Face it. You can’t get through college on your own dime. You need some financial help, but where do you turn? There are several ways in which you can get the help you need to attend the college that you want. This newsletter is dedicated to help you through the financial aid process, from now until you are ready to start your first class. Depending on whether you seek a loan, grant, or scholarship, EIS/Talent Search is here to help you.

What are the steps?
To qualify for federal and most state student aid, students must:

1. Fill out and file a FAFSA form by the March 2, 2006 deadline.
2. Submit a Cal Grant GPA Verification Form by March 2, 2006.
   (In question #86 on the FAFSA, for Cal Grant consideration, make sure to list the most expensive California school to which you are applying.)
3. Demonstrate financial need.
4. Have a high school diploma or its equivalent.
5. Be a U.S. Citizen or eligible noncitizen (permanent resident).
6. Be a California resident.
7. Enroll in an eligible degree or certificate program.
8. Have a Social Security number.
9. Register with the U.S. Selective Service.
10. Maintain satisfactory academic progress.

When is the FAFSA due?
In California, you must apply by March 2, 2006 to receive initial awards, or by September 2, 2006 to receive additional community college awards. Only one FAFSA needs to be submitted for each school year, and photocopies or faxes of the form are not accepted.
RESEARCH
- Grants (Page 8)
- Loans (Page 9)
- Scholarships (Page 8)
There is plenty to choose from.

FAFSA
The starting point for all financial aid applications.

GPA VERIFICATION FORM
Cal Grants only.

CSS/PREFILE
Only for Private Colleges. (Page 3)
5 SAR
A review of your FAFSA information. *(Page 3)*

6 CAR
A review of your GPA Verification Form. *(Page 9)*

7 AWARD LETTERS
Grants, Loans, or Work Study awards. *(Page 9)*

8 PROMISSORY NOTE
Your promise to pay it all back. *(Page 9)*

9 FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE
Good Luck!
This is the first step:
For all who wish to apply for federal aid.
FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and is required for federal loans, work-study programs and grant aid.

Think you’re “independent” living away from home? Think again…
Even if, by college, you have your own apartment and don’t get a penny from your parents, you are still classified as a “dependent” on your FAFSA form.
You are only “independent” if you are 24 or are at least one of the following:
• Married  • Are a ward of the court
• Support a child  • Are a foster child

You can fill out FAFSA two ways:
Electronically (online) or by paper. To get a paper FAFSA, visit your EIS/Talent Search College Aide Advisor and obtain a copy.

When in doubt, check full-time.
Your FAFSA application will ask if you are enrolling for college as part-time or full-time. Even if you are planning to enroll part-time, check full-time anyway.
Why? Because if you change your mind later on, you will have received enough funds for your education. If you really do plan to attend part-time, the financial aid office will reduce your award appropriately. It is better to start with too much than too little.

Filling it out online? Follow these steps first:
2. You and your parents need to obtain a Personal Identification Number (PIN) from www.pin.ed.gov. Your pin acts as a digital signature, and since your parents are required to “sign” (unless you qualify as independent), they also need a pin. Follow the steps on the Web site to get your number. You can also use this number to check the status of your FASFA.
3. Do not wait until your parents file their taxes to submit the fafsa. You can estimate their income on the form. Any corrections can be made when you receive the SAR.

Before mailing any forms...
Make sure that all of the information on it is accurate. Make a photocopy and obtain a 90¢ certificate of mailing from your nearest post office. To ensure receipt, use the postcard provided in the application packet.
I submitted my FAFSA. Now what do I do?

Just wait. The next step is that you will receive the SAR, or Student Aid Report. If you submitted the FAFSA on the Web, you will receive an electronic SAR by e-mail in 72 hours. If you submitted the paper FAFSA by mail, you will receive a mailed SAR in 4-6 weeks. The schools you listed on the FAFSA will also receive a copy of your information and use it to determine how much aid you are eligible to receive.

Schools determine your financial aid eligibility by determining the cost of attendance (including tuition, fees, housing, food, books, transportation and personal expenses) and subtracting what the student and student’s family are expected to pay, based on information you put on the FAFSA.

The SAR you receive will contain a summary of everything you put on the FAFSA, and provide room for corrections that may need to be made (i.e., change of address, parent’s income). In addition, the SAR will determine if you are eligible for a Pell Grant.

Couldn’t put all the colleges down you wanted on the FAFSA?

Once you receive the SAR schools can be added on-line, by calling the Federal Aid Information Center at (800)433-3243 or by sending a letter to the federal processor. Be careful when you add a new school as it will replace an existing school. Remember to always keep a California school on the list for Cal Grant consideration.

CSS/Profile

Certain colleges (especially private colleges) require this application in addition to your FAFSA. It is a very detailed account on you and your parents’ assets, investments, business record, debt and other detailed financial information. Every financial part of your life is covered in this application. Unlike the FAFSA and GPA Verification Forms, which are free, CSS/Profile requires a $5 registration fee plus $18 for each school. Also, unlike the two, the deadline for CSS/Profile varies from school to school. Check out the Profile College Board Web site at www.collegeboard.com to see what schools require this form and when each is due.

The CSS/Profile form can only be completed on-line at the site mentioned above.

GPA Verification Form

If you are applying for a Cal Grant (See page 8), you will also need to submit a GPA Verification Form by March 2, 2006. Your school counselor will need to verify your GPA and you must list a California school on your FAFSA to qualify for a Cal Grant.
GRANTS
“free money”
Grants from the state or federal government don’t have to be repaid. Based on your financial aid eligibility, the institution may also give you other forms of aid.

Cal Grants
Cal Grants are for anyone going for an undergraduate degree or occupational/career training in a California school. In addition to the FAFSA, you also need to send the GPA Verification Form by March 2, 2006.

Cal Grant A
AMOUNT: Up to $8,322. For 3.0 GPA and above, this grant assists with tuition and fees at California public and independent 4-year colleges. If you choose to attend a California community college, your award will be held for up to 3 years.

Cal Grant B
AMOUNT: Up to $1,551 in 1st year. For 2.0 GPA and above, it awards low-income students with living expenses and books. When renewed or applied beyond the freshman year, the award may cover tuition and fees.

Cal Grant C
AMOUNT: Up to $3,168. No GPA minimum required. For community college and trade/vocational schools. Selection is based on educational background or occupational experience.

**Following the GPA Verification form, you will receive a California Aid Report (CAR) if selected for a Cal Grant award. For more on the CAR see Page 9.

Federal Pell Grant
This grant may be used for tuition, fees, and living expenses at any qualifying college in the country, and you may receive this grant even if you attend school less than half time. Awards can range from $400 to $4,050 a year.

Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
Colleges award this federal grant between $100 and $4,000 per year to undergrad students with exceptional financial need, with priority given to Pell Grant recipients. Funding for this program is limited.

WORK STUDY
Work study allows you to earn money by working part-time for the school you are attending. Job placements can either be on or off-campus.

SCHOLARSHIPS
There is a wide variety of scholarships out there—they can be based on financial need, GPA, leadership skills, field of study, athletic accomplishments, work experience and heritage, just to name a few. Deadlines, procedure and selection also vary. Check with your counselor for more information or visit fastweb.com or scholarships.com. Scholarship searches require only your time; avoid fee charging sites that promise you money (see page 6).
“owed money with interest”

LOANS

Low interest loans are available to you and your parents by a lender (such as a bank, credit union or savings and loan institution). You must be enrolled in school at least half-time to be eligible. Don’t forget, loans need to be repaid. Be prepared for that!

LOW INTEREST LOANS

If you get a loan, you have to pay it back. The promissory note is a contract where you have agreed to pay it back in full. If you fail to pay it back, you go into default, ruining your credit rating. So when you sign it, you mean it.

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AWARD LETTER

After the school receives your SAR, your eligibility will be determined by the financial aid office. If you qualify for aid, you will receive an award letter stating the types and amounts you can receive. You must accept or decline the aid awarded to you.

PROMISSORY NOTE

Federal Perkins Loan

Low-interest loans available to undergraduate students. You may borrow up to $4,000 a year with interest rate of 5%.

Perkins has a nine-month grace period, with a repayment of 10 years maximum. Loan debt may be forgiven for Perkins Loan borrowers who take on certain jobs after graduating. The jobs include teaching, nursing, law enforcement, childcare, Peace Corps, or U.S. Armed Forced.

Federal Stafford Loan

Federal Stafford Loans are the most common form of “self-help” aid available to eligible undergrad and vocational students, with issued first-year loans of up to $2,625. Interest rates vary but don’t go higher than 8.25%. After you leave college (either by graduating or dropping out), you will have a six month “grace period” before you have to make your first payments. After that, you have up to 10 years to pay it off. Don’t forget, to receive a loan or grant, you need to fill out a FAFSA first.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF FEDERAL STAFFORD LOANS

Subsidized Stafford Loan

The government pays the interest on the loan while you are in school, and will continue to pay it for the first 6 months after you leave school.

Unsubsidized Stafford Loan

You have to pay the interest, and this interest starts when you first get the loan. You have the option to pay the interest while in school or have it deferred until after school.

CAR

Students who submit a FAFSA and a verified Cal Grant GPA by the March 2nd deadline will receive a California Aid Report (CAR) from the California Student Aid Commission if they are selected for an award. The Cal Grant ID number located at the top of the report indicates the type of grant—numbers beginning with an “E” are Entitlement grants and those beginning with a “C” are Competitive grants (Students may be asked for their Cal Grant ID number later for identification purposes, so they should keep their CAR handy). They will also receive material explaining their rights and responsibilities as a Cal Grant recipient. Students should be sure to review their CAR (or corrections letter) for accuracy and respond promptly if necessary.

Students who are not chosen for an award will receive a notification letter, along with the reason they were not selected for a Cal Grant. If denied, you still may be eligible for other types of financial aid.
Don’t Get Scammed!

Every year, several hundred thousand students and parents are defrauded by scholarship scams. The victims of these scams pay more than $100 million annually. Scam operations often imitate legitimate government agencies, grant-giving foundations, educational lenders and scholarship matching services, using official-sounding names containing words like “National,” “Federal,” “Foundation,” or “Administration.” Many of these agencies send invitations to you and your parents to a “seminar” at a local hotel and use “scare” tactics by insisting that the only way you can receive money is to pay them, anywhere from $50 to $1,030, in order to receive assistance.

If you should receive a call, get their name and phone number. If you get it in the mail, take it to your college center to see if it is legit. Remember, there are many programs available—EIS/Talent Search, school counselors, and university personnel—to help you and your family financial aid for free.

Helpful Websites...

An excellent Web site to link you to financial aid sources is www.finaid.org

For a free scholarship search, spend time researching www.fastweb.com

But BEWARE, there are two FAFSA Web sites:

www.fafsa.ed.gov and fafsa.com

Can you guess which one is free and which one is not?

The commercial site is the one that ends with “com”. Do not confuse this site with the legitimate Federal site www.fafsa.ed.gov where you can file the FAFSA directly for FREE. Remember, it does not cost anything to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

There are many agencies that market scholarship services, but many are scams! Look out for any agency that says:

1. You can win a scholarship! Guaranteed!
   No legitimate agency can guarantee you’ll win a scholarship.

2. We’ll do all the application work for you! Hassle-free!
   Don’t be fooled. You must apply for scholarships and grants yourself. There’s no way around it.

3. This scholarship information isn’t available anywhere else!
   There are tons of free scholarship lists. Check with your school or library before you decide to pay someone to do the work for you.

4. We need your credit card/bank account number to hold the scholarship!
   Never give your credit card or bank account number on the phone. It may be a setup for an unauthorized withdrawal.

5. Your scholarship is on hold. After we receive your initial payment the scholarship is yours!
   Don’t pay anyone who claims to be “holding” a scholarship for you. Free money shouldn’t cost a cent.

6. A national foundation has selected YOU to receive a scholarship! or You are a finalist!..in a contest you never entered.
   This scam requires you to pay a “disbursement” or “redemption fee” so they can release your prize.
## FAFSA Workshops

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*ofrecemos sección en español

The workshops above are to help you and your parents with the FAFSA form. Please check with your college center for the room location and if your school is not listed.

## Spring Field Trips

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Please see your EIS/TS College Advisor Aide for the grade levels that can attend and details on any of the above trips.
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