



The Four General Sources of Student Financial Aid

1. Federal Aid

Type:
Pell Grant, Work-Study Job, Subsidized/Unsubsidized Stafford & Direct Loan, Perkins Loan, and Parent PLUS Loan.

Apply:
The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**) can be found at www.fafsa.gov and is available starting January 1st of your senior year. Paper forms are discouraged, but can be obtained by calling 1-800-4FED-AID.

Deadline:
The California priority deadline is March 2nd for students enrolling in college/ technical schools. Please note that some schools set an earlier deadline for the FAFSA. Be sure to contact financial aid offices of the schools you are applying to and inquire about school-specific deadlines.

2. State Aid

Type:
Cal Grant.

Apply:
Students who are eligible for a Cal Grant are California residents graduating from CA high schools or students who meet AB540 criteria.

First, **complete the FAFSA or CA Dream Act on the web by March 2nd** because the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) will retrieve data from the FAFSA or the CA Dream Act to determine if the student is eligible for a Cal Grant. Next, complete the **Cal Grant GPA Verification Form** in January; deadline is March 2nd. **There is no online Cal Grant form**, but many high schools will include your GPA in a 'group report' to the California Student Aid Commission if you sign up at the counselor's office. *Check at your high school counselor's office to see if you must use the paper form or if your school offers the group reporting method.*

AB 540 students must complete the CA Dream Act application online at www.caldreamact.org. For more information about the Cal Grant and Dream Act, please contact the financial aid office of the schools you are applying to.

Deadline:
Priority deadline is **March 2nd** for students enrolling in college/ technical schools the following school year. Please note that some schools set an earlier deadline for the Cal Grant GPA Verification Form. Be sure to contact financial aid offices of the schools you are applying to and inquire about school-specific deadlines.

After submitting your FAFSA or CA Dream Act, **check the status of your Cal Grant** at www.webgrants4student.org.

3. College / Institutional Aid

Type:
Grant/Scholarship from the college itself.

Apply:
Students should contact the financial aid office at each college they are interested in and ask: "Do you have any applications for other scholarships or grants that are awarded by the school itself?" Many schools have separate scholarship applications that must be completed in order to be eligible for institutional awards. Also, many private colleges require students to fill out an independent financial aid form called the '**CSS Profile**'. The college will inform the student if the Profile form is required, and usually the student must pay a fee to file the 'Profile' form.

Deadline:
The scholarship application process and **deadlines vary by institution**- so it is important to research early!

4. Outside Agency Aid – Miscellaneous

Type:
Scholarship, Grant, and Loan.

Apply:
Eligible students should apply to organizations such as the **Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara** and other student aid organizations that send notices to the high school counseling office. Also, students should utilize the internet for a scholarship search -- a list of helpful website links can be found at the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara's website at www.sbscholarship.org. Click on 'Students' then 'Financial Aid Resources'.

Deadline:
The SFSB application is available on **October 1st** of every year and is due by **January 31st**. This online application is for students enrolling in college/ technical schools Apply at www.sbscholarship.org. Click on 'Students' the 'Apply for a Scholarship and Loan'



Helpful Financial Aid Hints

1. Start early! Do not wait until the student is accepted at a college to ask about financial aid. In most cases, high school students apply for admission to colleges in the fall of their senior year. Financial forms should be completed as soon as possible after the following January 1st. Remember that the California priority deadline is March 2nd. **However, be aware that some private/independent colleges have set their own financial aid deadlines, which may be earlier than March 2nd.**

2. Apply for everything for which you are eligible. Don't assume that you won't be considered. You don't need an 'A' average to receive financial aid. Students planning to attend vocational school and community colleges are also eligible for financial aid. Make courteous contact with the financial aid office at your desired school and stay in touch to be sure that your financial aid file is complete.

3. Financial Aid deadlines are not flexible! Make a separate College Calendar at home to keep track of important deadline dates. The Federal and State programs adhere to the March 2nd deadline. **Forms must be properly mailed or filed online on or before March 2nd (it is a postmark deadline) to be considered on time. Also note that your school may have an earlier deadline than March 2nd—you must call the school to find out specific deadlines!**

4. Make copies of everything. Start a specific folder to keep financial aid papers and letters together. If you have kept copies of your forms, you can always send a replacement copy to the college or processing center if something is misplaced.

5. Do not use registered or certified mail for your applications/forms. These types of mailing are not always accepted by the Federal and State programs or by many colleges. **DO** obtain proof of mailing by buying a Certificate of Mailing at the U.S. Post Office.

6. Parents: get your tax return done as early as possible. If you usually file an extension, try to avoid doing this when you have a student entering college. The federal FAFSA form asks for family tax data. **You may estimate these figures if necessary**, but the student's financial aid offer from the college may not be finalized until the family tax return is completed.

7. Remember, you may apply to all four sources of financial aid — Federal, State, Institutional, and Outside Agency Aid — and potentially receive financial aid from all four sources. Do not limit yourself or take an unmotivated approach to financial aid. Many students work a large number of hours each week at a minimum wage job, but won't take a few hours to fill out financial aid applications that could potentially bring them thousands of dollars in grant and loan aid.

8. Ask for Help! The Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara is here to help you. We answer phone calls and emails from parents and students who have questions regarding financial aid, and we schedule appointments with our advising staff. Also, don't be shy about scheduling an appointment with the professional counseling staff at the high school and/or with a financial aid officer at the student's college as well.

Help for Immigrant Students: About AB 540 laws & benefits

About the AB 540 LAW: **CALIFORNIA NONRESIDENT TUITION EXEMPTION**

Under AB 540, students who meet ALL of the outlined requirements will qualify to pay in-state tuition.

DO YOU QUALIFY? To qualify a student must:

- Attend a California high school for 3 or more years, and
- Graduate from a California high school or receive the equivalent general education diploma (GED), or be currently enrolled in a California Community College, California State University, or a University of California, and
- Sign a statement with the college or university (NOT with INS) stating that he/she will apply for legal residency as soon as he/she is eligible to do so.

Students should keep in mind that this law only provides students to be exempt from paying nonresident tuition at California public colleges and universities. The law does not provide any immigration benefits and does not provide access to federal aid for students.

For more information and for a list of scholarships, please see: www.ab540coalition.org .