

Understanding Financial Aid

Education beyond high school is an investment in yourself and your future. Financial aid is an umbrella term for the many ways students can get help paying for higher education. CFNC can help you achieve your goals starting with understanding financial aid.

TERMS TO KNOW

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
Learn more at StudentAid.gov.

Cost of Attendance (COA): Estimated cost of tuition + fees + supplies + more for attending a higher education institution.

Financial Aid Offer Letter: An official document provided by your school's financial aid office listing all of the financial aid available to a student. The financial aid may include grants, scholarships, work-study programs, as well as loans. A student is not required to use the lender or loan included in the letter.

Grants: Federal and/or state money given without payback or interest responsibilities. Eligibility is determined upon completion of the FAFSA.

Scholarships: Money for education without payback or interest responsibilities. Eligibility is determined upon completion of the FAFSA. There are local, institutional, state, and federal scholarships available. CFNC has a search tool at CFNC.org/scholarships.

Subsidized Loan: Federal loans for undergraduate students with financial need that don't accrue interest for the borrower while they are in college at least part-time. Loans must be repaid.

Unsubsidized Loan: Federal loans for students that begin accruing interest for the borrower while they are in college. Loans must be repaid.

Residency Determination Service (RDS): NC students must complete residency for in-state tuition and eligibility for financial aid.

Deferment: Temporary pause on loan payments for certain situations. Interest does not accrue during a deferment.

Forbearance: Temporary halt on payments, but interest will accrue.

Work Study: On campus, or sometimes off-campus, jobs for students with financial need to earn money for college-related expenses.

Private Loans: Can be called Alternative Loans, usually from a private institution like a bank, and have to be paid back.

NC Assist: The state's non-profit for affordable education loans for students with an NC connection. Learn more at NCAssist.org.

Where do you access the FAFSA?

Create an FSA ID and complete the FAFSA at StudentAid.gov. The FAFSA is FREE to complete!

When should students complete the FAFSA?

Complete the FAFSA your senior year of high school, or the year before you will enroll in college, and every year in college.

Who is eligible to complete the FAFSA?

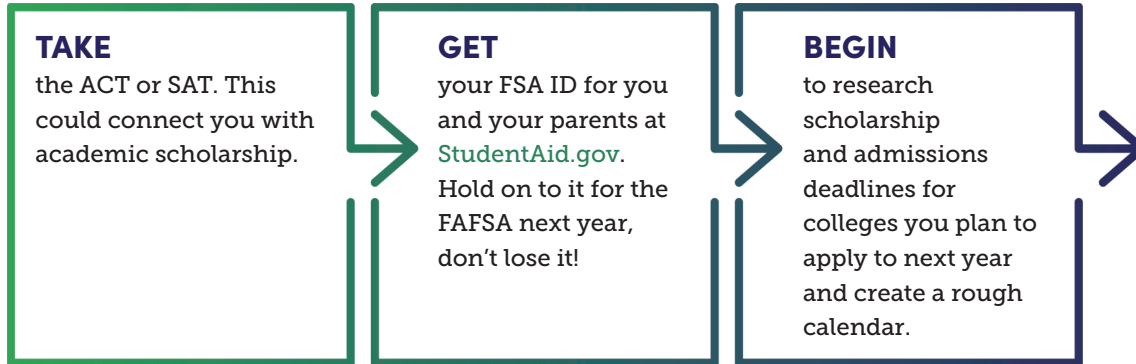
US Citizens or eligible non-citizens who are enrolled in an eligible degree or certificate program at a college or trade school. More information can be found at <https://StudentAid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements>.

Where and how to complete RDS?

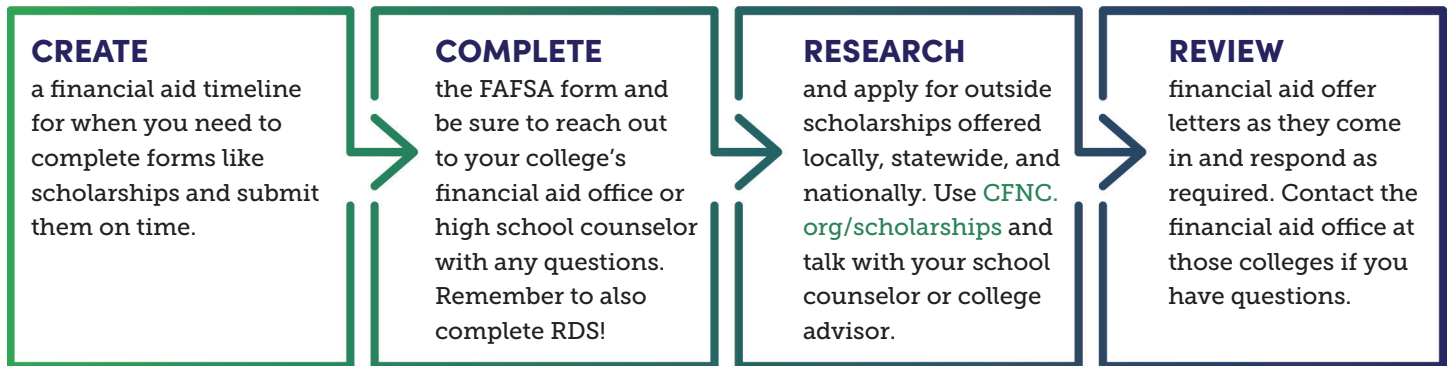
Residency is based on where parents/guardians reside, and they will need to help complete RDS. Log in with your CFNC.org username and password to complete the interview at NCResidency.org.

When to Start?

JUNIOR YEAR:



SENIOR YEAR:



5 THINGS TO ASK A COLLEGE BEFORE DECIDING

- 1 How much is the cost of attendance and how is it broken down?
- 2 What is needed for institutional financial aid and what are the deadlines?
Remember to ask the college how outside scholarships are handled as well.
- 3 When and how does the institution send out financial aid offers?
- 4 What types of Federal Work-Study jobs does your school offer? If you are not eligible for Work-Study, does your school have part-time jobs students can apply for?
- 5 Can you expect to receive a similar financial aid package each year, assuming your financial circumstances do not change by much?