Financial Aid Steps

- To get college money, **you must submit a 2023-2024 financial aid application at FAFSA.gov OR CalDreamAct.org by Mar 2nd. Submit by Jan. 1st if possible!** U.S. citizens and permanent residents submit the FAFSA. AB 540 students submit the Dream Act application**.** If you're submitting the FAFSA, start by getting an FSA ID for yourself and for one parent at www.FSAID.ed.gov.

- Both the FAFSA and Dream Act are based on tax forms. Use the 2021 tax forms that your parents did last spring.

- **Three days after submitting, you'll receive an email summary. You can check your Student Aid Report (SAR) in your FAFSA account (or the CA Aid Report for the Dream Act). Check your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) on your Student Aid Report. If your EFC is blank (no value, not even zero) or if it seems too large, you have made errors that need to be corrected.**

- **Lastly, check your Cal Grant status at https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/ 1 week after submitting your fin aid application.** You will be able to see if you qualify for a Cal Grant, and if not you can read their explanation of why you didn't qualify.

Tips

- **Get an FSA ID (the digital signature for the FAFSA) for you and one parent now! Names must be reported exactly as they appear on social security cards.**

- List a California college first on your financial aid form. This will help activate your Cal Grant if you qualify.

- Anyone who receives more than more than half their support from your parents is included in your family size.

- Parent marital status is determined by their status on the date the FAFSA is filed. If your parents are separated, report income for only the parent with whom you live. But if you also live with a stepparent, you must report their income, also.

- Parents should not include the value of your home on the FAFSA. You must report the value of additional properties, however.

- You should check "Yes" on the Work Study question. If you don't want a job at the college, you can always change your mind later.

- **File the correct financial aid form! (2023-24 for the Class of '23)**

- **The FAFSA and CSS Profile (an additional online form required by most private colleges) may be due as early as January for some private colleges. Don't miss the deadline!**

- If you're not sure about your living arrangements, it's probably safer to put "on campus" as your college housing option. You can always change your status later.