

# Financial Aid Checklist

link to [www.OfftoCollege.com/aid-checklist.html](http://www.OfftoCollege.com/aid-checklist.html) for link and support information

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## First Thing, Make Sure You Complete Your Off-to-College Tasks

If you are going to college, make sure you complete and submit the required documents.

Deadlines include essay and application submissions, college visits, housing selection, and gathering those things for the move.

Our quick calendar of events can help: [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## How Much Is It Going to Cost

Depends on where you are going

view our quick table of estimated costs: see *quick reviews* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

Costs include tuition, housing, books, transportation and more: view expected college costs (aid step 1)

TIP: print our tally sheet to keep tabs on cost and the available aid that you get

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## Where is the Money Coming From

\$135 Billion dollars were disbursed last year (2008) in financial aid for students. The largest percentage was federal loans.

Federal Loans	51%	\$68.6
Institutional Grants	18%	\$24.4
Federal Pell Grants	9%	\$12.7
Private & Employer Grants	7%	\$9.3
State Grants	5%	\$6.8
Education Tax Benefits	4%	\$6.0
Other Federal Programs	4%	\$5.3
Federal Campus Based	2%	\$3.1
Total	100%	\$135 billion

These are just some of the sources of financial aid. Other aid for college includes:

- scholarships
- campus aid
- private student aid and loans
- EFC

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## What is EFC

EFC is the Expected Family Contribution for higher education. In other words, financial aid is awarded based on a formula that calculates the total cost of attending school and the expected family contribution to that cost.

We have more information about EFC: see *quick reviews* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## Do You Qualify for Financial Aid

Before you start the financial aid process, you must qualify as either a dependant or independent student.

Review qualifications:

Go to Financial Aid Note 1: see *quick reviews* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## Understand the Financial Aid Process

First comes the FAFSA form, then the SAR, and then the Financial Aid letter from your school.

Link to our Financial Aid Steps to view the process:

Go to Financial Aid Steps: see *quick reviews* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## FAFSA Submission

Almost all financial aid begins with your filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

This form is required for all Federal Student Loans and many college aid programs, including some scholarships. You can file the FAFSA form starting in January for the upcoming Fall academic year.

What you will need to file:

- tax returns
- W-2 forms
- bank statements
- Social Security and VA Benefits, if any

Visit Aid Step 2 for FAFSA Information - Links: see *quick reviews* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## Understand the Types and Sources of Student Financial Student Aid

Financial aid programs include grants, scholarships, loans, state programs, and other special aid.

We have complete information on types and sources.

Start With Our Financial Aid List: Aid Step 5: see *quick reviews* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

You can view a summary chart of financial aid options:

financial aid chart: for undergraduates

financial aid chart: for graduates

financial aid chart: for parents

financial aid chart: for continuing students

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## Check with Your Financial Aid Office

Your school's financial aid office is the control center for student financial aid.

Talk with your college's financial aid office to see how they can help. Be prepared to ask questions such as:

1. What are the filing deadlines?
2. What forms are required?
3. What percentage of the college costs is covered by the financial aid package?
4. Can the award package be negotiated?

Connect to your schools web site for the aid office: see *tools* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## Start Searching for Scholarship Money

Scholarship awards can go fast, so start early — usually in the Fall prior to the start of your college year.

Check your field of study, ethnic background, social and religious affiliations, parent's employment, family club memberships, and local businesses and clubs:

over \$24.3 billion

worth of scholarships and grants in one location

view scholarship directory: [www.OfftoCollege.com/scholarships](http://www.OfftoCollege.com/scholarships)

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## **Learn About Student Stafford Loans**

Student loans are the most widely used form of financial aid. These loans are backed by the Federal Government to guarantee low-interest rate loans.

View complete information: *see pay for college at* [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

Go to Federal Student Loans

View our Summary Loan Chart of available student loans

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## **Graduates Can Use the PLUS Loan**

Graduates and professional students now qualify under the PLUS loan program to borrow up to the full cost of education. Deferment plans are available.

Information about the GradPLUS loan: *see pay for college at* [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

View GradPLUS Loans

View our Summary Loan Chart of available PLUS loans

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## **See How Parents Can Help**

Parents of undergraduate students can assist with their child's education by applying for the Federal PLUS loans.

We have information about PLUS loans: *see pay for college at* [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

View PLUS Loans

View our Summary Loan Chart of available student loans

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## **Private Loans and Other Alternative Financing**

Most financial aid awards do not cover the full cost of education. Many students are turning to private education loans and other alternative financing to finance their education.

These loans are not subject to Federal Government review and processing. You can get your money in as little as 5 business days.

See what Private Loans are available: *see pay for college at* [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

View Private Loans

View our Summary Loan Chart of available student loans

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## Home Equity Loans

Parents or students with equity value in their home can use home equity loan to pay for college. Funds can be borrowed as they are needed — not all at once under most other loan programs.

For more information: see *pay for college* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## Use the Banker Home Equity Line of Credit (BLOC)

Parents or students with steady working income can use the BLOC to manage their money and fund education expenses. The program benefits those with positive discretionary income that helps to keep funding costs low.

For more information: see *pay for college* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## Finding the Right Lender

When its time to submit your application for Federal and Private Education financing, our lending partners can process your application quickly for Stafford, PLUS, and Private Education Loans.

Apply for Financial Aid: see *apply* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## Managing Your Money

Money will be tight during school. You want to control spending and avoid unnecessary debt. View our recommendation on how to manage student funds while attending college.

Money management tips: see *tools* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## Building Your Credit

Starting school brings on many new responsibilities like building a strong credit report and managing your credit payments. This will benefit you in the future for:

- buying a home
- finding a good career
- keeping lending costs down
- perhaps starting a business

We have complete credit and debt management tips including budgeting monthly expenses: Link to the ABCs of credit management: see *tools* at [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## **Saving for College**

Though it might be too late for the upcoming student, it is not too late for the other children in your family — or even yourself if your plans have yourself returning to school.

There are some interest savings strategies that can benefit you.

For information:

Link to our College Planning Center: [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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## **Consolidating Student Loans**

Don't forget that when you graduate from school, you can consolidate your federal loans into one single billing at repayment terms that fit your budget.

For detailed information:

View our Student Consolidation Center: [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)

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Keep track of your student loans, scholarships and other financial aid for future reference and need: download our aid tracking worksheet

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## **Financial Aid Road Map**

Do you have a plan to pay for college?

Open and use our student aid map as your guide: [www.OfftoCollege.com](http://www.OfftoCollege.com)