

Financing College 101

Financial Aid can be the most difficult, and certainly the most time consuming, part of the entire college search process. Finding out what is out there early and what it takes to qualify for various types of financial aid is key. In this section, we have important links to various merit-based and need-based programs to assist you in the financial aid process. Keep in mind that when looking for financial aid, you should consider any and all of the following:

1. Merit-based aid from universities
2. Departmental aid from universities
3. Need-Based Aid (including grants, loans, work-study, etc.)
4. Tuition Reimbursement Programs
5. Athletic scholarships
6. Outside scholarships from business, organizations, civic groups, etc.
7. Financial programs, including savings plans, 529 accounts, etc.

Financial Aid/Scholarships:

- www.kheaa.com – Official website of the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, which allows user to find information on state financial aid programs, including the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES)
- www.fafsa.ed.gov – Official website for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the link to need based federal money
- www.pin.ed.gov – Website to register for the Federal Student Aid PIN – your PIN can be used yearly to electronically apply for federal student aid and to access federal student aid records
- www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov – Website for the Federal Student Aid Gateway – the source for free information, guidance, and tools for federal student assistance from the US DOE
- www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html – information about the Academic Competitiveness Grant and the SMART grant as well as other grant programs available by state
- www.finaid.org – links students to scholarship, loan, military benefit, and prepaid savings plans as well as providing a link to FastWeb
- www.fastweb.com – The largest and most complete source of scholarships available online – personalized matching of scholarships to your unique profile
- www.schoolsoup.com – information on scholarships, loan programs, etc.
- <http://calculators.collegetoolkit.com/college-calculators/debttoincome.aspx> – allows students and parents to calculate what financial aid/loan burden will be after college graduation

Scholarship Scam Prevention:

- www.studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/lsa/index.html – correct information about the FAFSA, scholarship programs, and information you need to prevent being taken advantage of when searching for colleges and scholarships
- www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams – Important information from the Federal Trade Commission about protecting yourself from falling victim to scholarship scams
- www.bbb.com – Official website for the Better Business Bureau – this website can help you determine if corporate scholarships are legitimate programs
- <http://foundationcenter.org> – Official Website of the Foundation Center – this website allows you to find out if scholarship organizations and foundations are legitimate
- <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/pay/scholarships-and-aid/408.html> – College Board’s website devoted to preventing scholarship fraud and providing students with advice in avoiding scams

Minority Scholarship Programs:

- <http://cyberguidance.net/dpl/node/17> – CyberGuidance.net’s comprehensive list of minority/diversity scholarship programs throughout the United States