



COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID MILESTONES

by the student editors of **GETTING THROUGH COLLEGE WITHOUT GOING BROKE**,
a Students Helping Students™ book

One of the most important aspects of applying for financial aid to help you pay for college is timing. There are many steps in the process and doing them right and at the right time makes a huge difference. Below is a detailed timeline to help you organize your financial aid application process. Keep in mind that the timing we suggest here is approximate, and you should check with each of the schools where you're applying to ensure that it doesn't have different deadlines.

JUNIOR YEAR

- ✓ Research colleges to ensure that you'll be applying to a variety of schools both in terms of academic rigor and cost.
- ✓ Begin to research scholarships to understand what your options are.

SENIOR YEAR

Fall

- ✓ Apply to a variety of schools and make sure not to rule out any simply because they're expensive.
- ✓ Talk to your guidance counselor and your parents about your financial aid requirements and your strategy for completing the required forms and applying for scholarships.
- ✓ Begin to apply for scholarships and grants. The earlier you apply, the more time you'll have to apply to as many as possible.

January

- ✓ File the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA). Some schools require that you submit it by the end of February, so pay attention to deadlines.
- ✓ File the PROFILE or other custom forms required by the colleges to which you're applying.
- ✓ Continue to apply for scholarships.

February

- ✓ If you filed the FAFSA in early January, you'll receive your Student Aid Report (SAR).
- ✓ Check your SAR for errors and send in any required corrections.

April

- ✓ The majority of your acceptance letters and financial aid award letters arrive, outlining what financial aid package each school offers.
- ✓ Carefully compare each of the financial aid packages you receive, paying attention to total amount of aid, the left-over amount your family will have to pay, and what the aid is made up of—loans, scholarships, grants, work-study, etc.
- ✓ Contact schools to ask for more aid. Unless you've received a full scholarship, you and your parents should ask for more money.

May

- ✓ Choose your school and make sure to send in all of the required financial aid paperwork.
- ✓ Fill out any required applications for student and parent loans, as well as private loans, if you didn't receive enough financial aid from your school.

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For more helpful tips and proven strategies from students and recent grads on applying for financial aid, acing your scholarship applications, managing your money at college, staying out of credit card debt, and much more, visit **www.StudentsHelpingStudents.com** and buy the Students Helping Students™ guide titled **GETTING THROUGH COLLEGE WITHOUT GOING BROKE**, available at bookstores and online stores, such as Amazon.com.