

FINANCIAL AID – FIVE EASY STEPS

Source: www.powerprep.com

STEP

1

Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form and the financial aid CSS (College Scholarship Service), if required.

(Note: Both the FAFSA and the Profile of the CSS should be obtainable in high school guidance offices before January 1st of the year in which applicants intended to enroll.)

Deadlines: Be aware of them. The FAFSA cannot be filed until after January 1st of the year the student will enter college; however, forms should be filed as soon as possible after January 1st. The earlier students apply for financial aid, the better their chances are for receiving it! Colleges give money to early applicants—so don't take a chance that they will still have some left if you apply late!

STEP

3

The SAR or Financial Aid Package is sent to as many of the following places requested by the student on the application: the student's home address, the selected colleges/universities, the state financial aid agency or private agencies.

STEP

4

This is an important step! The student must verify receipt of the SAR by the colleges/universities, or state or private agencies. Students should call or email the college to see if the institution has received the document.

STEP

2

The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is calculated by the Central Processing System of the U.S. Department of Education. The EFC is an amount, determined by the formulas in the processing of the forms mentioned above, that indicates how much a family should be able to pay for college. Several factors such as taxable and non-taxable income, assets (such as savings and checking accounts), benefits (such as unemployment or Social Security) are considered in the calculations. The EFC is the amount used to determine eligibility for Federal and State need-based aid, as well as most privately-funded aid programs. The total cost of attending the institution(s) to which the applicant is applying less the EFC represents the demonstrated need of the student/family for aid. Of course, the need will vary according to the total cost of each institution to which the student applies. A Student Aid Report (SAR) is generated. This is commonly called the Financial Aid Package. This will come in the mail to the student's house. Federal and non-federal aid is offered to the student/family in a "package" to help meet the student's need. The package usually has as many as three basic components—scholarships/grants, loans, or work-study.

STEP

5

The college sends its Financial Aid Package to the student outlining the components of its offer. It is important to know that the institution has the option of reviewing and making allowances for the SAR. If you believe there are special circumstances regarding your family's financial situation that have not been addressed in the processing of the SAR, you should contact the college(s) directly and negotiate. It's well worth the time and effort it takes to make the personal contact!