Applying for Financial Aid:

3 Important Things to Remember About the FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is an online form you fill out to determine if you are eligible for federal student aid. Completing and submitting the FAFSA is a free process that may determine your eligibility for state and school aid. This is one of the most important steps you and your parents can take to help pay for college.

1

Start the Application Early

Beginning on October 1, you may apply for financial aid for the 2021–2022 award year, which runs from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022. You can submit the application anytime until the end of the award year to apply for federal aid. Don't delay your submission. The earlier you apply, the sooner you will learn about your net cost at various institutions.

Watch state and school due dates

You'll need to stay on top of state deadlines and FAFSA due-dates at each of the schools where you apply. The goal is to have financial aid packages back from all of your schools early to help you make your best choice.

2

Provide Last Year's Tax Returns

Your financial aid eligibility will be based on income information submitted by you and your parents on last year's tax returns, which were likely filed months ago. You may be eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (**studentaid.gov/irsdrt**) to import your financial data. It streamlines the process and reduces the need for verification later. The Data Retrieval Tool transfers information from your tax returns directly into your FAFSA, improving speed and accuracy.

3

Hit the Deadline

FAFSA application deadlines will vary by institution and also from state to state. We encourage you to submit your FAFSA as soon possible to ensure full consideration for all forms of financial aid.

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For more information or online assistance, visit studentaid.gov/fafsa