Four steps to get financial aid for college

STEP 1

APPLY NOW FOR PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS.

- o See your high school counselor or career center manager for a list of scholarships.

- o Looking locally for scholarships can produce successful search results. Start with your local community/ civic organizations and businesses. Ask your family and friends what organizations they belong to and see if they offer scholarship opportunities. Do your parents' employers have scholarship competitions? Do you have an older friend who was awarded a scholarship from a local business or organization? Check it out!

- o Many scholarships are not posted until the fall of your senior year, but deadlines pop up as early as December,

- o There are several free scholarship sites on the Internet. Some popular sites are: www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org www.meritaid.com www.mycollegedollars.com www.fastweb.com.

- o Read your local newspaper every day to look for announcements about scholarships or photos of winners.

- o If you attend a community college, check the requirements to join Phi Theta Kappa which offers great scholarships.

CHECK OUT LOCAL AND STATE SCHOLARSHIPS AT GET2COLLEGE.ORG.

STEP 2

APPLY EARLY FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION AND SCHOLARSHIPS.

- o Most scholarships come directly from individual colleges.
- o Complete applications for admission in the fall of your senior year. You must be accepted for admission in order to receive scholarships and financial aid. Most can be found online at each college's website. MAKE SURE YOU MEET ALL DEADLINES!
- o If you attend a community college, be aware that 4-year colleges may have transfer scholarships for Phi Theta Kappa members, so be sure to join if selected.

STEP 3

NEW! EARLY FAFSA COMPLETION!

The FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and is required to receive any federal funds. Federal funds include need-based and non-need-based grants, work-study programs, and student loans. The FAFSA may also be used for awarding some state aid, institutional aid, and even private scholarships.

You must complete the FAFSA at fafsa.gov after October 1 of your senior year. The online application process contains built-in edits to help you prevent costly mistakes. Make sure you meet the state financial aid and your prospective colleges' priority deadlines. Review for accuracy your Student Aid Report (SAR), which is sent to you after you file your FAFSA. If necessary, make and submit corrections. Some schools may require the CSS/Financial Aid Profile® in addition to the FAFSA. If you have any special circumstances, contact the Financial Aid Office of the school you plan to attend.