



THE DEAN'S LIST

Center for College Planning

December 2008

Your guide to college planning

Applying for Financial Aid

As seniors complete and submit their applications for admission to their selected colleges and universities, the emphasis shifts to figuring out how to pay for it. The New Year will be upon us soon, so too the overwhelming task of understanding the financial aid process. The NHHEAF Network Organization's Center for College Planning is here to help. Counselors are available to help students and families better understand and navigate the process by answering questions and assisting in filing the necessary forms. This is just another one of the free services provided by our college counselors.

The Forms

Students should confirm which forms are required at the colleges and universities that they intend to apply. There are potentially three separate financial aid forms: the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), the CSS Profile, and an institutional form (specific to the college). The FAFSA is required at all colleges and universities, the CSS Profile (www.collegeboard.org) is required at a number of select private institutions, and the institutional form is required by some schools. It is possible that all three forms could be required by the same school. Students should be cognizant of each school's financial aid requirements and deadlines – check the school's financial aid Web site for deadlines. Colleges and universities are unforgiving when it comes to missed deadlines; get the forms in early and check to be certain they have been received by the appropriate office.

The FAFSA

We encourage students to file the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1, 2009 and, at the very least, by the earliest financial aid deadline of all the colleges which they are applying. The FAFSA must be filed to determine the student's eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant Program, Federal Stafford/Direct Loans, and Federal Campus-based Programs (i.e. SEOG, Perkins and Work Study). Families have the option of filing the FAFSA by paper or online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA is a FREE application to file. Within 3-6 weeks of filing the FAFSA, the Department of Education will send the student a Student Aid Report (SAR). Students should pay close attention to the instructions that are included with the SAR and be sure to do what is asked.

Center for College Planning at the NHHEAF Network Organizations

The Center for College Planning at the **NHHEAF Network Organizations** is dedicated to providing students and families with valuable information about the college planning process—from savings options and college admissions requirements, to applying for financial aid and scholarships. We serve all student populations: traditional, continuing education, graduate and adult learner. We offer college planning materials and coordinate speakers for schools, businesses and community organizations free of charge. We provide dynamic small group workshops in our Concord, New Hampshire office. We also provide a toll free college planning hotline and comprehensive Web site. Our goal is to promote higher education as the means to achieving personal, career and life goals.

The NHHEAF Network Organizations

The **NHHEAF Network Organizations** are comprised of four independent nonprofit organizations dedicated to streamlining the student loan process:

New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) guarantees, originates and disburses your loan.

New Hampshire Higher Education Loan Corporation (NHHELCO) funds your loan.

Granite State Management & Resources (GSM&R) services your loan.

NHHEAF Network Educational Foundation (NNEF) administers charitable giving.



The NHHEAF Network Organizations
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This product has been granted the Seal of Approval from the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

Students and parents should be aware that the paper FAFSA will no longer be available in bulk quantities which means that your library or school may not have any copies to distribute. Students will be able to obtain a paper FAFSA by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID or by visiting www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov. From this Web site, students can access the PDF, complete the form on the computer or by hand, and mail it to the address provided for processing.

Interested in getting a head start on filling out the FAFSA? Now there's a way to prepare your answers prior to submitting the actual FAFSA. The [FAFSA on the Web Worksheet](#) is now available to download and print. This will save time and energy when you actually file your FAFSA after January 1, 2009.

Top Ten Tips for Filing the FAFSA

1.

You should submit your FAFSA as early as possible, but no earlier than January 1, 2009. Each college has its own individual deadline. Don't miss it!

2.

If your 2008 tax forms will not be completed before the earliest college deadline, you should estimate. Consider using your 2007 tax returns and 2008 year-end pay stub to get estimated figures. It is much better to use estimated tax information than to miss a deadline. You can easily update your FAFSA information once your 2008 taxes have been filed.

3.

When reporting investment net worth, FAFSA questions #42 and #43 (student) and #91 and #92 (parent), report the current value minus debt owed.

4.

While you do not have to include the total value of your protected retirement savings on question #92 (investment net worth), you must provide your annual contribution, as well as any other untaxed income, on question #95a and/or #95b (parent).

5.

Do NOT leave any items blank on the FAFSA form. If the appropriate response is zero, then enter zero. Blanks could delay the processing of your financial aid information.

6.

On the FAFSA, the **green** section is to be completed by students and the **purple** section is to be completed by parents. It is especially important to make sure your social security number, date of birth, and e-mail addresses are accurate and in the appropriate sections.

7.

Because the FAFSA has limited room for school choices, the student should put his/her top choices on the FAFSA first. Once the student receives his/her Student Aid Report (SAR), the other schools may be added.

8.

When reporting parent information (questions #61-95), it is important to include information from the parent that the student lived with 51% of the time. In question #62, parents must indicate the month and year they were married/ remarried or divorced/separated. If the custodial parent is remarried, then all income and asset information from the new spouse must also be included. Remember: Filing the form does not obligate parents to pay.

9.

To apply online, go to www.fafsa.ed.gov. Both student and one parent must register for a personal identification number (PIN), at www.pin.ed.gov. You and your parent can sign-up for your PIN numbers today and you receive them immediately. Be sure to keep it in a safe place as it serves as your electronic signature and is yours for life.

10.

Applying for financial aid may require additional forms such as the **CSS Profile** or an institutional financial aid form (this form would be specific to the institution). You may also have to provide copies of your income tax returns or bank statements to the colleges. Make sure you submit all required documents by the colleges' deadlines and respond to correspondence from the financial aid offices immediately.

Key terms to remember

Aid Package: A combination of financial aid (scholarships, grants, work-study and/or loans) offered to prospective students by the financial aid office to help students and their families manage the costs of higher education.

Cost of Attendance (COA): The total cost of attending a postsecondary institution for one academic year. This figure usually includes tuition, fees, room, board, supplies, transportation and personal expenses.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): The amount determined by the FAFSA that students and parents are expected to pay toward school expenses.

Verification: A process whereby the financial aid administrator verifies data provided on the financial aid applications (i.e. request for income tax returns, bank statements, etc.).

They expect us to pay how much?

As if the cost of attendance hasn't shocked your parents enough, you may ask them to remain seated awhile longer. When you submit the FAFSA form, The Department of Education calculates how much they feel your family can afford to pay for your first year of college. This figure is your EFC (Expected Family Contribution). Remember that the EFC will not affect any academic, athletic or merit scholarships that might be offered to you, it will impact how much you are eligible for in terms of need-based aid.

If you would like to calculate your estimated EFC in advance, simply visit www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov. Do not despair if you are not Pell Grant eligible. You may still be eligible for other federal and institutional financial aid.

And remember - do not hesitate to call the college's financial aid office directly to ask specific questions or to confirm they have received all of the necessary paperwork.

Understanding the process

While the financial aid process may seem overwhelming, keeping a close eye on deadlines and utilizing all of your resources will be a huge help. We can help you and your parents in a number of ways:

1. Attend a free **"Filing the FAFSA"** workshop in our Concord offices.
2. Call our office at (800)525-2577, x 119 to set up a FREE one-on-one counseling appointment to help you file your FAFSA.
3. Sign up and attend our **"Filing The FAFSA/CSS Profile"** webinar on Thursday, 1/29/09 from 3 to 4:30 p.m.



You're Invited....

to a Financial Fitness Fair. On Saturday, January 17th 8:30 to 2:30, the NH Jumpstart Coalition will be hosting their third annual Financial Fitness Fair for high school students and their parents at Southern NH University. Come see keynote speaker Josh Shipp, from the popular video podcast www.HeyJosh.tv, dispense "advice with attitude" to motivate and inspire teens. Attend workshops such as, Click and Go...to College, Paying with Plastic – A Guide to Credit Cards, Investing 101, Basics of Investing and many more. To learn more, or register for the event beginning December 9th, visit: <http://www.nhjumpstart.org/FinancialFitnessFair.html>.

News Around the Nation

Economic Downturn Causing Students to Re-Evaluate College Choices

The faltering economy has caused many families to tighten up their finances and think carefully about how and where to spend their money. Prospective college freshmen are no different. A recent poll of 2,500 prospective college students by MeritAid.com found that 57% of students are considering less expense colleges because of the economic downturn. An increasing number of students are foregoing private colleges for public institutions as the ailing economy shrinks family savings and private loans become more difficult to find. Students across the nation are re-evaluating college options by choosing community colleges or public colleges closer to home. Saving money on fuel and housing can help ease the financial strain of higher education. Despite students thinking more carefully about finances and college options, college admissions continue to rise.

Did you Know?

Campus Highlight

For many, this time of year causes us to reflect on what we have and think about how we can give back. At St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, you can give back year round. St. A's students, faculty and staff work together to contribute more than 16,000 hours of service through the Meelia Center for Community Services. Whether working with youth at the local YMCA, community clean-up or spring break alternative service trips, St. Anselm students have many options to choose from when deciding how best to give their time to help others. For more information about the powerful ways St. Anselm students are changing lives and impacting the the community, visit <http://www.anselm.edu/administration/meeliacenter>.



Ask Joe

All of this financial aid talk may have you wondering about your own finances. How much are textbooks? Are there ways to save money while living on campus? Visit joecollegeblog.com to read posts about budgeting your money for miscellaneous expenses. Do you already have some budgeting secrets you want to share? Post them. This is a busy time of year as admission deadlines are fast approaching. Check out college counselor Tom's entry this month about staying on track as you juggle school and the college admissions experience.

The staff at NHHEAF would like to wish you a very happy holiday season.

Upcoming:

COMING SOON: More information concerning financial aid for NH students.

Your next CCP E-News will be sent in January. We will further discuss the financial aid process, assist you in applying for scholarships and decode the financial aid lingo you will begin hearing.

The NHHEAF Network Organizations are comprised of four 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that provide students and families with the resources and funding to pursue higher education aspirations. Funds generated by the Organizations make their charitable mission possible as student loan earnings are reinvested in programs and services that benefit citizens of New Hampshire. For more information, visit www.nhheaf.org.