Understanding Financial Aid

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History of Financial Aid

- Financial Aid has its origins right after WWII to train returning soldiers for jobs

- Financial Aid as we know it today began with the Higher Education Act of 1965

- It was based on the tenet that the family has the primary responsibility to pay for college. That tenet is still in place today.
Goal of Financial Aid

To assist students in paying for college tuition costs and living expenses
Role of the Financial Aid Office

- Inform families about the financial aid process and help them apply
- Determine financial aid eligibility
- Provide an Award Letter listing the financial aid programs and amounts the student is eligible for
General Eligibility Requirements

- Must be admitted in a degree, diploma, or certificate program that is financial aid eligible
- Must be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Must be registered with Selective Service (males age 18-25)
- Must have a valid Social Security Number
Application Process (part 1)

- Complete Free Application for Student Federal Aid (FAFSA) online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)
  - Apply for an FSA ID (electronic signature to sign FAFSA online)
    - Independent students: Student needs an FSA ID
    - Dependent students: Both parent and student need an FSA ID
  - Use the IRS Data Retrieval to electronically add your tax information to your FAFSA
  - List all school's you're considering (FDLTCC’s school code is 031291)
- Note: If you prefer to submit a paper FAFSA, go to [https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/2021-22-fafsa.pdf](https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/2021-22-fafsa.pdf)
Frequently Asked Question #1

Q: I am separated from my spouse. Do I include the spouse’s income since we are still married?

A: No, just yours. Exclude your spouse when answering all questions.
Frequently Asked Question #2

Q: Parents are divorced/separated. Which parent's information is needed?

A: The parent (and step-parent) who most recently provided the most financial support, even if the student is claimed on the other parent's taxes.
Frequently Asked Question #3

Q: What if my income is less now than the tax year’s information I put on the FAFSA?

A: Enter the year's information requested on the FAFSA. Then contact your Financial Aid Office to see if your reduced income can be used to reprocess your FAFSA.
529 Facts

- If the custodial parent owns a 529 plan account, it is reported as a parent investment asset on the student’s FAFSA and distributions from this 529 plan account are ignored. This is regardless of whether the student or someone else is the beneficiary.

- If the non-custodial parent owns a 529 plan account with the student as the beneficiary, it is not reported as an investment asset on the student’s FAFSA, but any distributions are reported as untaxed income to the student on the subsequent year’s FAFSA.

- If a dependent student owns a custodial 529 plan account, it is reported as though it were the custodial parent’s asset on the student’s FAFSA, regardless of whether the custodial parent or the non-custodial parent is the custodian on the custodial 529 plan account.

- If an independent student owns a custodial 529 plan account, it is reported as a student investment asset on the student’s FAFSA.
Application Process (part 2)

- The FAFSA results will be sent electronically to all of the schools you listed on the FAFSA.

- Each school will review your FAFSA to see if the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is requiring you to submit any information, or if there are eligibility questions they need you to answer. They will email and/or mail you a request for this information.
Application Process (part 3)

After you have completed, signed, and returned all required documentation to the Financial Aid Office, the information you list on the FAFSA is put into a mathematical formula which calculates the EFC (Expected Family Contribution).

Note: The EFC determines a families’ ability to pay for college for that school year. That is why Federal Tax and income information from two years ago is used.
Application Process (part 4)

Using the EFC and the cost of attending that school, the Financial Aid Office will calculate your eligibility for all of the Federal and MN State Financial Aid Programs at their school and list the results on an Award Letter. The Financial Aid Office will mail and/or email you about your Award Letter and eligibility.
Application Process (part 5)

- Contact the School’s Financial Aid and Scholarship Offices for information about their scholarships

- Search and apply for scholarships, tribal funding, and other sources of outside funding
Financial Aid Directors can exercise “Professional Judgement” to take into account special circumstances that may affect the families’ ability to pay such as loss of a job, decrease in income, out-of-pocket health care costs, natural disaster, one-time incomes, rollovers, and more.
Types of Financial Aid

- **Gift Aid** (financial aid that does not require repayment)
  - Federal Pell Grant
  - FSEOG
  - MN State Grant, Child Care Grant, MN GI Bill
  - Private Grants and Scholarships

- **Self Help Aid**
  - Work Study (Federal and MN State) – earned through work
  - Federal Student Loans – must be paid back
  - Private (Alternative) Loans – must be paid back
Reciprocity

- Receive tuition at a school in a neighboring state close to or same as MN resident tuition rate

- Must apply online through your home state’s website

  - Wisconsin
  - North Dakota
  - South Dakota
Scholarship Resources

- Potential employer/corporate scholarships
- Local library resources
- Local businesses and civic organizations
- Parents’ places of employment
- Internet Scholarship Searches
- Tribal Scholarships (Contact your Tribal Scholarship Office regarding their application process)
Helpful Web Sites

- Scholarship Searches
  - Mach 25 (scholarshipopportunity.org/collegenet-mach-25)
  - FastWeb (fastweb.com)
  - Finaid.org (finaid.org)
  - CollegeBoard (collegeboard.com/paying)

- U.S. Department of Education (ED)
  - (studentaid.ed.gov)

- Education and Career Choice Information
  - Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov)
  - MN Careers website (mncareers.org)
  - Petersons.com (petersons.com)

- Minnesota State Financial Aid Programs (OHE)
  - (ohe.state.mn.us)
Questions?

- Contact the Financial Aid Office:
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