



Financial Aid Checklist

- START SAVING.**
When it comes to saving for college, every penny counts. Now is the time to take responsibility for your finances. Keep track of your spending habits and identify areas where you can cut back.
- GET FAMILIAR WITH THE FINANCIAL AID PROCESS.**
Understanding the ins and outs of financial aid can be a daunting task. Talk to friends or family members who have already gone through the college application process and read articles online.
- TALK TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT FUNDING YOUR FUTURE.**
It's important to know your budget before you choose a school so you can figure out the amount of money you need to secure through financial aid, scholarships, and personal savings.
- UNDERSTAND COLLEGE COSTS.**
Spend some time researching the costs associated (tuition, room and board, books, etc.) with the colleges you're interested in attending. Tools like the US Department of Education's College Scorecard can give you a quick snapshot of schools based on program, location, size, and school.
- MEET WITH YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR.**
Your school counselor has a lot of great resources for financial aid. Make an effort to set up a meeting and ask about local scholarships and grants that you're eligible to receive.
- COLLECT NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION.**
Before you start the financial aid application process, gather everything you need to fill out the forms correctly, including your Social Security Number, driver's license number, and W-2 forms.
- CREATE YOUR FSA ID.**
Your FSA ID is a username and password you create that allows you to log-in to the Federal Student Aid's systems and serves as your legal signature. You must have your FSA ID to fill out the FAFSA.
- COMPLETE THE FAFSA FORM.**
The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) provides you with access to state and federal aid as well as financial assistance from many colleges. High school seniors should submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after it opens on October 1.
- APPLY FOR ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS.**
Don't forget to fill out scholarship applications not covered by the FAFSA form. To find scholarships, use online search tools like [scholarships.com](https://www.scholarships.com), opt in to the ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS), ask employers, clubs, and local groups if they offer scholarships, and reach out to the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend.
- REVIEW YOUR FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE.**
After you've submitted your ACT® test scores and completed your FAFSA, the financial aid office at the colleges you've been accepted to will send you an award letter outlining the financial assistance they can provide. This may include grants, scholarships, loans, and/or work study programs.