



4 Steps to Financial Aid

☐ Step 1: Prepare

- Know (and meet) the financial aid deadlines at the colleges you are applying to. Financial aid funds are limited, be sure to **file your financial aid application (FAFSA) on time!**
- Go to www.pin.ed.gov and request a PIN. Your PIN is your electronic signature for federal student aid and you (and your parent) will need a PIN to sign the FAFSA online.
- Many colleges require additional forms. Check with each college you are interested in to find out what is needed. Respond quickly to all requests for information.

☐ Step 2: Apply

- Go to: www.fafsa.gov to complete the FAFSA online.
 - ✓ Submit the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible.
 - ✓ Do not wait until your income taxes are completed; estimate your tax information and make updates later. Even if you do not file income tax, you can still complete the FAFSA.
 - ✓ Print and save your confirmation page.
 - ✓ **The FAFSA is free.** You do not need to pay anyone to complete or submit your FAFSA.
 - ✓ Paper applications are available for download at www.famemaine.com.

☐ Step 3: Follow-Up

- After you submit your FAFSA, you will receive a **Student Aid Report (SAR)**, which is a summary of the information you provided on your FAFSA.
- Carefully review your SAR for accuracy. If you used estimated tax figures, verify the figures and **make corrections if necessary at www.fafsa.gov.**
- The colleges you listed on your FAFSA will receive your FAFSA information electronically.

☐ Step 4: Receive and Respond

- You will receive a financial aid award from the colleges to which you have been accepted. Many colleges begin mailing (or e-mailing) financial aid awards in mid-March.
- Review your award carefully. If you have questions, be sure to ask. The financial aid office at your college is there to help you!
- Contact the financial aid office if there are changes in your family's financial situation, such as unemployment.

The FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It is the primary application for all federal and state financial aid.