

HOME OF THE
WILDCATS



WILDCATS

21

T.O.L.

3

FINANCIAL
AID 101

VISITOR

14

T.O.L.

3

DOWN

2

TO GO

8

10:00

BALL ON

35

QTR.

2

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'06

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'11

STATE
CHAMPIONS

2016



CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'18

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'22

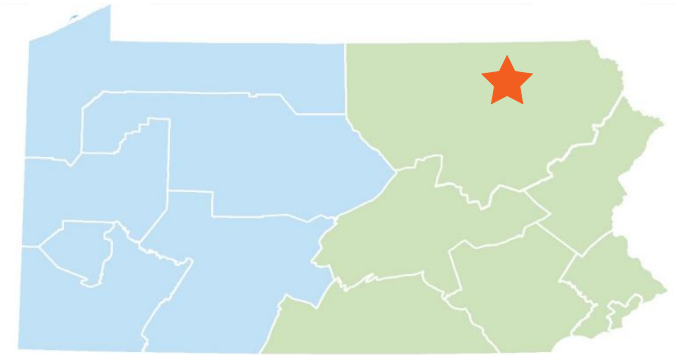


Please silence your cell phones!

Thank you for being considerate to the people around you.



Your Presenter



Nancy Harvey

Higher Education Access
Partner

PA Higher Education Assistance
Agency (PHEAA)

nancy.harvey@pheaa.org

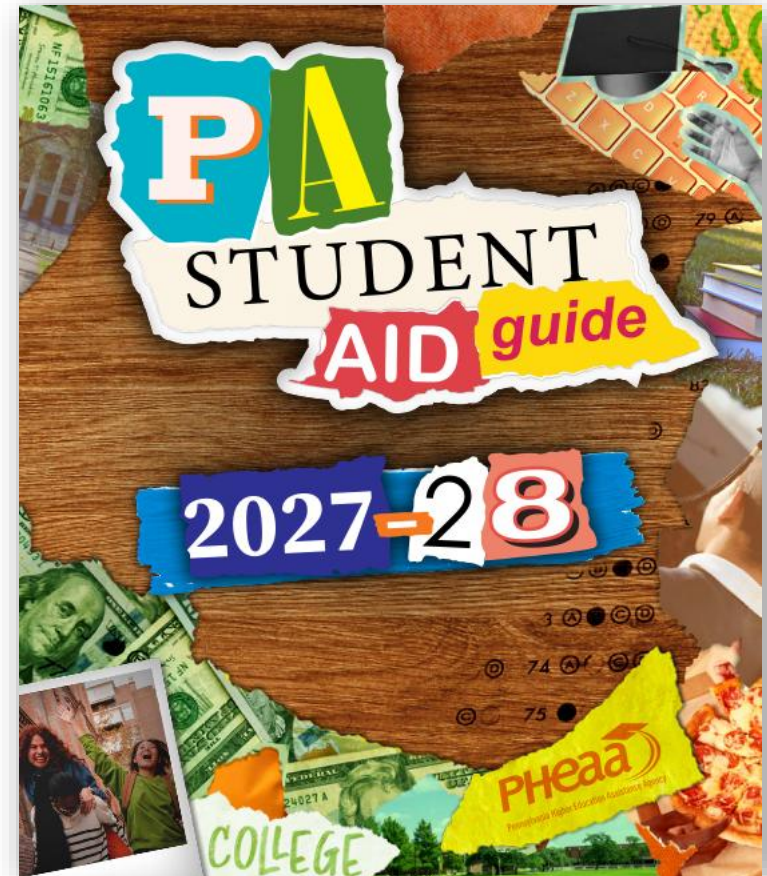
Topics



- Financial Aid Made Simple
- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)
- Federal and Pennsylvania State Aid
- Financial Aid Notifications
- Student and Parent Loans
- Scholarships
- Web Resources

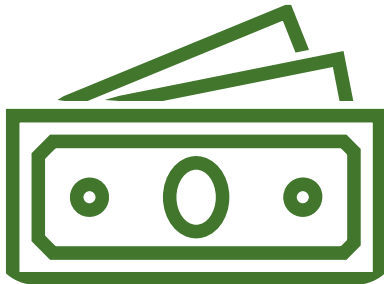
Student Aid Guide

- The **page numbers** in top left of this presentation refers to where in the Student Aid Guide (SAG) you can review for more information.
- To view the electronic version of the SAG, go to: <https://www.pheaa.org/college-planning/student-aid-guide> or scan the QR Code 



What Is Financial Aid?

Financial aid consists of funds provided to students and families to **help** pay for postsecondary educational expenses.



Gift Aid

Grants/Scholarships



Self-Help

Work-Study



Loans

Federal Student Loans,
PLUS, Private Loans

Funding Sources



Federal Government



State Government



School or College



Scholarships

HOME OF THE
WILDCATS



WILDCATS

21

T.O.L.

3

FINANCIAL
AID 101

VISITOR

14

T.O.L.

3

DOWN

2

TO GO

8

10:00

BALL ON

35

QTR.

2

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'06

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'11

STATE
CHAMPIONS

2016



CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'18

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'22

Applying For Financial Aid

Start with the FORMS

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid

- Required by **ALL Schools, PHEAA** and some scholarship organizations
- Required every year attending

STATE GRANT FORM through PHEAA

- Required first year for all students

Some schools require additional forms:

CSS Profile – through the College Board; additional fees

Institutional Financial Aid Forms - through a specific school

KNOW WHAT FORMS EACH SCHOOL ***REQUIRES***



Know Your Deadlines

- Applications for admission
- Deadlines for scholarships
 - Institutions, Outside Sources
- Free Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA)
 - Schools have priority deadlines



FAFSA – When To Apply

The FAFSA will be available **October 1, 2026**
for the upcoming award year.



The 2027-28 FAFSA
will be available
October 1, 2026

PA State Grant Deadlines

You must complete your FAFSA by the deadline to be considered for the PA State Grant.

- **May 1**—If you plan to enroll in a degree program or a college transferable program at a 2-year private college or other college or university.
- **August 1**—If you plan to enroll in a community college; a designated Pennsylvania -Admission institution; a business, trade, or technical school; a hospital school of nursing; or a 2-year program that is not transferable to another institution.

DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE!

Create Your StudentAid.gov Account

- The student applying for aid and all contributors providing information on the FAFSA need to create a StudentAid.gov Account at StudentAid.gov/fsa-id/create-account.
- Create at least 1 day prior to completing the FAFSA
- Legal signature for student and contributors.
- Users without an SSN will be able to acquire a StudentAid.gov Account.

Social Security
Number

Username

Email Address

Password

Enable Two-
Step Verification

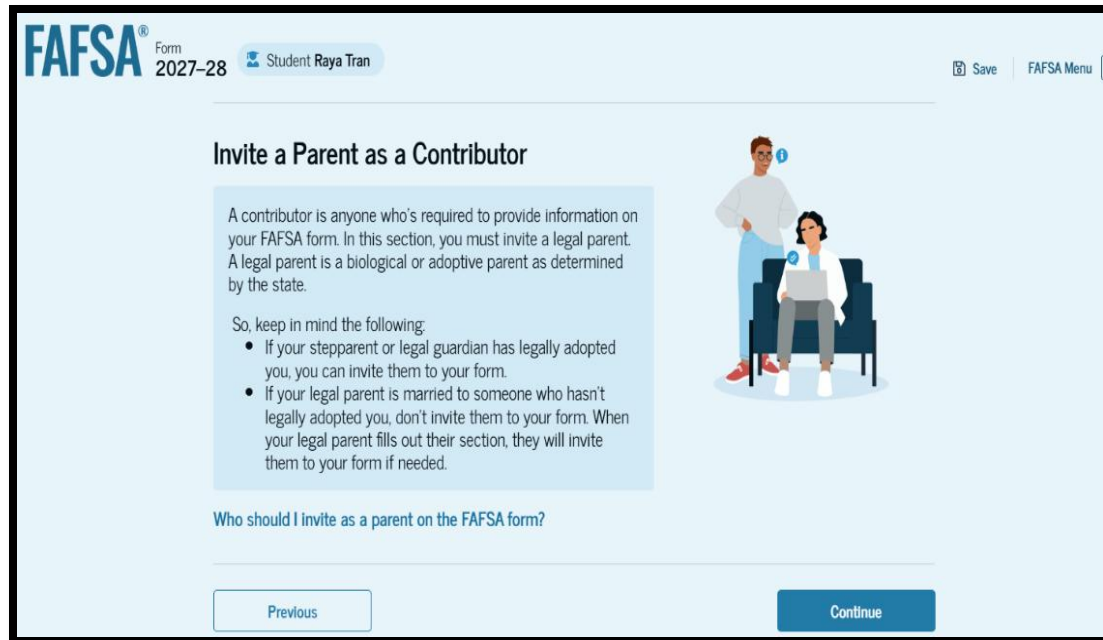
New FAFSA Real-Time Identity Verification

Applicants identified as being at a high-risk for identity fraud will be asked to confirm their identity.

- This step **must** be completed on a mobile or tablet device with a camera.
- Applicants will be asked to present one valid form of government-issued identification and to come on camera to take a picture. This process is automated and will happen in real time.
- The session is designed to be completed in one sitting and cannot be paused or resumed later.
- Students who fail to provide documentation during the timeframe can still submit their FAFSA form but will need to contact their school's financial aid office to complete the identity verification confirmation process.

Dependent Student Invites Parent

- The student is asked to invite a parent contributor. The student will enter their parent's email address in order to send them an invite to their FAFSA® form.



The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2027-28 interface for a student named Raya Tran. The page title is "Invite a Parent as a Contributor". It explains that a contributor is anyone required to provide information on the FAFSA form, and a legal parent is a biological or adoptive parent as determined by the state. It then lists two scenarios: if a stepparent or legal guardian has legally adopted the student, they can be invited; if the legal parent is married to someone who hasn't legally adopted the student, they should not be invited. The page includes a "Previous" button and a "Continue" button.

FAFSA® Form 2027-28 Student Raya Tran Save FAFSA Menu

Invite a Parent as a Contributor

A contributor is anyone who's required to provide information on your FAFSA form. In this section, you must invite a legal parent. A legal parent is a biological or adoptive parent as determined by the state.

So, keep in mind the following:

- If your stepparent or legal guardian has legally adopted you, you can invite them to your form.
- If your legal parent is married to someone who hasn't legally adopted you, don't invite them to your form. When your legal parent fills out their section, they will invite them to your form if needed.

Who should I invite as a parent on the FAFSA form?

Previous Continue



Invite On

You'll need
financial s
As a depende
[Who should](#)

Send Invite to mom@aol.com?

We will send an email that includes contributor invitation link and access code to this address.

Go Back

Send Invite

Invite a Parent Contributor

Email

mom@aol.com

Send Invite

Parent Contributor

Once your parent accepts the invitation, they can complete the parent section of this FAFSA form. They may be asked to invite their spouse as a contributor too. Check the status of contributor invitations from the "My Activity" page.

Parent

mom@aol.com

Invite Sent

Other ways to send the invite ^

Copy and Send the Invite Link ⓘ

www.fafsa.gov/invite/8BR4U7T Copy Link

You can also have them go to www.fafsa.gov/invite and enter code:

8BR4U7T

Cancel Invite

Dependent Students - Who Reports info on the 2027-28 FAFSA?

YES

- Married parents living together
- Biological parents living together
- Divorced or separated parents:
 - The parent that provided the most financial support to student over the past 12 months
 - If equal, then student would invite the parent with the higher income and assets
- Stepparent – If part of the student's household
- Adoptive parents

NO

- Foster Parents
- Legal Guardians
 - By court order
- Anyone else the student is living with



When Is A Student Automatically Considered “Independent”?

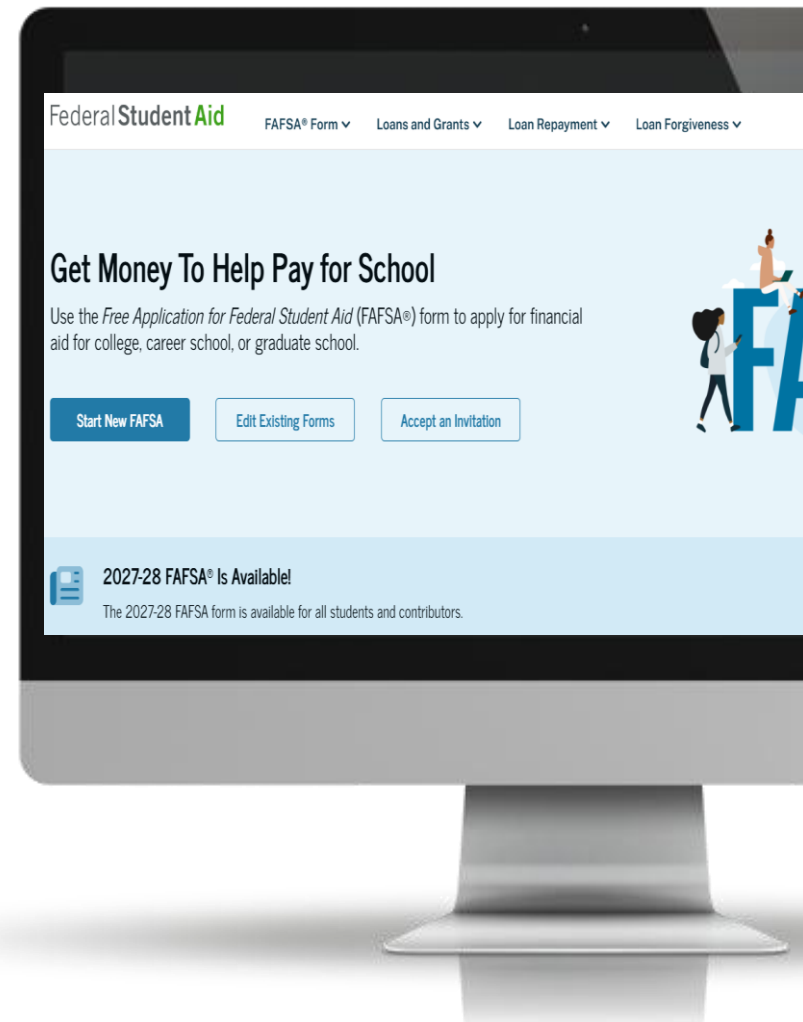


- 24 or older on Jan 1st of 2027
- Married
- Veteran (includes active-duty personnel)
- Working on graduate level degree
- Legally emancipated minor or in a legal guardianship with someone other than their parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in state of residence
- Orphan, in foster care or ward of the court at anytime since the student turned 13
- Have legal dependents other than spouse
- Student deemed homeless by proper authority
- PA State Grant status can be different

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

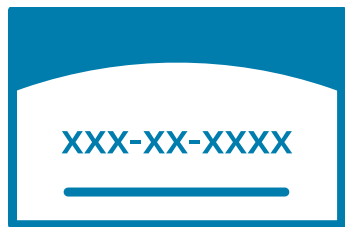
- The FAFSA is the primary federal form for financial assistance to attend a postsecondary school.
- Must file a FAFSA each year a student attends school to be eligible.
- File online—Fast, Secure, SKIP LOGIC and Built-in Edits.
- While filing the FAFSA online is preferred, a printable PDF version is available at **StudentAid.gov**.

[StudentAid.gov/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/fafsa)



2027-2028 FAFSA Prep

Information Needed for FAFSA



Social Security Numbers



Email Addresses (Not high school email address)



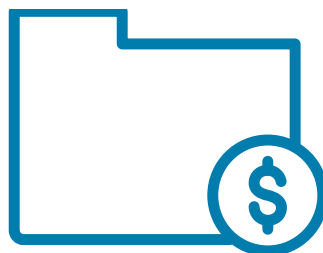
2025 Federal Tax Returns and W-2's



Current bank statements and records of other investment accounts (as of the FAFSA filing date)



Student & Contributor(s) StudentAid.gov Accounts



Current Records of any stocks, bonds and other investments, including 529 for student for whom the FAFSA is being completed



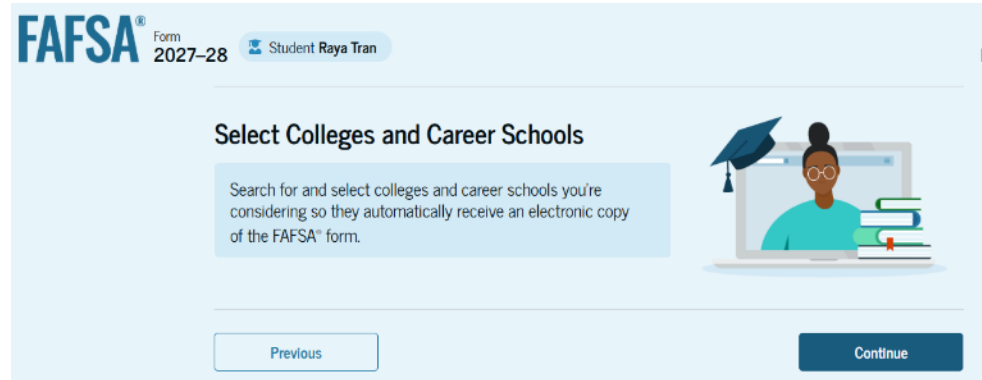
Total child support from the most recently complete calendar year

IRS Direct Data Exchange

- System integration allows users' federal tax information to be retrieved and transferred directly into the FAFSA form via IRS direct data exchange.
- Students and contributors must provide consent to retrieve and disclose federal tax information from the IRS for the student to be eligible for federal student aid.
- **The data exchange with the IRS may not work if the student or parent:**
 - has had a change in marital status after the end of the tax year.
 - filed a Puerto Rican or foreign tax return.
 - was victim of identity theft, involving their federal tax return.

FAFSA – School Selection

- List more than one!
- Only schools that are listed will be able to see your FAFSA information.
- Students can list up to 20 colleges at a time
- Schools can be added or deleted at any time
- First school listed on FAFSA is used for PA State Grant eligibility purposes



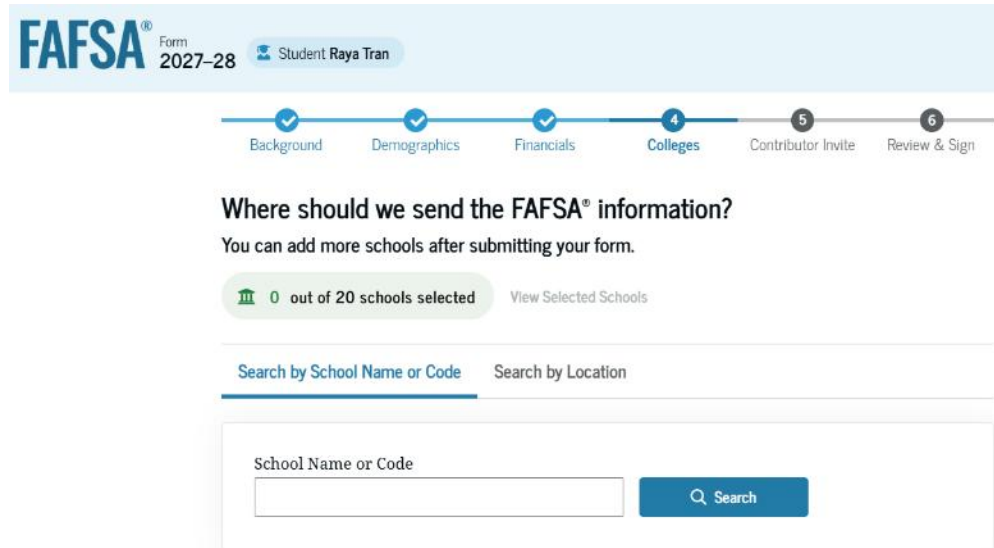
FAFSA® Form 2027-28 Student Raya Tran

Select Colleges and Career Schools

Search for and select colleges and career schools you're considering so they automatically receive an electronic copy of the FAFSA® form.



Previous Continue



FAFSA® Form 2027-28 Student Raya Tran

Progress bar: Background (checked), Demographics (checked), Financials (checked), **Colleges (4)**, Contributor Invite (5), Review & Sign (6)

Where should we send the FAFSA® information?

You can add more schools after submitting your form.

0 out of 20 schools selected View Selected Schools

Search by School Name or Code Search by Location

School Name or Code

FAFSA Confirmation

Upon submitting the student's FAFSA® form, the parent is presented an abbreviated confirmation page. This page displays information about tracking the student's FAFSA form and next steps. The student will receive an email with the full, detailed confirmation. With the student and parent sections completed and signed, the FAFSA form is now considered complete and submitted for processing.



Congratulations!

The student's FAFSA® form has been processed!

What to Know Now

1. The student's FAFSA Submission Summary has estimates of their eligibility for federal student aid.
2. The student should review the "Next Steps" section of their FAFSA Submission Summary to make sure there are no issues with their form. They'll also get an email.
3. Schools will contact the student. If they need more information to determine how much aid the student is eligible for, they will reach out. They will also send financial aid offers. If the student has a question about a school's student aid package, they should contact the school's financial aid office directly.

[Return to My Dashboard](#)

Steps to Apply for a PA State Grant

1. Complete the FAFSA by the appropriate filing deadline.
2. If you pass the pre-screening applicant checks, you'll get an email from noreply@grantus.org to activate your GrantUs account.
3. Review and complete items listed under your Action Items.

Students should watch for email messages and mail from PHEAA regarding their PA State Grant status. Students with incomplete applications will not be considered for state grant funds. Additional details on how to apply for a PA State Grant can be found at pheaa.org.

Student Unusual Circumstances

A student may be experiencing an **unusual circumstance** that prevents them from contacting their parents or contacting parents would pose a risk to student. This may include but is not limited to students who:

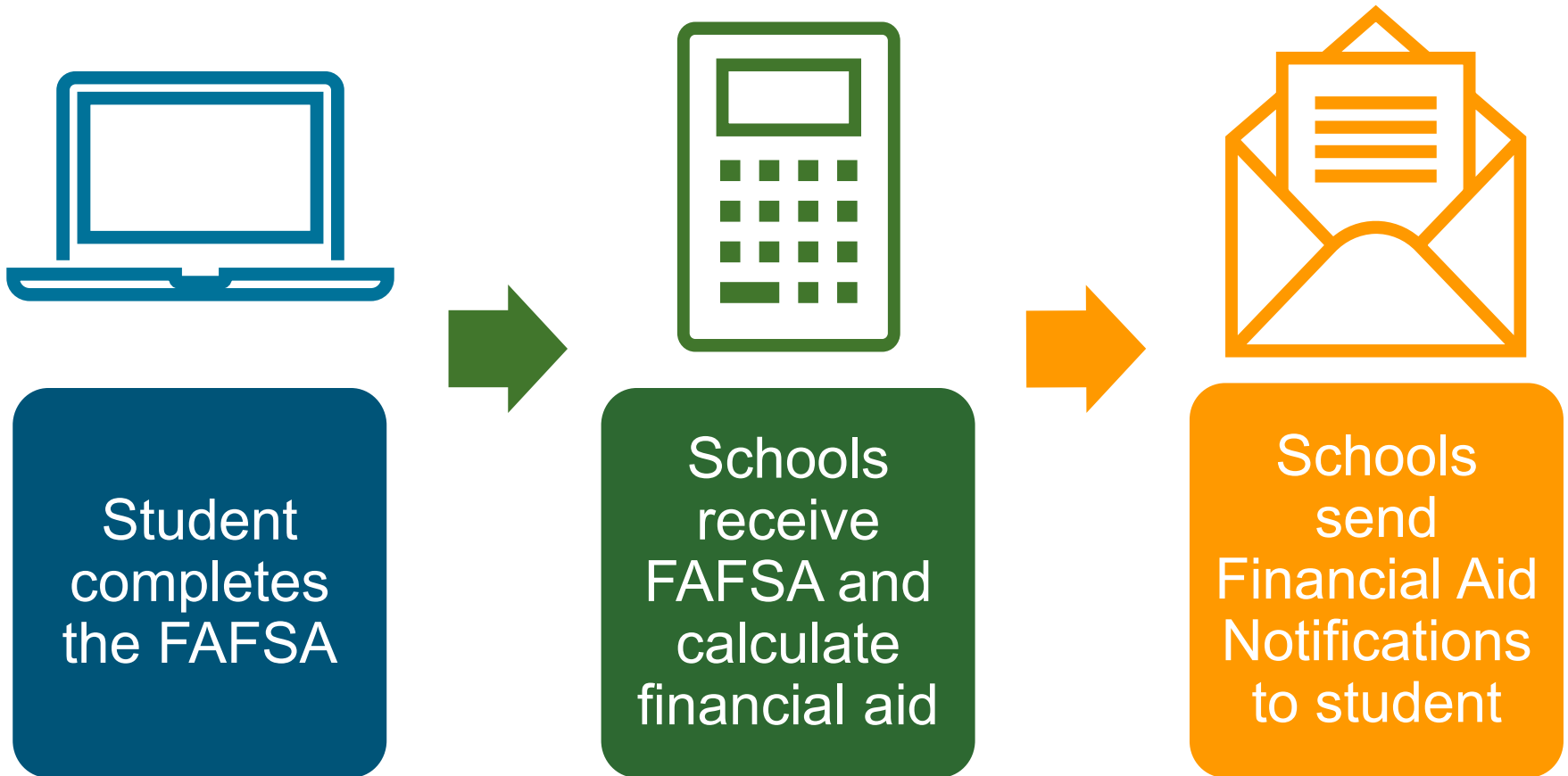
- Left home due to an abusive or threatening environment;
- Are abandoned by or estranged from their parents, and have not been adopted;
- Have refugee or asylee status and are separated from their parents, or their parents are displaced in a foreign country;
- Are a victim of human trafficking;
- Are incarcerated, or their parents are incarcerated, and contact with the parents would pose a risk to the student; or
- Are otherwise unable to contact or locate their parents and have not been adopted.

Special Circumstances

If things change....

- Divorced or separated parents
- Stepparents
- Adoptive parents
- Foster parents
- Legal guardians
- Living with others
- Recent death or disability
- Reduced income

FAFSA is Filed... Now What?



What School Costs Are Considered?

A school's cost of attendance includes:

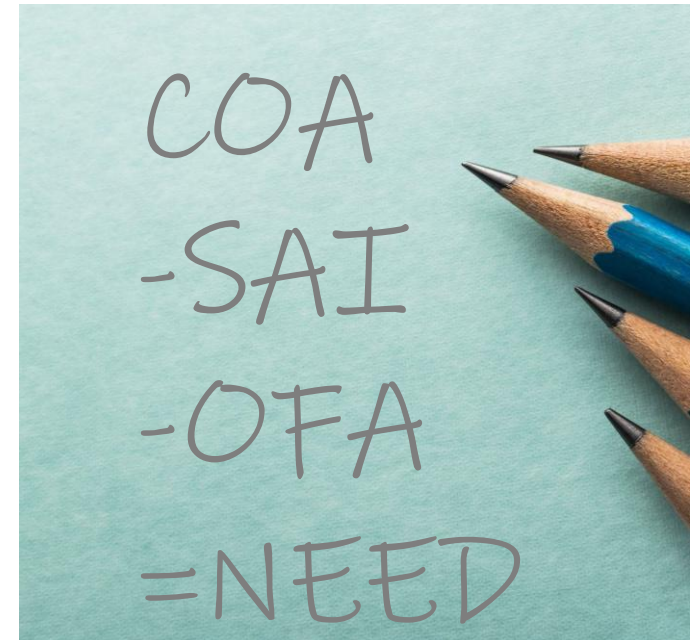
- Tuition and fees
- Housing and food
- Books, course materials, supplies, and equipment
- Transportation
- Personal expenses



Calculating Financial Need



- Schools and colleges receive FAFSA information and calculate financial need
- Financial Aid Office (FAO) “packages” student based on financial need and available funding (varies from school to school)
- Financial aid offer sent to student



Financial Aid Offer

- Official notification from school about financial aid, terms and conditions
- Lists the type and amount of aid to be received
- Describes what must be done to accept or reject any aid
- Discloses students' rights, responsibilities and academic requirements

HOME OF THE
WILDCATS



WILDCATS

21

T.O.L.

3

FINANCIAL
AID 101

VISITOR

14

T.O.L.

3

DOWN

2

TO GO

8

10:00

BALL ON

35

QTR.

2

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'06

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'11

STATE
CHAMPIONS

2016



CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'18

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'22

Federal and State Aid

Federal Grant Programs

- Pell Grant—max award \$7,395*
 - Eligibility is the same for every postsecondary institution
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)—max award \$4,000
 - Eligibility determined by Financial Aid Office at each potential school
 - Student must be enrolled at least half-time
 - **Awarded to most financially needy students**

*for the 2026-27 academic year

PA State Grant Program

2026-2027 Award Amounts

- In-state—max award \$6,000 (full-time)
- **Reciprocal states:** Delaware, DC, Massachusetts, Ohio, Vermont, West Virginia
 - Up to \$600 for full-time students (\$800 for veterans)
- Award amount determined in part by the cost of the school

Must be at least half-time to be eligible



Other State Programs

- PA Active Volunteer Tuition & Loan Assistance Program
- PA Blind or Deaf Higher Education Beneficiary Grant Program
- Chafee Education and Training Grant Program
- PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program
- Grow PA Scholarship Grant Program 
- PA Mental Health Education Learning in Schools
- PA Partnerships for Access to Higher Education Program

**New
Program!**

For details, see the PA Student Aid Guide, or visit pheaa.org

Other State Programs

- PA Postsecondary Educational Gratuities Program
- PA Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program
- PA State Work-Study Program
- PA Student Teacher Support Program
- PA Targeted Industry Program
- PA National Guard Educational Assistance Program
- PA National Guard Educational Military Assistance Program
- PA National Guard Military Family Education Program

For details, see the PA Student Aid Guide, or visit pheaa.org.

HOME OF THE
WILDCATS



WILDCATS

21

T.O.L.

3

FINANCIAL
AID 101

VISITOR

14

T.O.L.

3

DOWN

2

TO GO

8

10:00

BALL ON

35

QTR.

2

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'06

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'11

STATE
CHAMPIONS

2016



CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'18

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'22

Federal Student Loans

Federal Student Loans

- Available to **ALL** students (US citizens and eligible non-citizens) **REGARDLESS** of need
- In student's name, no collateral or credit check, must sign MPN
- No payments required while attending school & six-month grace period
- Flexible Repayment options



Undergraduate Loan Borrowing Limits

Dependent Undergraduate Student (does not include students whose parents are unable to borrow under the PLUS Program)	Annual Loan Limits
First Year	\$5,500 of which no more than \$3,500 may be subsidized
Second Year	\$6,500 of which no more than \$4,500 may be subsidized
Third Year and Beyond*	\$7,500 of which no more than \$5,500 may be subsidized

*Aggregate Federal Student Loan Limit for undergraduate dependent student is \$31,000

Federal Direct PLUS Loan

- In parent's name for dependent's student costs
- Rates set every July 1st for the life of that year's loan; fees are deducted from disbursement
 - 9.07% variable/fixed interest rate; 4.228% fees
- MUST apply each year
- Principal can be deferred while student is in school; Interest will continue to accrue
- If denied - student is eligible for an additional \$4,000 unsubsidized loan



Parents are limited to \$20,000 per year with \$65,000 as the aggregate limit **per dependent!**

Private/Alternative Loans

- From private lenders or financial institutions
- In student's name/co-signers usually required
- Can borrow up to the Cost of Attendance
- Based on credit scores and debt-to-income
- Principal can be deferred while student is in school; Interest will continue to accrue
- Terms vary by lender – compare before making choices

Read the Fine Print!



Undergraduate and Graduate Loans

PA's Low-Cost Way to Pay for College!

Low, Fixed Rates
2.78–9.94% ^{1,2} APR

Effective as of 6/4/26

Learn more at pheaa.org/PAForward

1) Annual Percentage Rate (APR) Calculations—The lowest APR is based on the following assumptions: A loan of \$10,000 made in a single disbursement, a borrower who selected an Immediate Repayment Plan and a repayment term of 60 months, monthly payments of \$178.84 and a final payment of \$170.99, a fixed periodic interest rate of 3.06%, and total payments of \$10,722.77. The borrower in this sample qualified for a 0.25% Direct Debit benefit for the entirety of the repayment period and a 0.50% Graduation benefit was applied 47 months into repayment. The highest APR is based on the following assumptions: A loan of \$10,000 made in a single disbursement, a borrower who selected an Interest Only Repayment Plan and a repayment term of 180 months, monthly payments of \$83.17 for 52 months and monthly payments of \$107.34 for the remainder of the repayment term, a fixed periodic interest rate of 9.98%, and total payments of \$23,645.54. The borrower in this sample did not qualify for any interest rate discounts. Less than half-time students may only borrow a maximum of \$5,000 per loan. These APRs are estimates and may differ from the actual rates received.

2) The provided rate range includes Undergraduate, Graduate, and Parent loans and may change based on loan type, loan term, repayment plan, and applicable discounts (not all discounts apply to all loan products). See individual loan programs for more specific information. PHEAA uses applicant credit scores to determine eligibility and interest rates. Higher credit scores may mean an applicant is offered a lower interest rate. Applicants, including co-signers, are subject to credit qualifications, completion of an application and credit agreement, and verification of application information. PHEAA reserves the right to discontinue all programs or benefits without prior notice.

HOME OF THE
WILDCATS



WILDCATS

21

T.O.L.

3

FINANCIAL
AID 101

VISITOR

14

T.O.L.

3

DOWN

2

TO GO

8

10:00

BALL ON

35

QTR.

2

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'06

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'11

STATE
CHAMPIONS

2016



CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'18

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'22

Scholarships

Types of Scholarships



Postsecondary
Scholarships



Local and
Regional
Scholarships



National
Scholarships

Scholarship Search Tips

- Start searching early
- Use **free** scholarship search sites
- Don't ignore scholarships with smaller award amounts
- Don't miss deadlines
- Search for scholarships every year



(Some) Scholarship Search Engines

- ✓ FastWeb.com
- ✓ Scholarshipamerica.org
- ✓ FinAid.org
- ✓ Cappex.com/scholarships
- ✓ Unigo.com/scholarships
- ✓ DoSomething.org/Scholarships
- ✓ CollegeScholarships.org
- ✓ Chegg.com
- ✓ Scholarships.com
- ✓ Scholarship-Page.com
- ✓ Colleges.Niche.com
- ✓ StudentScholarships.org
- ✓ BigFuture.Collegeboard.org
- ✓ **MORE....**



Use Your Resources



- pheaa.org
- EducationPlanner.org
- MySmartBorrowing.org
- YouCanDealWithIt.com
- PHEAA toll free: 1-800-692-7392
- PHEAA's Higher Education Access Corner Podcast (Available on Spotify, Amazon Music, iHeartRadio, and PHEAA's YouTube channel, PHEAASStudentAid)
- Federal Student Aid Info Center: 1-800-433-3243
- StudentAid.gov – The one-stop shop site for all financial aid information.
- StudentAid.gov/FAFSA – Direct link to the FAFSA

Higher Education Access Corner Podcast



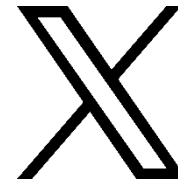
Do you enjoy podcasts? Check out PHEAA's Higher Education Access Corner Podcast!

- Higher Education Access Corner provides candid conversations around higher education access and affordability. Tune in to hear a variety of engaging discussions with industry professionals, as well as how PHEAA helps create affordable access to higher education.
- **Available on Spotify, Amazon Music, iHeartRadio, and PHEAA's YouTube channel, PHEAAStudentAid.**
- Subscribe and listen on your favorite podcast app or streaming platform!

Social Media Outreach



PHEAA
American Education Services



@PHEAAaid
@aesSuccessorg



@PHEAAaid



PHEAA

HOME OF THE WILDCATS



WILDCATS

21

T.O.L.

3

VISITOR

14

T.O.L.

3

QUESTIONS?

DOWN

2

TO GO

8

10:00

BALL ON

35

QTR.

2

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'06

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'11

STATE
CHAMPIONS

2016



CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'18

CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

'22