



# FINANCIAL AID

## Understanding how you and your child can pay for college

Financial aid is the money you and your child can get for educational expenses. It is designed to supplement the amount of money your family is able to contribute to the cost of the college.

In order to receive financial aid, a financial aid application (FAFSA) must be completed by the specified deadline. The FAFSA is not an easy application to fill out but very rewarding. Filling out the application online not only saves time but penmanship is not required. The FAFSA includes questions about student and parent income, family size, financial assets, and more. The application should be completed from January 1<sup>st</sup> through March 2<sup>nd</sup> of the student's senior year.

Each FAFSA goes through a process called "Needs Analysis" to determine how much the student and parent can pay towards college expenses. This amount is called EFC (Expected Family Contribution). This is how the student's financial need is calculated:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Cost of Attendance (includes tuition, books, transportation, and living expenses)} \\ & - \text{Family Contribution (based on the results of the student's Needs Analysis from the FAFSA)} \\ & = \text{Student's Financial Need (this amount varies depending on the cost of the school)} \end{aligned}$$

Financial need will vary because the budget for each college differs. The EFC stays the same at each college. The following are different types of financial aid:

- **Grants**-do not need to be repaid. Money comes from the federal government (Pell Grant) or the State of California (Cal Grant)
- **Scholarships**-do not need to be repaid. Money comes from foundations, private organizations, funds, donations, etc.
- **Work-Study Programs**-need to be repaid by working or other arrangements.
- **Educational Loans**-need to be repaid. Usually the money comes from a bank.

The college will receive the information on the student's FAFSA, including the EFC, and will put together a package that will likely include aid from several sources listed above. Every school may offer a different package. Each college the student lists on the FAFSA will send a Financial Aid **Award Letter** giving the details of the student's financial aid package. The student can compare award letters to help decide which college to attend. The student **must** respond to the college to **accept or decline** each type of financial aid offered.

The following are important points to remember:

- All students should apply for financial aid regardless of family income.
- Students will not receive financial aid from any college unless the student completes a FAFSA.
- It is strongly recommended that students complete the FAFSA online. This decreases the chance of mistakes and increases the speed of processing the FAFSA.
- When applying online, each student and parent must first apply for a PIN. The PIN is used online as your signature.
- Students should meet with their counselor to be assisted in the process.
- **Financial Aid Websites:** [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov), [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov), and [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov)
- 1-800-4 FEDAID