHEAA.org** for a list of these schools), or a non-transferable 2-year program

What is the IRS Data Retrieval Tool?

If you complete your FAFSA online, you have the option of retrieving your income and tax data from the IRS and having it automatically transferred into your FAFSA.

What do I need to file my FAFSA?

- Your Social Security number
- Your driver's license number, if you have one (optional)
- Your alien registration number, if you are not a U.S. citizen
- Your W-2 forms
- Records of other untaxed income received, including workers' compensation, child support, payments to tax-deferred pension, and savings plans, etc.
- Your federal income tax return and schedules from the prior-prior year (For example, if completing the 2022-23 FAFSA, use 2020 income tax return information.)
- Your current bank statements and records of stocks, bonds, 529 plans, and other investments.
- A personal email address (not a school email address)

If you are a dependent student, you will also need:

- Your parent's Social Security number
- Your parent's income and financial records (as listed above)
- Parents date of marriage/remarriage – month/year
- Parents date of separation/divorce – month/year

What is a Federal Student Aid account username and password (FSA ID)?

When you create an account at **studentaid.gov** the username and password (also referred to as an FSA ID) you create will be used to log in to and sign the FAFSA. If you are a dependent student, both you and one of your parents must have your own account with a username and password.

Remember to Use the Correct Tax Information

| If you plan to attend college from	You can submit the FAFSA from	Using income & tax information from
July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022	October 1, 2020 - June 30, 2022	2019
July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023	October 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023	2020
July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024	October 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024	2021

Note the Schools You Have Applied To

For purposes of federal student aid, it does not matter in what order you list the schools on your FAFSA.
However, PA State Grant awards will be made for the first college listed on the FAFSA form.

1.		4.
2.		5.
3.		6.

To change the schools listed on the FAFSA, log in to studentaid.gov, or call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) TTY (Hearing Impaired) 1-800-730-8913

File Your PA State Grant Application

The easiest way to file your PA State Grant application is right from the link on your FAFSA confirmation page (highlighted on the right). If you miss this link, you will need to wait approximately 3-4 days after your FAFSA is submitted and apply at PHEAA.org.
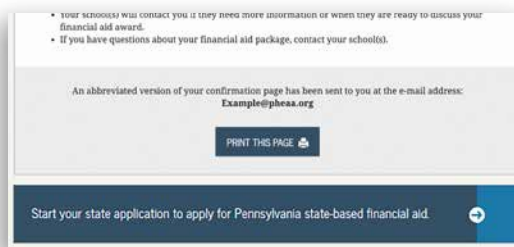
Once Your FAFSA is Processed

You will be notified that your FAFSA has been processed and you can view or print your Student Aid Report (SAR) from your My FAFSA page. You may receive an email with a link to My FAFSA after your FAFSA has been processed or you can log in to My FAFSA at studentaid.gov/FAFSA. Check your SAR for any errors and if you do find mistakes, you will need to make necessary corrections online within My FAFSA at studentaid.gov/FAFSA, or by mail on your paper SAR.

Your FAFSA will be shared with the schools that you listed on the FAFSA and with PHEAA to determine eligibility for the PA State Grant. Schools send out notifications about financial aid eligibility to students once you have been accepted to the school. Your schools may require other forms for you to fill out for school specific programs. Contact your postsecondary schools for more information about financial aid eligibility.

Do you Have Changes in Your Circumstances? If your family's income is less this year than what you reported on the FAFSA, reach out to the financial aid staff at your school for assistance. You can also report other changes in your situation such as high medical expenses, separation or divorce, etc. **Please contact PHEAA PA State Grant staff for assistance with reporting changes in your circumstances at 1-800-692-7392** (TTY: Dial 711, for hearing impaired).

→ To learn more about the financial aid process, visit PHEAA.org.

PHEAA
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

FAFSA® Checklist

PHEAA
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

About the FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) is the first step in the financial aid process. It is used to apply for federal student aid, such as grants, loans, and work-study. In Pennsylvania, information from the FAFSA is also used to determine student eligibility for the PA State Grant.

The FAFSA asks for information about you and your financial situation. If you're married, you will need the same information for your spouse. **If you're considered a dependent student, you will need your parents' information, too.**

Before filing the FAFSA, gather the following items:

- ☐ Your Federal Student Aid account username and password (FSA ID)

  > **Note:** This may take time to process, so we recommend you create your account several days prior to filing the FAFSA.
  > Visit **studentaid.gov** to create your account.

- ☐ Your Social Security number

- ☐ Your driver's license number, if you have one (optional)

- ☐ Your Alien registration number, if you are not a U.S. citizen

- ☐ Your W-2 Forms

- ☐ Records of untaxed income received, including workers' compensation, child support, payments to tax-deferred pension, savings plans, etc.

- ☐ Your federal income tax return 1040 and accompanying schedules

  > **Note:** If you complete your FAFSA online, you have the option of automatically retrieving your income and tax data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and having it transferred into your FAFSA. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) is the preferred method to complete the FAFSA.

- ☐ Your current bank statements and records of stocks, bonds, 529 plans, and other investments including real estate (but not including the home in which you live) and business and farm assets

- ☐ A personal email address (not a school email address)

Now you're ready... Visit **studentaid.gov/FAFSA** to file for FREE!

Need additional help?

Need help with more than just the FAFSA? There are plenty of FREE resources available to help you with the financial aid process:

PHEAA.org | **studentaid.gov** | **collegecost.ed.gov**

Creating and Using the FSA ID

What's an FSA ID?

The FSA ID is a username and password combination you use to log in to U.S. Department of Education (ED) online systems. The FSA ID is your legal signature and shouldn't be created or used by anyone other than you—not even your parent, your child, a school official, or a loan company representative. You'll use your FSA ID every year you fill out a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form and for the lifetime of your federal student loans.

How do I get an FSA ID?

Visit **StudentAid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch** to create an FSA ID. You'll need your Social Security number, full name, and date of birth. You'll also need to create a memorable username and password, and complete challenge questions and answers so you can retrieve your account information if you forget it.

You'll be required to provide either your email address or your mobile phone number when you make your FSA ID. Providing a mobile phone number and/or email address that you have access to will make it easier to log in to ED online systems and allow additional account recovery options.

Important: A Social Security number, email address, and mobile phone number can only be associated with one FSA ID. If you share an email address with someone else, then only one of you will be able to use that email address to create an FSA ID.

FSA ID Tips

- If you need to provide information about your parents on the FAFSA® form, one of your parents will need an FSA ID to sign the form. Your parent can create an FSA ID and then sign the FAFSA form electronically using that FSA ID. Not sure whether you'll need to put your parents' information on the FAFSA form? Check out **StudentAid.gov/dependency**. **Remember**: You should create your own FSA ID, and your parent should create his or her own FSA ID. Also make sure to use the correct FSA ID when signing the FAFSA form electronically.

- When you first create your FSA ID, the use of your FSA ID will be restricted to completing, signing, and submitting an original (first-time) FAFSA form. You'll have to wait one to three days for your information to be confirmed by the Social Security Administration (SSA) before you can use your FSA ID for other actions, such as submitting a FAFSA Renewal or signing a *Master Promissory Note*. If you provided an email address, then you'll receive an email letting you know that your information was successfully matched with the SSA, and you can begin using your FSA ID.

- If you forget your FSA ID username or password, look for the "Forgot My Username" and "Forgot My Password" links on log-in pages. These links will direct you to web pages where you can request a secure code to be texted to your verified mobile phone number or emailed to your verified email address. The secure code will allow you to retrieve your username or reset your password. You can also retrieve your username or reset your password by successfully answering your challenge questions. **Remember**: If you verified your email address or mobile phone number during account creation, you can enter your email address or mobile phone number instead of your username to log in.

Learn more about how you can use your FSA ID at **StudentAid.gov/help-center/answers/article/how-can-i-use-my-fsa-id-username-and-password**. Find this fact sheet at **StudentAid.gov/resources**.

May 2021

Creating a Federal Student Aid Account (FSA ID)

What you need to know...

What is a Federal Student Aid (FSA) Account?

An FSA Account is a username and password that you will use to log into certain U.S. Department of Education websites, and electronically sign the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®).

Who should create an FSA Account?

Students interested in receiving federal student aid should create an FSA Account. You **AND** any parent electronically signing the FAFSA will need their own separate FSA Account.

When should I create an FSA Account?

Due to processing time, we recommend you apply at least 3 days BEFORE filing the FAFSA or attending a FAFSA Completion Event.

What do I need to create an account?

You will need your own mobile phone number and/or email address.

How to Create a Federal Student Aid Account (FSA ID)

⚠ Before you start

Make sure you have access to your personal email account or mobile phone while setting up the account.

Step 1 Visit studentaid.gov/fsa-id and click "Create an Account," then click "Get Started."

Step 2 Enter your name, date of birth, and Social Security number exactly as they appear on your Social Security card.

> **Note:** A Social Security number, email address, and mobile phone number can only be associated with one Federal Student Aid Account.

Step 3 Enter your username, email, and password.

Step 4 Enter your optional mailing address and phone number. You may also set up Mobile Phone Account Recovery if you provided a mobile phone number, allowing you to unlock your account from your mobile device.

Step 5 Confirm your communication and language preferences.

Step 6 Provide four required unique, challenge questions and answers.

Step 7 Confirm and verify your personal information and acknowledge the account terms and conditions.

Step 8 Verify your account via the email or mobile phone number you previously entered.

I created my FSA Account, now what?

You can now use your account to sign an original FAFSA. Once the Social Security Administration verifies your information in 1-3 days, you will be able to start a renewal FAFSA, make changes to an existing FAFSA, and log in to U.S. Department of Education websites.

⚠ **Never share your username and password with anyone, not even to someone helping you fill out the FAFSA.**

Still have questions?
Visit **studentaid.gov/fsa-id.**

Federal Student Aid Account

Important Information & FAQs

A Federal Student Aid (FSA) Account username and password, previously known as an FSA ID, gives you access to FSA's online systems and can serve as your legal signature.

Important: Your FSA Account is used to sign legally binding documents electronically. You should create your own FSA Account, and your parent should create their own. Don't give your FSA Account information to anyone – not even to someone helping you fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®).

To create an FSA Account, go to **studentaid.gov** and use this form to track of important information. This information should be kept confidential and stored in a secure location.

Student Information

Student Email Address: _____

Username: _____

Password: _____

Mobile Number: _____

Challenge Question/Answer #1: _____

Challenge Question/Answer #2: _____

Challenge Question/Answer #3: _____

Challenge Question/Answer #4: _____

Parent Information (if applicable)

Parent Email Address: _____

Username: _____

Password: _____

Mobile Number: _____

Challenge Question/Answer #1: _____

Challenge Question/Answer #2: _____

Challenge Question/Answer #3: _____

Challenge Question/Answer #4: _____

What information do I need to create an FSA Account?

To create an FSA Account you will need your Social Security number, full name, and date of birth. You'll also need to create a memorable username and password, and provide answers to some challenge questions so you can retrieve your account information if you forget it.

You will also be required to either provide your email address or your mobile phone number and opt in to messaging when you create your FSA Account. Providing a mobile phone number and email address that you have access to will make it easier to log in to Department of Education online systems, unlock your account, retrieve your forgotten username, or reset your forgotten password.

Important: Each email address and mobile phone number can only be associated with one FSA Account. If you share an email address with someone else, then only one of you will be able to use that email address to create an account. This applies to your mobile phone number, too.

How do I create an FSA Account?

⚠️ **Before you start**
Make sure you have access to our personal email account and mobile phone.

Step 1: Visit **studentaid.gov** and click "Create an Account," then click "Get Started."

Step 2: Enter your name, date of birth, and Social Security number exactly as they appear on your Social Security card.

Step 3: Enter your username, email, and password.

Step 4: Enter your optional mailing address and phone number. You may also set up Mobile Phone Account Recovery if you provided a mobile phone number, allowing you to unlock your account from your mobile device.

Step 5: Confirm your communication and language preferences.

Step 6: Provide four required unique, challenge questions and answers.

Step 7: Confirm and verify your personal information and acknowledge the account terms and conditions.

Step 8: Verify your account via the email or mobile phone number you previously entered.

Additional Resources

- **studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out**
- FSA YouTube Video – "How do I create an FSA ID?" **youtube.com/watch?v=K7ihhGk8mCY**

➡️ Learn more about the FSA ID at **studentaid.gov**.

PHEAA

Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

Created in 1963 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has evolved into one of the nation's leading student aid organizations. Today, PHEAA is a national provider of student financial aid services, serving millions of students and thousands of schools through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, grant administration, outreach, and other student aid programs.

PHEAA's earnings are used to support its public service mission and to pay its operating costs, including the administration of the PA State Grant and other state-funded student aid programs. PHEAA continues to devote its energy, resources and imagination to developing innovative ways to ease the financial burden of higher education for students, families, schools, and taxpayers.

PHEAA conducts its student loan servicing operations nationally as FedLoan Servicing and American Education Services (AES). PHEAA operates its digital technology division as Avereo.

PHEAA.org

Additional Resources

PHEAA.org offers information on Pennsylvania's grant, scholarship and work-study programs.

MySmartBorrowing.org provides students with an interactive financial aid tool that encourages them to make SMART decisions about their career and college choices.

EducationPlanner.org offers in-depth resources to help students learn about and explore hundreds of careers, colleges and financial aid opportunities.

PA529.com is a savings plan that helps families save for higher education.

The U.S. Department of Education offers information on federal guidelines for student financial aid programs and how to manage student loans. It also operates the following websites:

- studentaid.gov
- collegecost.ed.gov
- nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator

Your school counselor has information on schools, standardized test dates, local scholarships, and much more.

Public libraries are a great resource for researching postsecondary schools and financial aid.

College financial aid administrators are available to answer your questions and provide information on school-specific offers and other financial aid.
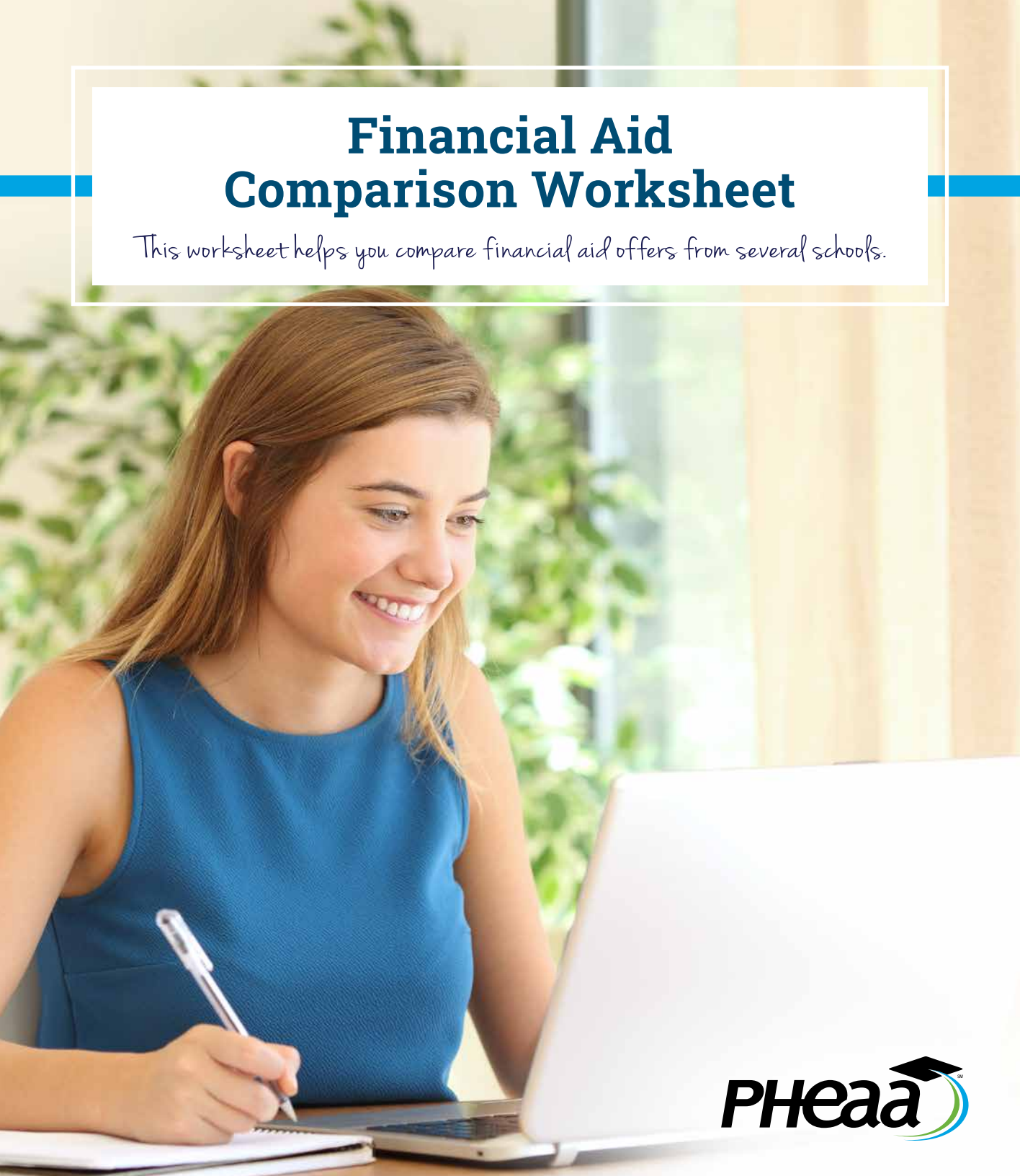
Financial Aid Comparison Worksheet

This worksheet helps you compare financial aid offers from several schools.

Tips

After completing the FAFSA® and being accepted by the school, you will receive a financial aid offer that outlines how much the school will cost and what kind of financial aid package you may receive.

Aid notices from schools will be formatted differently from one another, but overall they will contain the same information:

- **Cost of Attendance**, which includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, travel, and personal expenses. If some of these are not listed on your offer, check the school's website or contact the Financial Aid Office.

- **Gift Aid**, which includes all of the FREE sources of financial aid that the school is offering you and that you're receiving from federal, state and other sources. Be sure to include any private scholarships not listed on the offer.

- **Self-Help Aid**, which includes loans and work-study. Self-Help Aid is different from Gift Aid in that you must repay the funds or work to earn the funds.

Then do the math. "WHAT YOU STILL NEED" is the amount of money you are still responsible for after all aid has been applied. This is typically covered by family assistance, savings, private loans, or considering a less expensive school.

CONSIDER the Big PICTURE
x4 Multiply your results by the number of years you anticipate being in school.

Sample School

Cost of Attendance		Gift Aid (FREE Money)				Self-Help	
Tuition & Fees	26,410	State Grant	4,000			Direct Loans	5,500
Room & Board	10,440	PELL Grant	5,425			Other Loans	0
Books & Supplies	1,200	FSEOG Grant	1,500			Federal Work-Study*	3,000
Travel & Personal Expenses	2,200	Other Grants & Scholarships	10,900				
Total	$ 40,250	Total	$ 21,825			TOTAL	$ 8,500

This is what you can consider the actual cost for one year of college.

NET COST $ 18,425

WHAT YOU STILL NEED $ 9,925

*Federal Work-Study funds are not deducted from a student's bill.

Paid directly to the student and earned according to hours worked. Not Guaranteed!

Will probably need each year!

College A

Cost of Attendance	Gift Aid (FREE Money)		Self-Help			
Tuition & Fees	State Grant		Direct Loans			
Room & Board	PELL Grant		Other Loans			
Books & Supplies	FSEOG Grant		Federal Work-Study*			
Travel & Personal Expenses	Other Grants & Scholarships					
Total	Total		Total			

NET COST

WHAT YOU STILL NEED

College B

Cost of Attendance	Gift Aid (FREE Money)		Self-Help			
Tuition & Fees	State Grant		Direct Loans			
Room & Board	PELL Grant		Other Loans			
Books & Supplies	FSEOG Grant		Federal Work-Study*			
Travel & Personal Expenses	Other Grants & Scholarships					
Total	Total		Total			

NET COST

WHAT YOU STILL NEED