



— BAY PORT —
PIRATES

FINANCIAL AID GUIDE

This guide is designed to help students and parents navigate the financial planning process for higher education. The resources within this guide are not all encompassing but will answer many of the frequently asked questions. In addition to the resources listed below, students have more information available for review in Xello. Ask your student to log into their Xello account, select College Planning, and select Knowledge Hub. The topics listed there provide insight regarding financial aid, also.

Financial Aid Can Help You Afford College

Financial aid is money that the government and other organizations give you or lend you so you can pay for college. To qualify for financial aid, you have to apply. With financial aid, many students who can't afford the full cost of college are able to earn their degrees. In fact, most full time college students receive some type of financial aid.

Sources of Financial Aid

1. The federal government (the largest source)
2. State governments
3. Colleges and universities
4. Private organizations, such as companies, clubs and religious organizations
5. Banks and lending companies

4 Types of Financial Aid

1. Grants Grants are often called "gift aid" since they do not have to be paid back. Grants come from federal and state governments and from colleges. Most grants are need based, which means they are usually given based on your or your family's financial circumstances.

2. Scholarships Scholarships are also "gift aid." Scholarships come from the government as well as colleges & private organizations. They may be awarded for academic or athletic ability, interest in a certain subject, or volunteer work, for example. Some scholarships are given based on membership in an ethnic or religious group. Companies may also give scholarships to children of employees.

3. Loans Borrowing money from a bank, government, or lending company is called "taking out a loan." A loan must be paid back with an extra charge called "interest." The federal government offers low-interest loans to students with financial need. Other lenders may charge more interest.

4. Federal Work-Study Programs The Federal Work-Study Program offers students paid part-time jobs at the college of attendance to help students pay for part of their college cost.

Where, How, and When to Apply for Financial Aid

Step 1 of your financial aid journey is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on or after October 1. Completing the [FAFSA](#) will allow you to be considered for financial aid from the federal government, state government, and many colleges. A great resource to help you complete the FAFSA:

- [College Goal Wisconsin](#) holds local FAFSA workshops several times each year in October and November. Attending these workshops is a great idea if you've never completed the FAFSA. By using the link and Registering you can select either an in-person time at a local event (10/5 at Green Bay Preble, 10/7 at Green Bay Southwest, or 10/26 at Green Bay West) or for a Virtual event.

*[CSS Profile](#): In addition to completing FAFSA, some colleges may require you to complete the CSS Profile on or after October 1st. Completing CSS will give the college additional information so they may assess potential funding for you.

When to Apply for Financial Aid

October 1 of the year before you plan to go to college is the first day you can file the FAFSA. College, state and private financial aid & scholarship deadlines vary. Aim to file the FAFSA as close to Oct. 1 as possible. Financial aid dollars are limited & are awarded on a first-come, first served basis. You must complete the FAFSA each year you're in college to continue receiving funds.

Don't Rule Out "Expensive" Colleges. A college that may seem to charge a lot for tuition might offer you generous financial aid; this is most often the case for private colleges. Private colleges might even be more affordable than public colleges that charge a lower tuition. Cost will depend on several factors, including the college, your financial need, and/or your GPA & standardized test scores (if required). So, think about net price, not published price — and don't be afraid to apply to colleges you think you can't afford.

Scholarship Basics

Step 2 in your financial aid journey is to apply for scholarships.

Types of scholarships:

- Need-based scholarships consider your family's financial status.
- Merit-based scholarships consider your academic credentials.

Beyond merit & need based scholarships, scholarships originate from 2 different sources:

1. College-Specific Scholarships (often called "Institutional Aid") - You are considered for many scholarships that the colleges provide, usually via your application for admission. Always check the college website's "Financial Aid" section for any incoming freshman scholarships that may require an additional application. Call the college's financial aid department if you have questions.

2. Local/Private Scholarships (often called "Outside Scholarships") - Many local, national, & private scholarships not affiliated with specific colleges are posted in Xello under College Planning, Local Scholarships. These scholarships are offered by organizations committed to helping with the affordability of higher education. Some are offering scholarships to students across the country, others will focus on Northeast Wisconsin or Bay Port students only (Local).

3. Scholarship Companies - Scholarship Companies provide an opportunity for students to complete one application then be considered for multiple scholarships. There are national companies that specialize in this and two local providers. The key is to not pay for the service. [Greater Green Bay Community Foundation Scholarships](#) (open early Dec- mid-March): a local scholarship clearinghouse where you complete 1 application & are considered for many scholarships within our community.

[College Ready WI](#) (open Dec/Jan - early April) another local scholarship clearinghouse where you complete 1 app & are considered for many area scholarships.

Colleges require you to report any “outside scholarships” you've earned (those not affiliated with the college) - check each college's website for college-specific rules on outside scholarship reporting.

Estimating Cost of Attendance (COA)

Step 3 on your financial aid journey is estimating the COA at each college. The COA is the average annual total amount to attend a college or university. COA varies by college. Included in the COA are reasonably expected expenses, such as...

- Tuition & fees
- On-campus room and board
- Books and supplies
- Personal expenses
- Transportation to and from

**Using the college's Net Price Calculator will help you determine your COA....

Net Price

Net price is the real price that you'll pay to go to a college. It's the published price of the college (sticker price) minus any gift aid you receive. The net price of a college is often much lower than the published price.

Colleges offer a tool on their websites called a Net Price Calculator (use the search tool on the specific college website). This online tool gives you an estimate of the actual price you would pay to go to a certain college, based on information you enter about your finances. The net price will be different for every college, so it's a good idea to search each of your prospective college's net price calculator to determine COA.

Comparing Financial Aid Offers

Step 4: Receiving college's financial aid offers and comparing them is your next step before deciding on your college of attendance. If you've been accepted by colleges, they'll send you financial aid offers. Collecting and comparing these offers to determine which option is best for you is a wise move.

Private Student Loans (often called “Alternative Loans”)

Completing FAFSA is your 1st step, as the federal government offers loans with benefits that private lenders are not able to offer. Private Student Loans should be used only after all other options are exhausted. Some tips...

- Only borrow what you need for your direct costs. Try to save money for discretionary expenses. Think about the expected income in your field of study. Will your monthly payments from your loans be affordable? Remember to include payments from other types of loans, loans for future years at school, and other expenses such as rent, car, etc.

Questions to ask when determining which lender to use:

- What will the interest rate be? Rates vary between lenders and are most often based on the credit score of you or your co-signer. Ask: "Are there options to reduce the rate?"
- Is the interest rate fixed or variable? With a fixed rate, the rate will never change, but is typically higher than a variable rate. Variable rates are lower, but will change over the life of the loan. Not all lenders offer both options.

Are there fees associated with the loan?

- What are the annual and lifetime limits for the amount you can borrow?
- Will you need a co-signer? Most loans are based on credit scores. Many high school students have not established credit history yet, so a co-signer may be necessary. Finding a good credit worthy co-signer will help you get the best interest rate possible. Most lenders offer the option to remove a cosigner after a certain number of on-time payments.

When will the repayment begin? Is there a grace period? What are the repayment terms & conditions? What is the estimated repayment amount and what repayment options are available? Do you have the option to start making payments while still in college? Are alternate repayment plans available when you've graduated if you cannot afford your monthly payment?

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