

Paying for College- Information and Resources

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the form used by virtually all two and four-year colleges, universities and career schools for the awarding of federal student aid and most state and college aid. The fastest way to apply for federal student aid is over the Internet using the interactive FAFSA on the Web at www.fafsa.ed.gov. This site hosts the online application, as well as an abundance of information about filling it out. You can check your eligibility for applying for financial aid, find out what information you need to gather, and sign up for a pin number which serves as your electronic signature on the application.

To meet the Federal Student Aid deadline, you should apply as soon **after January 1st** as possible. Please be aware that schools and states have their own deadlines, which are often in February or March, so you should contact each college or university for exact deadline dates. Though the FAFSA cannot be file until January 1, pulling together financial and tax information prior to that can save you time. Schools may also ask you to complete supplemental forms that ask additional information about your financial status and life situation, as well as their own institutional forms. Copy all forms so that you have the same information on all forms. Mistakes or discrepancies can cause costly delays. As with college applications, proof read everything!

For additional information on the FAFSA, go to the www.fafsa.ed.gov.

CSS Profile: Some colleges, universities and scholarship programs require you to report financial information using the CSS Profile. The PROFILE is only available online at www.collegeboard.com or <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp> beginning October 1. The information collected is used to award private grant and scholarship funds. The PROFILE application is personalized for you based on the information you give when you register for the service. In addition, you can include explanations about special circumstances on the application so the colleges and programs reviewing your information can make their decisions knowing as much as possible about your family. For more information about the CSS Profile, [see the Profile website](#).

MEFA (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority): A non-profit self-financing state authority, not reliant on state or federal appropriation that provides services and information to help families plan, save and pay for college. Sign up for MEFA counselor emails for ongoing college admissions and college financing information. www.mefacounselor.org.

Tuition Break: New England Board of Higher Education's Tuition Break Program enables New England residents to enroll at out-of-state New England public colleges and universities at a discount. Students are eligible for the RST Tuition Break program when they enroll in an approved major that is not offered by the public colleges and universities in their home state. Information at <http://www.nebhe.org/programs-overview/rsp-tuition-break/overview/>

Federal Student Aid Gateway: the source for free information, guidance and tools for federal student assistance—from the U.S. Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid. <http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov>.