

Federal Student Loan Programs

StudentAid.gov

Will you need a loan to attend college?

If so, think federal aid first. Federal student loans usually offer borrowers lower interest rates and have more flexible repayment terms and options than private student loans.

1. What is a federal student loan?

Federal loans are borrowed funds that you must repay with interest. A federal student loan allows students and their parents to borrow money to help pay for college through loan programs supported by the federal government. They have low interest rates and offer flexible repayment terms, benefits, and options.

2. What is a private student loan?

A private student loan is a nonfederal loan issued by a lender such as a bank or credit union. If you're not sure whether you're being offered a private loan or a federal loan, check with the financial aid office at your school.

3. Why are federal student loans a better option for paying for college?

Federal student loans offer borrowers many benefits not typically found in private loans. These include low fixed interest rates, income-based repayment plans, cancellation for certain employment, and deferment (postponement) options, including deferment of loan payments when a student returns to school. Also, private loans usually require a credit check. For these reasons, students and parents should always exhaust federal student loan options before considering a private loan.

4. How much should I borrow?

Borrow only what you need and consider the earnings potential in your chosen profession to determine how easily you can repay your debt. You can find career salary estimates at the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook at www.bls.gov/oooh. Your student loan payments should be only a small percentage of your salary after you graduate.

Have questions?

Contact or visit the following

- ▶ StudentAid.gov
- ▶ a college financial aid office
- ▶ studentaid@ed.gov
- ▶ 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) toll free
- ▶ TTY: 1-800-730-8913
- ▶ Find this fact sheet at StudentAid.gov/resources

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What kinds of federal student loans are available?

The interest rates shown are fixed rates for the life of the loan.

Federal Loan Program	Loan Details	Annual Award (subject to change)
Federal Perkins Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For undergraduate and graduate students Eligibility depends on student's financial need and availability of funds at the college. If you have questions about Perkins Loan eligibility, please contact your college's financial aid office Interest rate is 5% College is the lender; payment is owed to the college that made the loan 	<p>Undergraduate students: up to \$5,500; graduate and professional students: up to \$8,000</p> <p>Total amount may not exceed \$27,500 for undergraduates and \$60,000 for graduate students (including amounts borrowed as an undergraduate)</p>
Direct Subsidized Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need Loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2015, and before July 1, 2016, interest rate is 4.29% Student is not usually charged interest on the loan during certain periods The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is the lender; payment is owed to ED 	<p>\$3,500–\$5,500, depending on grade level</p> <p>For total lifetime limit, visit StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub</p>
Direct Unsubsidized Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For undergraduate and graduate students; financial need is not required For loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2015, and before July 1, 2016: 4.29% interest rate for undergraduate students, and 5.84% interest rate for graduate and professional students Student is responsible for interest during all periods ED is the lender; payment is owed to ED 	<p>\$5,500–\$20,500 (less any subsidized amounts received for same period), depending on grade level and dependency status</p> <p>For total lifetime limit, visit StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub</p>
Direct PLUS Loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For parents of dependent undergraduate students and for graduate or professional students; financial need is not required Student must be either a dependent undergraduate student for whom a parent is taking out a Direct PLUS Loan or a graduate or professional student who is receiving a Direct PLUS Loan For loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2015, and before July 1, 2016, interest rate is 6.84% Borrower must not have negative credit history Borrower is responsible for interest during all periods ED is the lender; payment is owed to ED 	<p>Maximum amount is cost of attendance minus any other financial aid student receives; no minimum amount</p>

Note: Find interest rates on loans disbursed before July 1, 2015, at StudentAid.gov/interest.

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