

# START HERE: GETTING FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE

## *One big step to help high school seniors afford college*

While high schools are closed, one of the most important steps you can take for your future is to **complete your college financial aid applications**. It's a good idea to fill out the forms even if you are not sure whether you will go to college in the fall or which one you'll attend.

Why does it matter? Applying for financial aid now helps make college affordable. New Yorkers are missing out on an estimated \$152 million in federal financial aid by not filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). More than half of high school seniors in New York State have already filled out the FAFSA—but that means lots of students still have not!

**You can complete your FAFSA, today, using a smartphone or computer.**

### HERE'S WHERE TO START:

- The **FAFSA** determines the amount of federal student financial aid you can receive. Many colleges and universities use it to help determine the aid they provide, too. You can fill it out at <http://FAFSA.gov>.
- The NYS **DREAM Act** gives undocumented and other students access to New York State grants and scholarships. You can fill it out at <http://NYS DREAM.applyists.net>.

After you've completed these applications, you'll be able to find out about other New York State financial aid like Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grants and the Excelsior Scholarship. You can get more information on the forms and the documents you'll need to complete them in our High School Toolkit at <http://NYFAFSACHallenge.org>.

We know this is a hard time. It's not the senior year that anyone expected, but things will get better. Congratulations on earning your diploma! Your future awaits!

### Already filled out the FAFSA? Here's one more question...

The coronavirus pandemic is making life harder for a lot of families. Some parents have lost their jobs or experienced pay cuts. Some students have a family member who has gotten sick, and medical bills are piling up.

All of these reasons—and more—might make you eligible for more financial aid from your college. You can check your eligibility and ask your college for a change in your financial aid package. It's easy, and there's help online. Start at <https://formswift.com/swift-student>.

There's also more financial aid available from the federal government. A new law called the "CARES Act" gives money to colleges and universities that they have to use for student aid. Talking to your college's financial aid office can help you find out if you qualify.