# Financial Aid 101
# Simplifying the Process

# 2027-2028 Academic Year

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Former Dean of Enrollment



# The Mission

The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority is the only State agency with the sole mission of providing students and families with the financial and informational resources to pursue their education beyond high school.

# Financial Aid Application Graduation Requirement:

FAFSA, or if applicable NJ Alternative App for NJ DREAMERS or an Approved Waiver

New Jersey high school graduation requirement for students in the graduating classes of 2025,2026 and 2027:

- Builds awareness of financial aid resources for New Jersey students to pursue a postsecondary education
- Determines eligibility for both federal and state financial aid
- Empowers students to make informed decisions about the college selection process
- Emphasizes that a college degree is both accessible and affordable for many NJ residents

# Goals of Financial Aid Office

Primary goal is to assist students in paying for college and is achieved by:

- Evaluating family's ability to pay for educational costs
- Distributing limited resources in an equitable manner
- Providing a balance of grants/scholarships and other funds from the family's own resources, such as savings or wages from school-sponsored student employment.
- Implementing federal and state regulations for their college/university

# Sources & Types of Aid

**Sources of Aid**

- The College/University
- Federal
- State of New Jersey
- Private Scholarships

**Factors that influence scholarships**

- Academics
- Athletic Ability
- SAT or ACT
- Geographic Diversity

**Types of Financial Aid**

- Grants
- Scholarships
- Loans
- Campus employment/work study

# Types of Aid - Federal

## Grants

## Federal Student Aid for Award Year 2026-27

- Pell $7,395 (max award)
- SEOG $4,000 (max award)
- TEACH $3,772 (max award)

. * 2027-28 award amounts subject to change

# 2026-2027 Award Amounts

## New Jersey State Grants 2026-27 Academic Year

| Award Type | Award Amounts |
|---|---|
| Full-Time TAG | $1,280 - $14,404 |
| Part-Time TAG (community college only) | $320-$1,097 |
| EOF (Educational Opportunity Fund) | Up to $3,050 includes college success support |
| NJ STARS (top 15.0% of high school class junior or senior year) | Tuition Only - community college only |
| NJ STARS II | Up to $2,500 per year – any NJ 4-year college |
| Governor's Urban Scholarship (for top 5.0% of high school junior year) | Up to $1,000 |
| NJ-GIVS (women and minorities) | Up to $2,000 - building trades only |
| **Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG)** | Up to full tuition and approved fees --AGI between $0 and $65,000 |
| **Garden State Guarantee (GSG)** | Up to full tuition and approved fees --AGI between $0 and $65,000 |
| **Summer TAG** | 75% of the Fall or Spring Award |

# State Grants & Scholarship Requirements

Students must have a complete Application for TAG (Tuition Aid Grant) and all other state programs. Students must:

- File a FAFSA **or** New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application
- Be a U.S. citizen, eligible non-citizen or qualify as an NJ Dreamer
- Be a New Jersey resident and attend a New Jersey institution
- Be enrolled full-time* in an approved degree program
- Demonstrate financial need
- Meet all state deadlines for application and document submission

*Part-Time TAG, CCOG, and EOF awards are available for county college students enrolled in 6-11 credits per semester.

# Types of Aid: State Grants & Scholarships

## EOF (Educational Opportunity Fund)

- Award ranges from $200 - $3,050 annually depending on institution
- EOF is a campus-based and award amounts vary
- Must demonstrate educational and economically disadvantaged background
- Complete all required EOF tasks with campus EOF Office

# Types of Aid: State Grants & Scholarships

## NJ STARS

- NJ residents who rank in the top 15.0% of their class at either the end of junior or senior year of high school
- Students must attain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at the start of the third semester at the county college to remain eligible for NJ STARS

## NJ STARS II

- Received NJ STARS funding and have a family taxable income of less than $250,000
- Must earn an associate degree and graduate with a 3.25 GPA or higher
- May receive up to $2,500 annually for a public or private 4-year NJ college or university

# Types of Aid: State Grants & Scholarships

## Community College Opportunity Grant (CCOG)

**Pays for all or part of the cost of Tuition and Approved fees at a NJ county college**

- Must take a minimum of six credits per semester
- Must make satisfactory academic progress

**AGI $0 - $65,000 for maximum award: Tuition & Approved Fees**

NJ Community College Opportunity Grant

# Types of Aid: State Grants & Scholarships

## Garden State Guarantee

**Pays for all or part of the cost of tuition and approved fees at a NJ state college**

- New Jersey State Colleges and Universities
- Must make Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Available for students in their third and fourth year of enrollment at a public 4-year institution

**AGI $0 - $65,000 for maximum award: Tuition & Approved Fees**

# 3 + 1 Degree Completion Programs

- Student enrolls in a bonafide 3 + 1 major/degree program
- Student completes the first two years at the community college and earns an associate degree
- Pays community college tuition and fees for the associate degree **and** the third year of their bachelor's degree program
- Attends and pays the four-year institution's tuition and fees in the final year of their bachelor's degree
- Must have a complete TAG record to be potentially eligible for TAG, NJSTARS, and/or CCOG



# Loans & Financing Shortfall Solutions

- Monthly Payment Plans – offered by the college
- Federal Direct Loan Program (1st year dependent student)
  - Subsidized Loan $3,500 need based
  - Unsubsidized Loan $2,000 additional
- 2026 - 2027 - Federal Undergraduate Direct Loan interest rates are 6.52%, plus a 1.057% origination fee

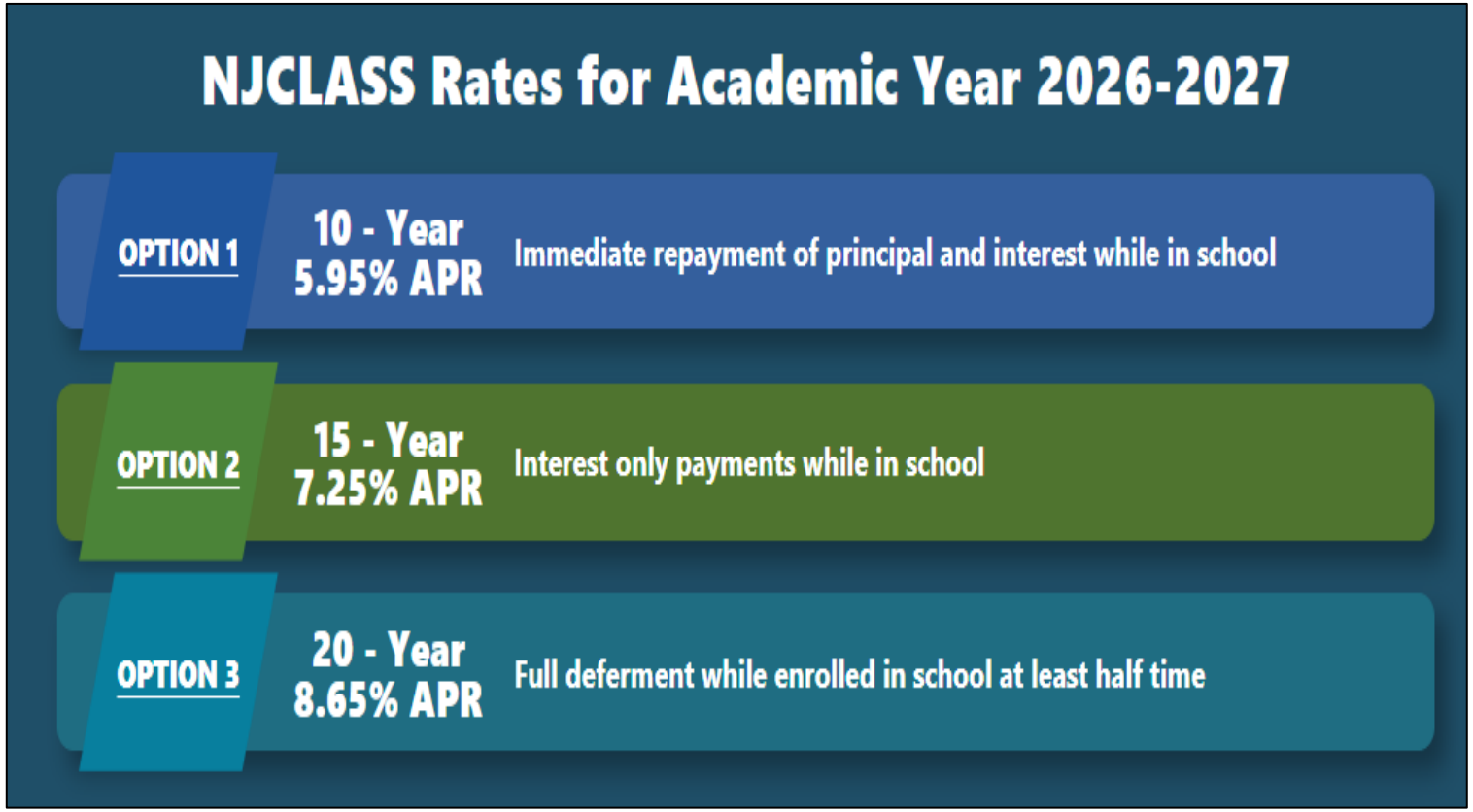
2027-2028 interest rates available Jul y1, 2027

# Other Loan Options to Cover the Gap

Borrow up to cost of attendance less other aid

Option: 2026-27 Federal Parent PLUS loan

- Interest rate of 9.07%
- Capped at $20,000 annually per student - maximum per child $65,000




Option: 2026-27 Private Bank

- Interest rate average of 11.20%

# Applications to Access Aid

**studentaid.gov**
**FAFSA**
**Available by October 1, 2026**




**student.collegeboard.org/profile**
**CSS Profile**
**Available October 1, 2026**




**HESAA.org**
**NJ Dreamer**
**Available by October 1, 2026**



# Application: CSS Profile

- Approximately 400 colleges and organizations use the CSS profile to determine how they will award institutional (school-funded) aid
- Available 10/1 each year and collects more comprehensive income, asset, and household information than the FAFSA
- Uses prior-prior year income (2024 for 2026-2027)
- Mostly used by independent (private) colleges and universities

Register – Complete Application – Make payment – Submit

- ✓ No application fee for income under $100,000
- ✓ All others, $25 for first application and $16 for each additional

# CSS Profile

Website to apply for profile
https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/

Website to apply for Noncustodial Profile:
https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/profile-for-parents

Participating CSS Institutions:
https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/profile/ppi/participatingInstitutions.aspx




Customer Support - 844-202-0524 | Live Chat Available

# Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- The 2027-2028 FAFSA is available by October 1, 2026
- Collects family's personal and financial information used to calculate the student's Student Aid Index (SAI). The SAI determines eligibility for federal student aid
- File the FAFSA electronically via FAFSA on the Web at www.studentaid.gov
  - FAFSA uses prior-prior year income information (2025 for award year 2027-28)
  - All contributors on the application (student and parent(s)) must provide consent to the IRS to obtain Federal Tax Information (FTI) to populate income and tax information with actual prior-prior year tax information
    - All prior-prior year tax information (2024) is already filed, allowing immediate retrieval.

# 2027-2028 Federal Student Aid ID

Used to provide consent to obtain Federal Tax Information and digitally sign the FAFSA

Student and all Information Contributors must create a Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID) at www.studentaid.gov by clicking on "create account"

Student identifies who the Information Contributor(s) are and invites them to contribute to the FAFSA. Each contributor must have their own separate FSA ID and password.

Information Contributors include: Biological Parent, Stepparent, and Adoptive Parent

**Who Needs an FSA ID?**

- If there are two parents who filed taxes jointly, only one parent
- If the parents are divorced/separated, the parent who provided more financial support in the last 12 months
- If married or unmarried/living together but did not file taxes jointly, then each parent will need an FSA ID

# 2027-2028 Federal Student Aid ID for Undocumented Contributors

Parents **without an SSN** can still create a StudentAid.gov account, but instead of SSN-based identity checks, they complete an **alternative identity verification process**.

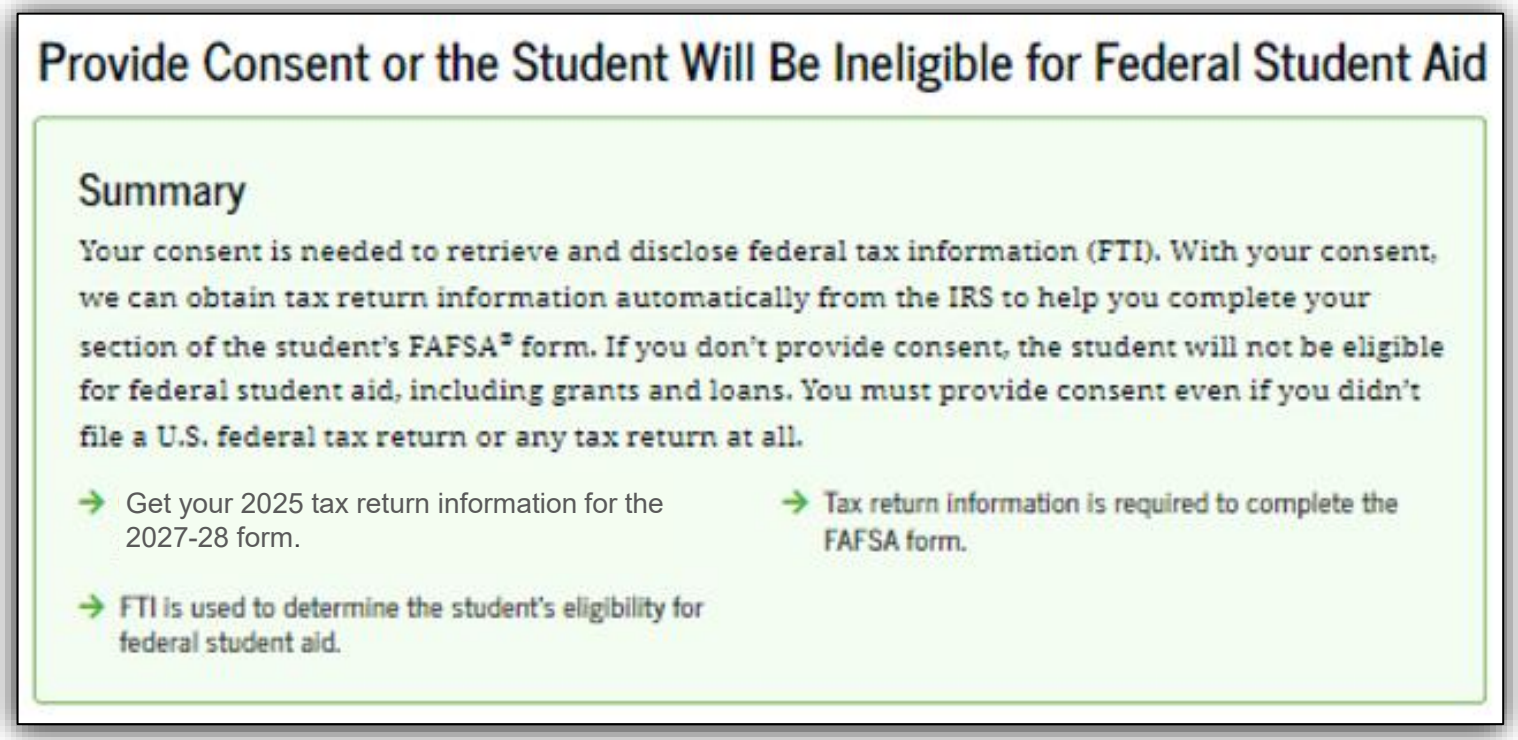
- This involves submitting documentation through an online form—usually proof of identity such as a foreign passport or government-issued ID.

- They **do not** get the knowledge-based questions that are used for people with an SSN.

- Once verified, they can access the account and complete their portion of the FAFSA.

# Federal Tax Information Consent

Information Contributors will be instructed to provide Federal Tax Information from their 2024 tax return to be used to determine the student's eligibility for federal student aid for Award Year 2027-28



## Provide Consent or the Student Will Be Ineligible for Federal Student Aid

### Summary

Your consent is needed to retrieve and disclose federal tax information (FTI). With your consent, we can obtain tax return information automatically from the IRS to help you complete your section of the student's FAFSA® form. If you don't provide consent, the student will not be eligible for federal student aid, including grants and loans. You must provide consent even if you didn't file a U.S. federal tax return or any tax return at all.

- Get your 2025 tax return information for the 2027-28 form.
- Tax return information is required to complete the FAFSA form.
- FTI is used to determine the student's eligibility for federal student aid.

# Key Eligibility Requirements for FAFSA

- The student must have a valid Social Security Number
- Must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an eligible program of study
- Must be pursuing a degree, certificate, or other recognized postsecondary credential
- Must be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- New Jersey students who are undocumented and meet the NJ Dreamer qualifications should complete the NJ Alternative Financial Aid Application for state-funded financial aid

# Key Components of the FAFSA

- **Student Contributor Section**
  - ✓ Full Name and address
  - ✓ Social Security Number or ITIN Number
  - ✓ Date of Birth
  - ✓ Mobile phone number (optional)
  - ✓ Email address
  - ✓ College/Career plans – 20 Colleges
- Student Consent and Assets
  - ✓ FTI (Federal Tax Information)
- Student Status: Personal Circumstances
  - ✓ Dependent or Independent Determination
  - ✓ Student Special Circumstances
  - ✓ Student Unusual Circumstances
  - ✓ Social Security Number

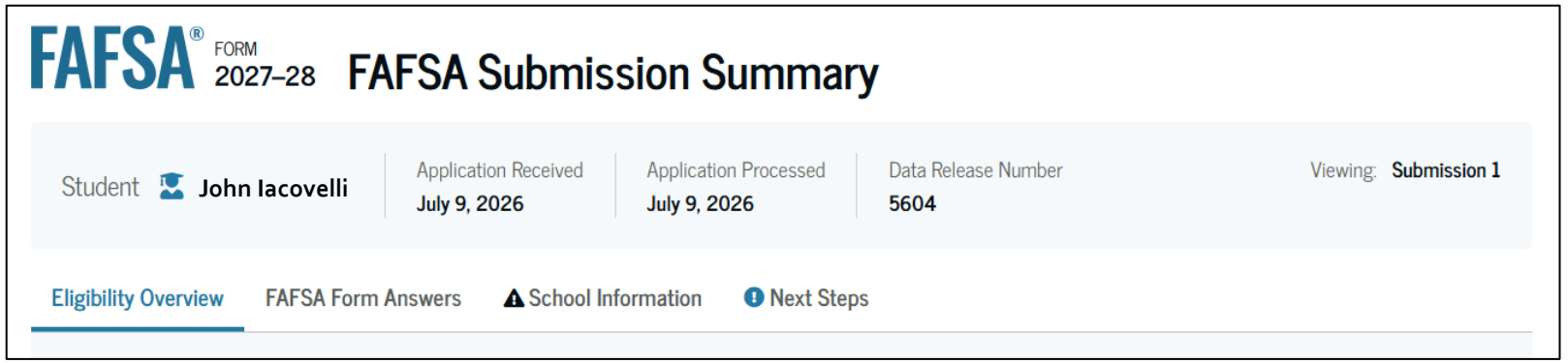
- **Parent Contributor Section**

✓ Last Name
✓ Date of Birth
✓ Email address
✓ Family size – FTI
✓ Income and Assets
✓ Federal Means-tested benefits
  - ✓ Medicaid, SSI, SNAP,
  - ✓ Free or Reduced Lunch
  - ✓ TANF, WIC, WITC QHP

- Business and Farm will be considered as assets in the calculation of the SAI
- Child Support received is an asset

# FAFSA Submission Summary

All Information Contributors will receive an individual FAFSA Submission Summary



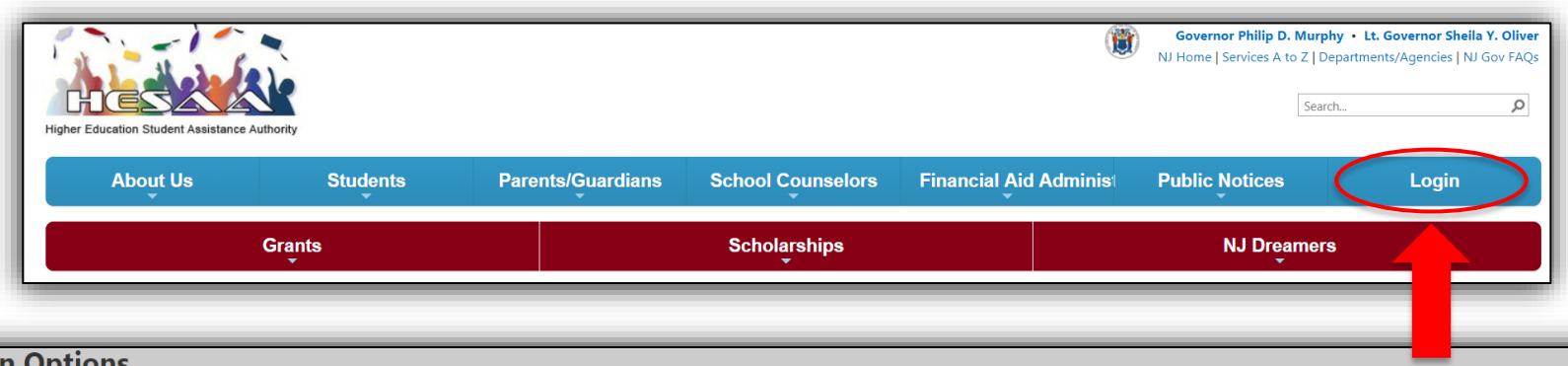

Applicants are instructed to log into "**NJFAMS.HESAA.org**" to create a user ID and password. In 3-5 business days, students can their check awards and eligibility status and complete any outstanding items on their "To Do" list (There is no separate State Application, only a To-Do List in the state's NJFAMS system).

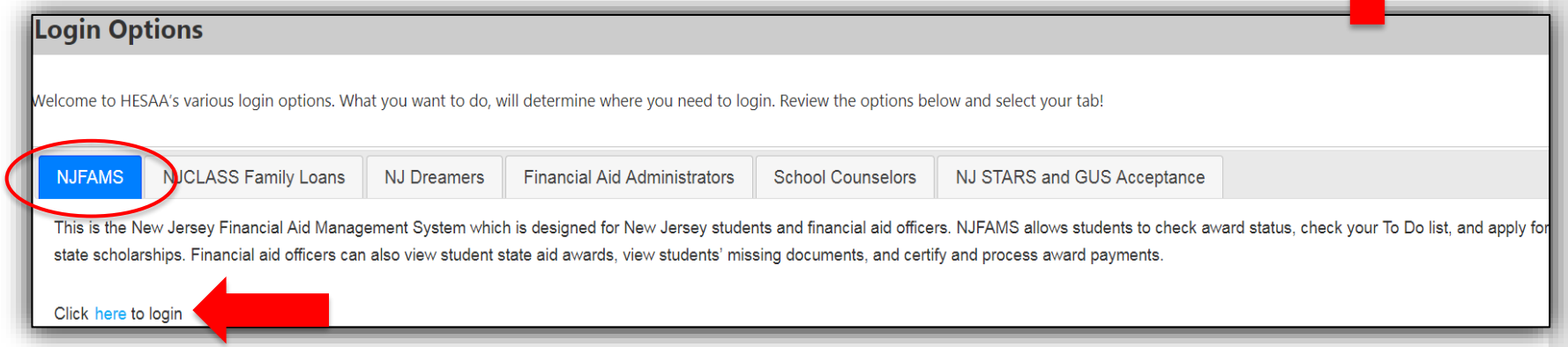
Please note, all notifications will be sent to the student email address listed on the FAFSA.

# Federal & State Verification

- School is responsible for verifying information for federal aid except for special circumstances
- HESAA is responsible for verifying information for State aid
- Schools may send request for information by mail or e-mail
- Always check your school account and NJFAMS account for required tasks
- Be sure to meet verification deadlines

# New Jersey Financial Aid Management System - NJFAMS




- All students must go to "NJGRANTS.org"
- Establish an NJFAMS Account by creating a User ID and Password
- Track the status of your State-funded student aid and respond to required tasks on the To-Do List

# Cost of Attendance

- Tuition and fees
- Food and housing
- Books and supplies, equipment, transportation, and miscellaneous personal expenses
- Medical Insurance
- Federal Loan Fees
- Study abroad costs
- Dependent care expenses
- Expenses related to a disability
- Expenses for cooperative education program

# What Is The Student Aid Index (SAI)?

- SAI is determined by a federal formula that calculates federal Pell grant eligibility and is used to determine further financial need using the information you supplied on the FAFSA
- SAI and Financial Need are guidelines used by schools to determine student aid offers

# Financial Need for Smith Family

| College | Community College | State College or University | Private College or University |
|---|---|---|---|
| COA | $8,000 | $30,000 | $60,000 |
| SAI<br>Other Financial Aid | 8,667<br>1,000 | 8,667<br>1,000 | 8,667<br>1,000 |
| Unmet Financial Need | $0 | $20,333 | $50,333 |

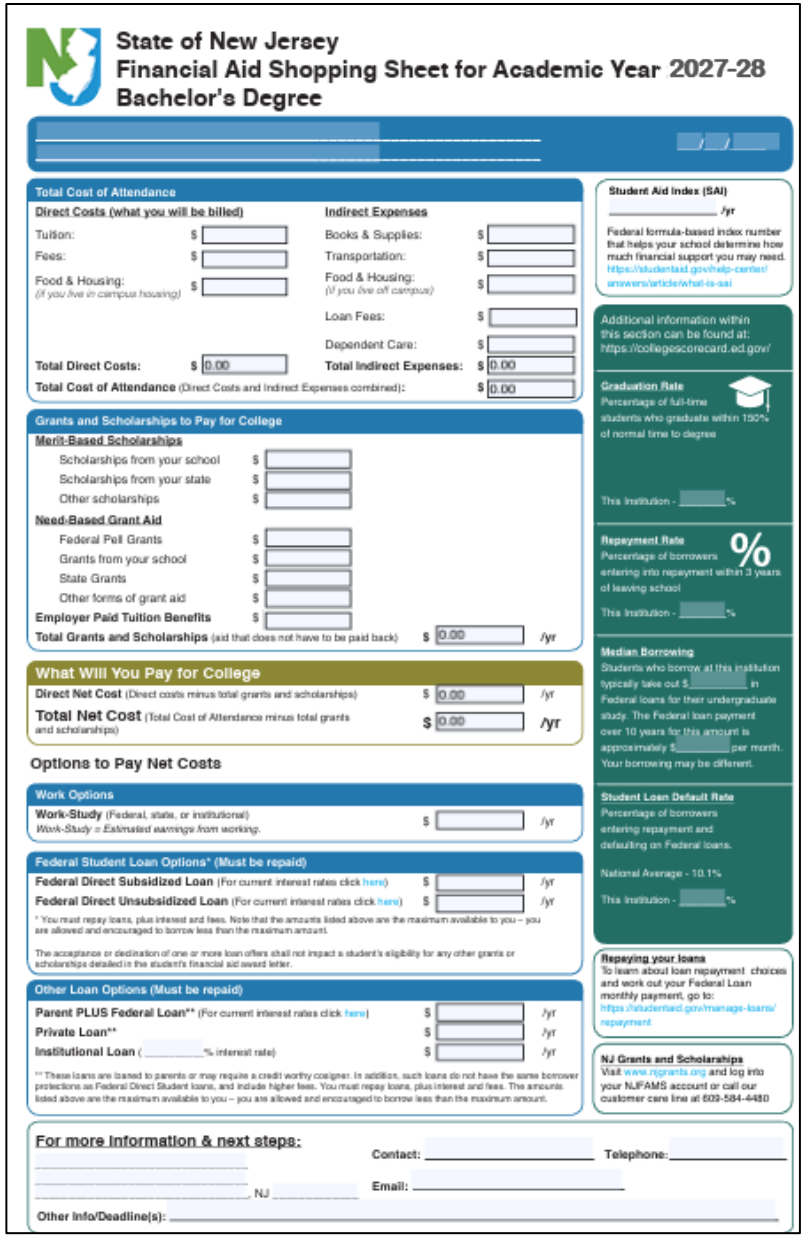
# The Cycle of Financial Aid

| | |
|---|---|
| October - March | Complete FAFSA, college search, college application process, and CSS profile |
| February - May | Schools send financial aid offers |
| June - July | Schools send Fall semester bills |
| August | Bills are due |

# The College Financing Plan New Jersey Shopping Sheet

- Help families with net cost transparency
- Separates the Cost of Attendance listing the direct and indirect costs
- Grants and Scholarships (no repayment required, "free money")
- Student Net Costs in center box
- College coordinated work-study employment
- Federal Student Loans
- If necessary, alternate loans

Aid Offer must replicate the Shopping Sheet



State of New Jersey
Financial Aid Shopping Sheet for Academic Year 2027-28
Bachelor's Degree

Total Cost of Attendance
Direct Costs (what you will be billed)
Tuition:
Fees:
Food & Housing: (if you live in campus housing)
Total Direct Costs:
Indirect Expenses
Books & Supplies:
Transportation:
Food & Housing: (if you live off campus)
Loan Fees:
Dependent Care:
Total Indirect Expenses:
Total Cost of Attendance (Direct Costs and Indirect Expenses combined):

Grants and Scholarships to Pay for College
Merit-Based Scholarships
Scholarships from your school
Scholarships from your state
Other scholarships
Need-Based Grant Aid
Federal Pell Grants
Grants from your school
State Grants
Other forms of grant aid
Employer Paid Tuition Benefits
Total Grants and Scholarships (aid that does not have to be paid back)

What Will You Pay for College
Direct Net Cost (Direct costs minus total grants and scholarships)
Total Net Cost (Total Cost of Attendance minus total grants and scholarships)

Options to Pay Net Costs

Work Options
Work-Study (Federal, state, or institutional)
Work-Study = Estimated earnings from working.

Federal Student Loan Options* (Must be repaid)
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan (For current interest rates click here)
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan (For current interest rates click here)
* You must repay loans, plus interest and fees. Note that the amounts listed above are the maximum available to you – you are allowed and encouraged to borrow less than the maximum amount.
The acceptance or declination of one or more loan offers shall not impact a student's eligibility for any other grants or scholarships detailed in the student's financial aid award letter.

Other Loan Options (Must be repaid)
Parent PLUS Federal Loan** (For current interest rates click here)
Private Loan**
Institutional Loan ( % interest rate)
** These loans are loaned to parents or may require a credit worthy cosigner. In addition, such loans do not have the same borrower protections as Federal Direct Student loans, and include higher fees. You must repay loans, plus interest and fees. The amounts listed above are the maximum available to you – you are allowed and encouraged to borrow less than the maximum amount.

For more information & next steps:
Contact:
Telephone:
NJ
Email:
Other Info/Deadline(s):

Student Aid Index (SAI)
/yr
Federal formula-based index number that helps your school determine how much financial support you may need. https://studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/what-is-sai

Additional information within this section can be found at: https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/

Graduation Rate
Percentage of full-time students who graduate within 150% of normal time to degree
This Institution - %

Repayment Rate
%
Percentage of borrowers entering into repayment within 3 years of leaving school
This Institution - %

Median Borrowing
Students who borrow at this institution typically take out $ in Federal loans for their undergraduate study. The Federal loan payment over 10 years for this amount is approximately $ per month. Your borrowing may be different.

Student Loan Default Rate
Percentage of borrowers entering repayment and defaulting on Federal loans.
National Average - 10.1%
This Institution - %

Repaying your loans
To learn about loan repayment choices and work out your Federal Loan monthly payment, go to: https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment

NJ Grants and Scholarships
Visit www.njgrants.org and log into your NJFAMS account or call our customer care line at 609-584-4480

# Other Resources

- Outside Scholarships
- Local businesses, civic organizations and churches
  - ✓ Check with your High School guidance office
- Parent's employer(s)
- www.hesaa.org
- www.fastweb.com
- www.collegeboard.org
- Campus-Administered Payment Plans

# NJBEST 529 College Savings Plan



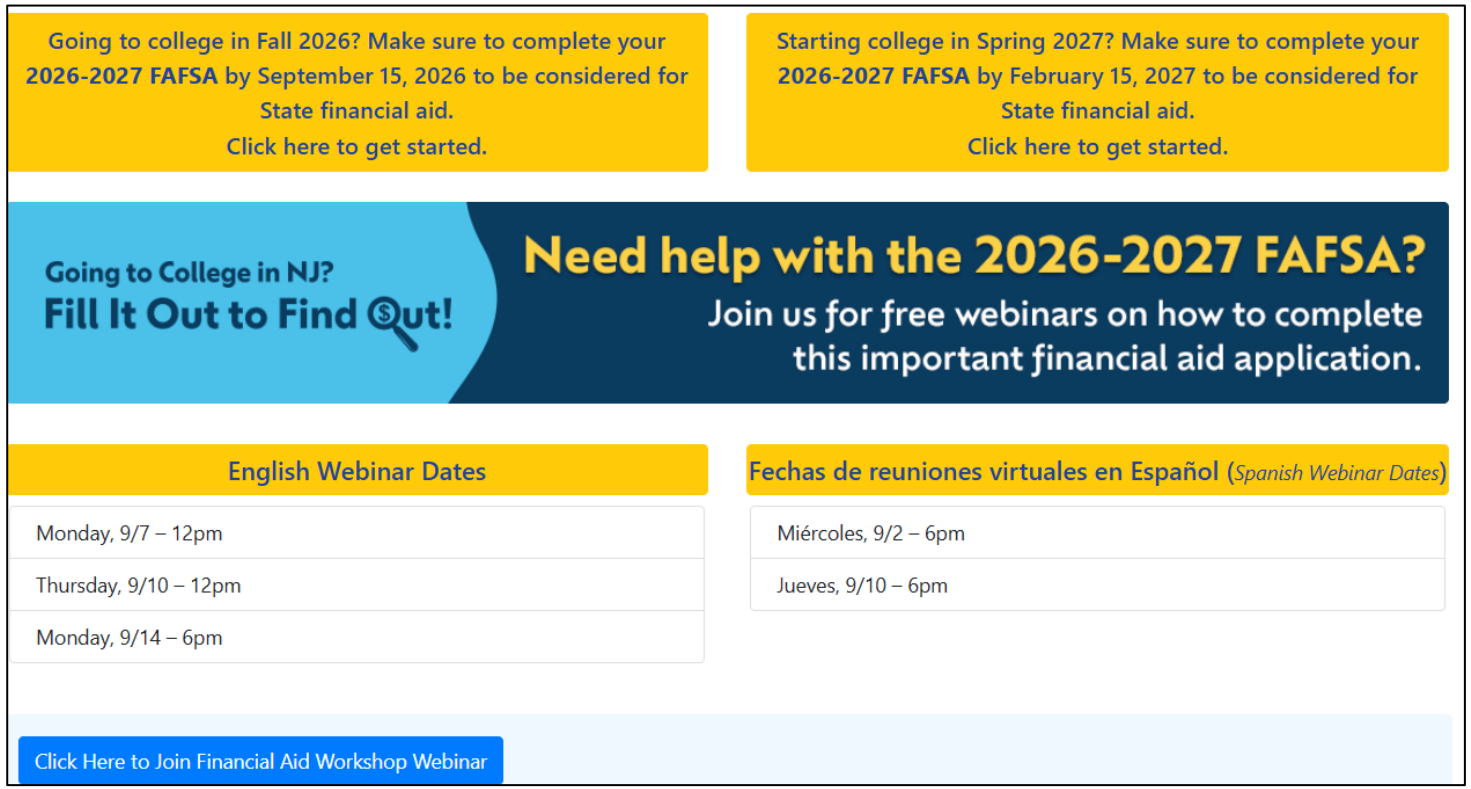

- HESAA awards a one-time scholarship ranging from $2,000 - $6,000 to NJBEST beneficiaries who enroll in a New Jersey institution after making contributions to an account for at least 4 years
- NJBEST offers a matching grant up to $750 for new accounts
- State tax deduction for up to $10,000 in annual contributions to an account

To Learn More:
https://www.hesaa.org/pages/NJBESTHome.aspx

# Apply for State Aid Workshops & Webinars

# HESAA.org - Apply for State Aid

## Live Webinars




The 2027-2028 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) opens by October 1, 2026.

Most colleges and universities provide FAFSA® Completion Workshops to assist families with completing the FAFSA® application. For FAFSA® Virtual Workshops dates please check your local high school or college. You are also invited to join one of HESAA's virtual events.

# HESAA Services

- Customer Care Center

  CustomerCare@hesaa.org

  609-584-4480

  Monday – Thursday: 8:30 – 8 and Friday: 8:30 – 5:00

- Online Resources

  www.hesaa.org

  www.njgrants.org

  www.njclass.org

  https://njfams.hesaa.org

  www.hesaa.org/pages/financialaidhub

# QUESTIONS?

HESAA
HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY

# Thank you