



Financial Aid 101: Financial Aid Award Lacking?



With the early FAFSA availability, students who have submitted this information (and the CSS Profile if required) are beginning to receive estimated financial aid awards from schools that have accepted them. With these awards, **students and families can begin the process of narrowing down the list of college possibilities into one more focused on affordable options.**

If none of the options appear affordable, students are encouraged to:

- Review each school's Financial Aid website for internal scholarships and apply for them.
- Seek outside scholarships to fill the gap.
- Apply to additional colleges including local schools that would allow a student to commute to campus saving the room and board portion of the college fees (often in the \$8,000 to \$12,000 range/year) or offer tuition reciprocity/reductions (see page 2).
- Apply to a local community college to take advantage of lower tuition costs and no room and board fees for the first two years with the intention of transferring to a 4-year institution to complete the degree.
- Complete the Financial Aid/Special Circumstances Appeal process at the schools the student has been accepted to and is sincerely interested in attending. Google: "_____(school name) financial aid appeal special circumstances" to learn specific details for the financial aid appeals process at each school.

Special circumstances form the basis of financial aid appeals that focus on need rather than merit. Click [here](#) for examples. Special circumstances occur when there are significant changes to a student's/parent's financial circumstances that are beyond their control and may not be accurately reflected in the FAFSA/CSS the family submitted based on 2020 tax returns. The first step in a financial aid appeal process is to complete and file parent and student 2021 tax returns (if warranted) to provide colleges with a more current snapshot of the family's financial health. The second step is to document unusual situations that impact a family's ability to pay for college and provide this information to these schools.

Examples of special circumstance situations include:

Changes in income/cash flow

- Job loss/unemployment/dislocated worker status of a household wage earner
- Death, disability, or serious illness (mental or physical incapacitation) of a wage earner
- Incarceration or institutionalization of a household wage-earner
- Significant reduction in parent or student income, including when a student quits a job to go to school full-time particularly if the student is currently contributing to household expenses
- Reductions in/discontinuation of child support payments
- Impact of required child support catch-up payments owed from previous years
- A reduction in Social Security or other federal, state, or local means-tested benefits

Unusual expenses

- Medical, dental, or nursing home expenses not covered by insurance (if in excess of 5-10% of household income)
- Unusually high childcare, dependent-care or elder-care costs
- Elementary or secondary school tuition (more relevant to private colleges than public)

Unrecognized college expenses

- Parent(s) enrolled (on at least a half-time basis) in a degree or certificate program at a school eligible for Title IV federal student aid
- Parent education debt taken out to pay for student's sibling's college expenses

Unusual events

- A change in housing status including foreclosure and homelessness
- Natural disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, floods, landslides)
- Loss or damage to the principal place of residence
- U.S. Armed Forces activation of a parent or student

One-time fluctuations in income

- Employer reimbursement of moving expenses
- Retirement plan distributions to pay for higher education expenses/make-up for lost income
- Unusually high income (compared to 2 prior years) for non-salary workers (taxi drivers, realtors, waiters, restaurant owners, etc.)
- Unusual capital gains, an atypical one-time bonus, and worker's compensation payments.

Important information for college applications:

SPCPA School Code: 242 284

Counselor: Alison Green

School Information:

16 W 5th St

St Paul, MN 55102

(651) 290-2225

FAFSA Facts & Tips:

- Read the directions...if the question remains unclear click on the help link.
- Income questions...are based on 2020 federal income tax returns – parent(s) and student. (The IRS Retrieval Tool will populate these fields.)
- No blanks...enter "0" or not applicable.
- No commas or decimals...whole numbers only.
- No nicknames...FAFSA name, address and social security information must match IRS forms.
- Parent #1...is biological or adoptive parent student lives with 51% or more of the time.
- Parent #2...is parent #1's spouse.
- Students living with both biological or adoptive parents...decide who parent #1 is in advance and be consistent.
- Questions about students living with unmarried parents, a stepparent, or in a foster care/non-custodial adult situation...click [here](#) to learn more.
- Not living at home and other independent student questions...click [here](#) to learn more.
- Asset questions...are as of the FAFSA application date (not 2020 figures).
- Exclude...the value of primary residence and all retirement accounts (IRA, 401K, 403B, etc.) from the asset questions.
- DACA students...apply for financial aid via the Minnesota Dream Act not FAFSA. See Ms. Green for more details. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- Undocumented parents...use 000-00-0000 in the social security field. (*Caution: It is unclear whether FAFSA information can be shared with I.C.E.*)
- Male designation on birth certificate...means student must complete their Selective Service registration to be considered for federal student aid.
- Review the Student Aid Report (SAR)...once your FAFSA is submitted for important next steps!



Scholarship Opportunities....
See websites for additional details!

february 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	14	15	16	17	18	19
	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

Sunflower Initiative
\$10,000
Essay, Attend a Women's College/University

Legacy Award
\$4000
Elks Family Member

BMI Student Composer
\$5000
Classical work
John Lennon
Varies
Original song

Wilcox Education Fund
\$5000
Health Care Studies in MN
Texting & Driving
\$1000
Essay

Optimist Dreams You iMagine
Up to \$2500
Essay

Tozer Foundation
Up to \$2750
Washington County Resident

Vegetarian Resource
Up to \$10,000
Activist

Live Deliberately
\$250
Essay/Visual Essay on Henry David Thoreau Quote

Students of Integrity (BBB of MN)
\$4000
Essay

HSF General College
Up to \$5000
Hispanic Descent

Davidson Fellowship
Up to \$50,000
Significant work in Arts & Sciences

Richard & Louise Varco
Up to \$5000
2.5 GPA, MN Resident

March 1st deadlines...
Spirit of Youth
Up to \$5000
3.0 GPA & Essay

Scholars Helping Collars
Up to \$1500
Animal Volunteering

Beauty Changes Lives
\$5000
Hair Styling Video

ASK THE COUNSELOR

Need more help with your FAFSA?

Click [here](#) to register for one (or more) of these free sessions offered by the MN Office of Higher Education...

Ready, Set, FAFSA!

SESSION DATES/TIMES:

- 2/08/22 @ 7 p.m. | Financial Aid Overview
- 2/15/22 @ 7 p.m. | Complete the FAFSA
- 2/17/22 @ 7 p.m. | Complete the MN Dream Act
- 2/22/22 @ 7 p.m. | Understand Your Offer Letter
- 3/01/22 @ 7 p.m. | Scholarship Search

* Interpreters available in Hmong, Spanish and Somali.
Brought to you by MN Office of Higher Education (MOHE), MN Dept. of Education and ECMC The College Place.

SIGN UP NOW!

Space is limited; register now!
<https://bit.ly/MNFAFA>