

FINANCIAL AID NEWSLETTER

The following pages contain important information that all college-bound seniors should pay close attention to. If you would like more detailed Financial Aid information, please contact your school counselor.

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

The fall semester of your Senior Year is normally the beginning of college application submissions. January is the time when most colleges begin accepting students and many seniors have already been accepted at the college of their choice. However, there are still some college-bound seniors who have not yet submitted a single college application! It is **urgent** that you complete your applications **right away!** Programs at many colleges fill rapidly and once their quotas are filled, no more students will be accepted.

If you have a particular question, or if you are still undecided about your plans after high school, please see your counselor **ASAP!!**



FINANCIAL AID



Every college has a different financial aid deadline and different form requirements. You should be researching that information now, for any colleges you're interested in.

For each college that you have applied to, or may still apply to, you will need to know:

- ◇ **Financial Aid deadlines:** Some deadlines are as early as December, so make sure you know **NOW** when the forms are due at your selected colleges.
- ◇ **Required forms:** Every college will require that you file the FAFSA (more details later), but some also require the CSS Profile or a special form that is specific to their college. It is your responsibility to know which forms each school requires.

FREE MONEY FOR COLLEGE

Who wants free money?

You should!

How can you get free money?

By researching and applying to as many scholarships as possible, including the local scholarships that are available through the Counseling Office.

Remember to check your email!!

New scholarships arrive OFTEN!





FINANCIAL AID PROCESS AND FORMS

There are some different forms that you may have to file to be eligible for financial aid.
You must check with your college(s) to see which forms they require.

1) FSA I.D.

Before beginning the Financial Aid process, you must apply for your FSA I.D. at <https://fsaid.ed.gov>. Your parents will also be required to apply for an FSA I.D.

2) Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA)

This form is used to determine your eligibility for all federal financial aid programs. Visit www.fafsa.gov to file this form.

FAFSA Facts:

- You and your parents will use the tax data from prior years to complete the FAFSA forms. You and your parents should have your tax information for the prior 2 years readily available.
- If you and/or your parents filed taxes electronically before completing the FAFSA, you can use the IRS Retrieval Tool to connect directly to the Internal Revenue Service for all updated tax data.
- If the retrieval tool is used, the colleges that you apply to will not be required to collect tax information from you, as it will be automatically transferred electronically.
- You will receive a "Submission Confirmation." This will have your Student Aid Index (SAI) or Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which is a measure of your family's financial strength and is the number that colleges will use to determine your financial aid package. It is not a guarantee of how much money you will receive. That is up to individual colleges and may vary significantly.
- All New York State residents who include a New York college on their FAFSA form may apply for New York State Aid, including New York's Tuition Assistance Program (**TAP**), immediately after completing the FAFSA form by using the special link on the FAFSA Submission Confirmation page.

Your FAFSA Student Aid Report

Once the FAFSA is processed, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) which gives you basic information about your eligibility for federal aid. Check this report carefully to make sure it is correct and complete. All the colleges you listed on your FAFSA will receive a copy of your SAR to review, and will then be able to create an aid package/award letter for you.

Your FAFSA Award Letter

- College Financial Aid Professionals recommend that you consider the following when comparing award letters from each college:
 - ⇒ What does the Cost of Attendance include?
 - ⇒ Which items are billed, and which are just estimates given to you for budgeting?
 - ⇒ Find out if any scholarships or grants included are renewable, and if so, what criteria are needed to continue receiving that aid.
 - ⇒ If a work study is included, is it a guaranteed job, or just a potential option?
- The award letters will also include the amounts of Federal, State, and School-based aid that you will qualify for.
- There is also a helpful "Financial Aid Award Packages Comparison Tool" at www.HESC.ny.gov (under the "pay" tab) that you can use to easily compare costs at your colleges.
- Most colleges are emailing award letters, or links to letters, rather than mailing them. Make sure you're reading all emails from your colleges and share them with your parents!

3) Specific College Forms

Many colleges have their own forms that must be completed to determine the amount of aid you receive. Do this in a timely manner and return these forms ASAP!

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4) Tuition Assistance Program—TAP

- This program helps eligible New York State residents pay tuition at approved colleges in New York State.
- Your TAP-on-the-Web application cannot be processed until your FAFSA is complete.
- TAP awards are not processed until the NYS Budget is passed, which is typically on, or after, April 1 of each year.
- If you miss the TAP link after finishing the FAFSA online form, you must wait 3 business days until your FAFSA data is received by HESC, before completing your TAP-on-the-Web application at www.HESC.ny.gov.
- The TAP application has space for only one college code. Usually, it's the first NYS college that you named on your FAFSA. *When you decide on the college that you will attend (and it's an approved NYS school), please remember to update your TAP application with the name of that college if it's different from the one you included originally.*

5) CSS PROFILE

This form is published by The College Board and is required by many private institutions to award money specific to their school. Students should check their college's financial aid information to see if they require this form. If required, you file the CSS PROFILE online at cssprofile.collegeboard.org. There is a fee to file a CSS PROFILE, so please see your counselor if you qualify for a fee waiver. The CSS PROFILE may be filed as early as October 1st. It is recommended that it be filed no later than two weeks before the priority deadline specified by the college.

HINTS AND TIPS FROM THE FINANCIAL AID PROFESSIONALS

1. STUDENTS should be actively involved in filling out all financial aid and college forms.
2. You must apply each year and apply early to not miss any deadlines. When the money is gone, it's gone.
3. Make sure you choose the correct year.
4. Part-time students are eligible for financial aid if they go to school at least half-time.
5. Let your college know if your status changes, as you could be eligible for more aid. For example, if your parent loses their job, if there is a divorce in the family, if you become independent (see below) or if there is a death in the family.
6. BE SURE to open and read all mail and email from your colleges.
7. Make sure you list ALL of the schools you are applying to on your FAFSA.
8. Both you and a parent will sign the FAFSA using your own FSA I.D. You can apply for a FSA I.D. at <https://fsaid.ed.gov>.
9. Questions about "you" refer to the student, not necessarily the person filling out the form.
10. If you have a NYS school listed, you can also apply for New York State financial aid.
11. Make sure you print or save a copy of your completed FAFSA information to retain for your records.
12. Don't forget to hit "SUBMIT" when sending your FAFSA forms to colleges. "SAVING" does not send your information.

US Department of Education Warning: Be wary of organizations that charge a fee to submit your application or to find you money (grants, scholarships, awards, etc.) for college. In general, the help you pay for can be obtained for free from your high school, the colleges you're interested in, or from the U.S. Department of Education.

Special Circumstances: You may have special financial circumstances that will not be evident through FAFSA data. If you believe you have a situation that merits special consideration, please contact the financial aid office at your college. Financial Aid officers have some leeway to make changes that the Federal Government cannot, so don't hesitate to contact your college financial aid office for advice.

Independent Status: To be of independent status, you cannot be under 24 years of age, unless you are a ward of the court, both of your parents are deceased, you have dependents that you support financially, you are a graduate student, or you are a veteran. If you have a particularly unusual circumstance, please see your counselor as soon as possible.

Student Loan Advice: Many experts recommend not taking out more in loans (total for 4 years) than you're expected to earn in your first year out of college. www.Mappingyourfuture.org has excellent calculator tools to help you budget.

THE PROGRAMS

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

At www.studentaid.ed.gov you can find a complete list and full description of federal programs. The most common are:

Federal PELL Grant

This is a grant based upon financial need and will not need to be paid back. The Federal PELL Grant makes funds available to eligible students attending approved colleges, vocational schools, technical institutions, hospital schools of nursing, and other post-high school institutions.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants

This grant is for students of exceptional financial need who, without the grant, would not be able to continue their education. These grants do not need to be repaid.

Federal Work-Study (FWS)

FWS provides jobs for students who have financial need and who must earn a part of their educational expenses. You may apply if you are a full-time or part-time student. Wages are at least equal to the current minimum wage.

Direct Subsidized Loan

Available to undergraduate students with financial need, the maximum amount borrowed yearly will depend on what year you are in college. The interest will be paid by the Federal Government while you are in college.

Direct Unsubsidized Loan

This is a loan for students who do not qualify for the Direct Subsidized Loan. The yearly amounts you may borrow are the same, but the interest rate is higher and accumulates while you're in college.

Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS)

PLUS loans can help pay for educational expenses not covered by other financial aid. The maximum PLUS Loan amount your parents may borrow is your cost of attendance (as determined by the school) minus any other financial assistance you will receive.

TEACH Grant Program

The TEACH Grant Program can help you pay for college if you plan to become a teacher in a high need field in a low income area. To avoid having the grant turn into a loan you must repay, you will be required to teach for a certain length of time so be sure to understand the obligation.

Iraq & Afghanistan Service Grants

This grant is available if your parent/guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan.

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THE PROGRAMS

NEW YORK STATE PROGRAMS

At www.hesc.ny.gov, you can find many grant programs that New York State offers to residents attending an approved college in New York State.

Some examples include:

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

The New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) helps eligible New York residents pay tuition at approved schools in New York State. Depending on the academic year in which you begin study, an annual TAP award can be up to \$5,665. Because TAP is a grant, it does not have to be paid back. *Every New York State resident who is planning to attend a college/university in New York State should apply for TAP.* When you complete your FASFA on-line there will be a section that says "New York State Residents" that will link you to the TAP application.

The Excelsior Scholarship Program

The Excelsior Scholarship, in combination with other student financial aid programs, allows students to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition-free. The program covers tuition for eligible SUNY and CUNY students based on parent/family household incomes.

Enhanced Tuition Awards

The Enhanced Tuition Awards (ETA) program provides tuition awards to students who are New York State residents attending a participating private college located in New York State. Recipients will receive \$6,000 through a combination of their TAP award, ETA award and a match from their private college.

The NYS STEM Incentive Program

The NYS STEM Incentive Program provides tuition awards to students who are New York State residents attending a public or private degree-granting college or university located in New York State. Recipients must be in the top 10 percent of students of their high school graduating class, pursue an approved, two or four-year STEM degree program and agree to live in NYS and work in a STEM field in NYS for five years after graduation.

The NYS Dream Act Excelsior Program for Immigrants

The Senator José Peralta New York State DREAM Act gives undocumented and other students access to New York State administered student financial aid to support their higher education costs.

The Aid to Native Americans Grant

Enrolled members of a New York State tribe or children of an enrolled member of a New York State tribe may be eligible for financial aid through the Aid to Native Americans Program. Eligible and certified American Indian students may receive grant awards of up to \$2,000 per year (\$1,000 per semester) for up to four years of full-time study. Students enrolled in specific five year degree programs will receive funding for the full duration of their programs.

Anyone planning to attend a school in New York State should at least apply for the Tuition Assistance Program.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

HELPFUL WEBSITES

- studentaid.gov: Outlines all the federal financial aid resources—also on [Twitter.com/FAFSA](https://twitter.com/FAFSA) and Facebook at www.facebook.com/federalstudentaid.
- hesc.ny.gov: The N.Y. State financial aid site has debt calculators, college & career planning tools and practical info about credit, textbooks, etc...
- startheregetthere.org: NY State sponsored financial aid site geared toward students.
- finaid.org: Information on financial aid for college and tips on how to help ease the burden of college expenses.
- mappingyourfuture.org: Great site for budgeting & loan planning.
- fastweb.com: A connection to scholarships, colleges, and financial aid.
- Niche.com: A connection to scholarships, colleges, and financial aid
- bigfuture.collegeboard.org: Helpful resource with many links, tips, and information regarding financial aid.
- [INDIVIDUAL COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES/TECH OR TRADE SCHOOLS](#): The financial aid office at any college that you may be interested in can assist you with your questions and/or concerns..
- [GOOGLE](#): Great tool to research “financial aid resources and tips” or any other variations of wording for financial aid.

OTHER RESOURCES

AmeriCorps: This is a national service movement that will engage thousands of Americans of all ages in a domestic Peace Corps to get things done in our rural and urban communities. In exchange for one or two years of service, students will receive an educational award to help finance their college education, vocational training, or to pay back their student loans. You would also receive a living allowance. For more information, go to americorps.org. or see your Counselor.

Scholarships: There are many ways to search for scholarship money. Some of these include, but are not limited to: checking your school email often for the “Available Scholarships and Awards” flier, visiting your college’s website, searching Google for scholarship specific websites and/or specific award criteria, visiting scholarship search sites like goingmerry.com, scholarship360.org, studentscholarships.org, etc. You are also always welcome to contact your school counselor or Ms. Oldfield for help with your scholarship searches.

Military.com: Joining the military can be an exciting and life-changing experience. There are a lot of reasons young men and women across the United States show an interest in the Armed Forces. Some have a multigenerational respect for the military and want to serve like their older relatives did. Others want job security and the benefits that come along with being in the military. Whatever the reason, joining the military can create a great foundation for future personal growth.

CONTACT THE COUNSELING OFFICE

Counselor	Letters "A-K"	Zach Matzek	matzekz@dansvillecsd.org	335-4010 ext. 1007
Counselor	Letters "L-Z"	Erik Kastner	kastnere@dansvillecsd.org	335-4010 ext.1006
Secretary/Scholarship Coordinator	Amy Oldfield		oldfielda@dansvillecsd.org	335-4010 ext. 1009