DO YOU NEED MONEY FOR COLLEGE? Federal Student Aid at a Glance 2013–14

WHAT is federal student aid?
Federal student aid comes from the federal government—specifically, the U.S. Department of Education. It’s money that helps a student pay for higher education expenses (i.e., college, career school, or graduate school expenses).

Federal student aid covers such expenses as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Aid also can help pay for a computer and for dependent care.

There are three main categories of federal student aid: grants, work-study, and loans. Check with your school to find out which programs your school participates in. Information about the federal student aid programs is on page 2 of this document.

WHO gets federal student aid?
Our most basic eligibility requirements are that you must
• demonstrate financial need (for most programs—to learn more, visit StudentAid.gov/how-calculated),
• be a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen,
• have a valid Social Security number,
• register (if you haven’t already) with Selective Service, if you’re a male between the ages of 18 and 25,
• maintain satisfactory academic progress in college or career school, and
• show you’re qualified to obtain a college or career school education by
  - having a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate or
  - completing a high school education in a homeschool setting approved under state law.

Find more details about eligibility criteria at StudentAid.gov/eligibility.

HOW do you apply for federal student aid?
1. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA™) at www.fafsa.gov.
   If you need a paper FAFSA, you can get one from
   • our website at www.fafsa.gov, where you can download a PDF, or
   • our ED Pubs distribution center at www.edpubs.gov or toll-free at 1-877-433-7827.

   For the 2013–14 award year, you can apply beginning Jan. 1, 2013; you have until June 30, 2014, to submit your FAFSA. But you need to apply as soon as you can! Schools and states often use FAFSA information to award nonfederal aid. Their deadlines are usually early in the year. You can find state deadlines at www.fafsa.gov or on the paper FAFSA. Check with the schools you’re interested in for their deadlines.

2. Review your Student Aid Report (SAR). After you apply, you’ll receive a Student Aid Report, or SAR. Your SAR contains the information reported on your FAFSA and usually includes your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is an index number used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Review your SAR information and make any corrections or changes, if necessary. The school(s) you list on your FAFSA will get your SAR data electronically.

3. Contact the school(s) you might attend. Make sure the financial aid office at each school you’re interested in has all the information needed to determine your eligibility. If you’re eligible, each school’s financial aid office will send you an award letter showing the amount and types of aid (from all sources) the school will offer you. You can compare award letters from the schools to which you applied and see what aid you can receive from each school.

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HAVE QUESTIONS?
Contact or visit the following:
• StudentAid.gov
• a college financial aid office
• studentaid@ed.gov
• 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) toll-free
• 1-800-730-8913 (toll-free TTY for the hearing impaired)