

Financial Aid Calendar

January – February

Here are tips to share with your high school seniors and juniors to help them plan and pay for college.

{ Seniors }

JANUARY

- Submit the FAFSA as soon as possible starting January 1.** You can submit the online version at www.fafsa.ed.gov or mail the paper FAFSA. Complete the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet first, if you haven't done so already. If you'll be mailing your FAFSA, be sure to get a Certificate of Mailing from the post office (95 cents, plus postage) as proof you met the deadline.
- Keep a copy of everything you submit.**
- Pay close attention to deadlines.** Schools, state grant programs and private scholarship organizations may all have different filing deadlines and some deadlines may be very early in the year.
- Don't wait to submit the FAFSA until your parents have filed their federal income tax return.** Instead, submit your FAFSA on time using estimated income figures based on your parents' 2006 W2 forms and prior year tax return. You can always make changes to your FAFSA when your parents have a completed 2006 federal tax return.

FEBRUARY

- Submit the FAFSA if you haven't already done so.**
- If they haven't done so already, remind your parents to complete their federal tax return.** That way, you'll have your final financial records when you receive your Student Aid Report and can update any information, if necessary. In addition, your college may ask to see your federal tax return for 2006 to verify your eligibility for financial aid. If your parents don't file a federal tax return, ask them to save their year-end payroll stubs if they show total earnings for the year.
- Review your Student Aid Report promptly.** You could receive it as soon as three days after submitting the FAFSA online or within four weeks of mailing the paper FAFSA. If you submitted your FAFSA online and provided an e-mail address, check your e-mail inbox regularly for your electronic Student Aid Report.
- Arrange to have your mid-year transcripts sent to all the colleges you're considering.**
- Look into taking an exam for college credit if your high school offers one.** These exams—Advanced Placement (www.apcentral.collegeboard.com), International Baccalaureate (www.ibo.org) or College-Level Examination Program (www.collegeboard.com)—are usually held in the spring at participating high schools. Contact your high school counselor to learn more.

California students only:

- **Be sure the California Student Aid Commission receives your verified Cal Grant grade point average by the March 2 Cal Grant application deadline.** Check with your school in early January to confirm whether your verified Cal Grant GPA will be submitted to the Commission by your school or on the paper Cal Grant GPA Verification Form by you.
- **If you'll be submitting your verified Cal Grant GPA, pick up the Cal Grant GPA Verification Form at your high school or find it online at www.csac.ca.gov or www.calgrants.org.** Whether you fill out the form online or by hand, you must still give it to a school official for verification before

mailing it to the Commission—the form cannot be submitted online. Be sure to give your school plenty of time to certify your Cal Grant GPA before the March 2 Cal Grant application deadline.

- **Attend a California Cash for College workshop in January or February.** You'll not only get help completing the FAFSA and other forms, but you can also enter a drawing for a \$1,000 scholarship. One scholarship is offered at each workshop held across the state—up to 300 in all. Winners will be selected and notified in late spring. Many workshops have staff who speak Spanish or other languages. For workshop dates and locations near you, go to www.californiacashforcollege.org.

{ Juniors }

JANUARY

- **Plan to attend your high school's financial aid night.** It's not too early to learn about your options.

- **Check out colleges online or browse your high school's college catalogs.** Pick out three to five schools that interest you. Ask your guidance counselor if any college representatives may be visiting your high school this spring and whether a college fair is planned for your community.

FEBRUARY

- **Start investigating private scholarships and other financial aid opportunities.** Ask teachers, counselors and coaches for leads. Next, check out the free scholarship directories and search engines on the Web. Also, browse the scholarship directories in your school or local library.
- **Register for the SAT Reasoning Test or SAT Subject Tests (www.collegeboard.com), the ACT (www.act.org) or other college entrance exam.** You'll find SAT practice questions, tests and the SAT "question of the day" at www.collegeboard.com/student/

[testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html](http://www.uccp.org/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html). Also, check out the free online tutorials for the SAT and ACT at www.uccp.org (click on "Students").

- **If you plan to participate in a college sport, you'll need to register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (www2.ncaa.org) or the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (naia.collegesports.com), depending on the sport and division.** Learn more by reading the brochure, *The Guide for College-Bound Student-Athletes*, available online at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.