UNDERSTANDING FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

THE **FREE APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)** IS A FORM THAT ALLOWS STUDENTS TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID, SUCH AS SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, WORK-STUDY, AND LOANS FOR COLLEGE, CAREER/TRADE SCHOOL, OR GRADUATE SCHOOL

BE PREPARED

Both students and parents must provide the following:

- Driver's license
- Social security number
- Tax returns from two years prior to the FAFSA application year

FSA ACCOUNT NEEDED

The Federal Student Aid account is required for the FAFSA application to be completed. Students and parents must create individual accounts. **Make sure to write down your account information.**

https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch

2027-2028 APPLICATION

This year, the FAFSA form is expected to be released on **October 1, 2026** for all students. For updated information about the release of the application, please use the link below.

- https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/fafsa-support

CSS PROFILE

Many colleges & universities require families to complete a CSS account in addition to the FAFSA form. CSS asks families to provide additional financial information, so more financial aid packages can be provided. The link below will send you to their home page.

There is a fee associated with the CSS

https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/

FAFSA IS A YEARLY PROCESS

A new FAFSA form must be completed **each year** to continue receiving financial aid.

HELPFUL TOOLS

If you do not wish to complete the FAFSA form or the DREAM act application, seniors and their legal guardians must submit either THIS WAIVER FORM and submit to your school counselor. Or complete THIS FORM Both forms acknowledges your awareness of FAFSA and the DREAM act and your choice not to complete either federal financial aid applications..

NYS FINANCIAL AID

The New York State offers many financial aid opportunities for students applying to full-time college education programs. The link below provides a list of specific NYS grants and scholarships based on merit, intended degree, and financial needs.

STEM Incentive Program

- Students who are applying to a SUNY or CUNY school for a degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics field may be eligible for tuition-free schooling

The DREAM Act

- The Jose Peralta NYS DREAM Act provides resources for undocumented students to receive financial aid packages

Excelsior Scholarship

- The Excelsior Scholarship is a last dollar scholarship potentially providing free tuition to SUNY or CUNY institutions (not housing)
- Students from families earning less than $125,000 annually may qualify.

SEEK Program

- Students from economically disadvantaged families/communities may apply for financial aid towards CUNY institutions
- College students in the SEEK Program have access to additional tutoring, counseling, and other resources

EOP

- Provides access, academic support and financial aid to students who show promise for succeeding in college but who may not have otherwise been offered admission.

HEOP

- Students from under represented and or economically disadvantage families may apply for this financial aid.
- Each New York college Establishes their own criteria for eligibility.

COLLEGE BASED FINANCIAL AID OFFICER

HOW CAN THEY HELP?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES.

Financial aid officers can break down complex financial aid offers, explaining the types of aid offered (grants, loans, work-study) and the terms of each, so students fully understand their package.

I'M LOOKING FOR MORE FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES

Financial aid officers can inform students about institutional scholarships, grants, and other sources of aid that may not be widely advertised. This can be particularly helpful if students have unmet financial needs

I WANT TO SET UP A PAYMENT PLAN OR LOAN

Officers can outline payment plans and provide advice on federal and private loan options, helping students and their families make sustainable financial choices.

I NEED ASSISTANCE FILLING OUT THE FAFSA FORM OR CSS PROFILE

Filling out these required forms can be confusing. Financial Aid officers can assist with filling out these forms accurately and answering any questions about required infromation, ensuring students maximize their eligibility.

More Scholarships!

While New York State offers many scholarship opportunities, there are tons still available. Feel free to explore some of these websites for more information about private scholarships given to students based on a variety of different personal qualifications. It is helpful to make a profile on each of these websites to narrow down eligible scholarships.

Fastweb

https://www.fastweb.com

Scholarships.com

https://www.scholarships.com

GoingMerry.com

https://goingmerry.com

Niche

https://www.niche.com

College Board

https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org

Scholarships360

https://scholarships360.org