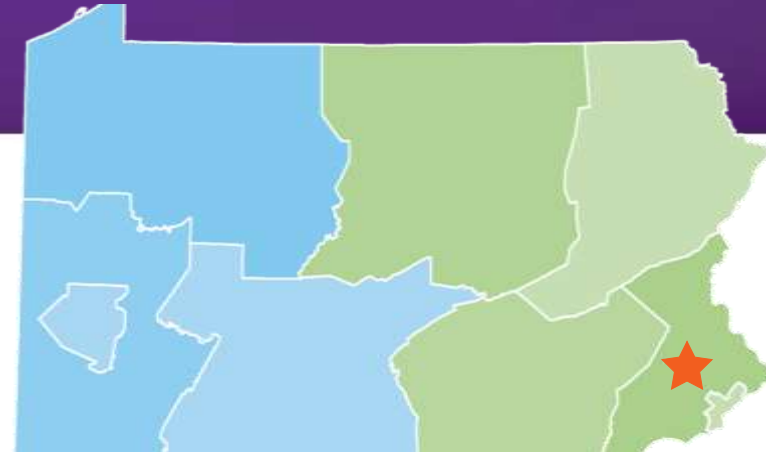


# Financial Aid 101



# Your Presenter



## **Fran C. McKeown**

Higher Education Access Partner

Southeastern Region

PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA)

215-801-7097

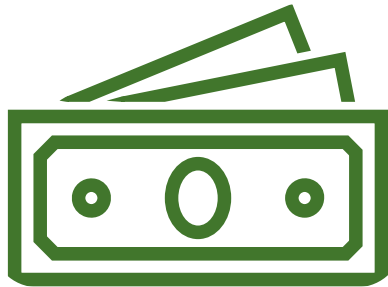
[Frances.mckeown@pheaa.org](mailto:Frances.mckeown@pheaa.org)



- What is financial aid
- Funding sources available
- How do I apply
- What happens next
- Federal and State aid
- Loans
- Scholarships Search Engines

# What Is Financial Aid?

Financial aid consists of funds provided to students and families to **help** pay for postsecondary educational expenses.



## Gift Aid

Grants/Scholarships



## Self-Help

Work-Study



## Loans

Federal Student Loans,  
PLUS, Private Loans

# Funding Sources



**Federal Government**



**State Government**



**School or College**



**Scholarships**

# Financial Aid 101



## Applying

# Start with the **FORMS**

## **FAFSA** – Free Application for Federal Student Aid

- Required by **ALL Schools, PHEAA** and some scholarship organizations
- Required every year attending

## **STATE GRANT FORM** through PHEAA

- Required first year for all students

### Some schools require additional forms:

**CSS Profile** – through the College Board; additional fees

**Institutional Financial Aid Forms** - through a specific school

**KNOW WHAT FORMS EACH SCHOOL *REQUIRES***



# FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) – StudentAid.gov/fafsa

- The FAFSA is the primary federal form for financial assistance to attend postsecondary school.
- Must file a FAFSA each year a student attends school to be eligible.
- File online – Fast, Secure, SKIP LOGIC and Built-in Edits.
- While filing the FAFSA online is preferred, a printable PDF version is available at [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).
- Students do not have to be accepted for admission to list a school on the FAFSA



Accessibility to the FAFSA has been expanded to the top 11 languages spoken by English learners in the U.S. - Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, French, Arabic, Korean, Russian, German, Haitian and Hindi



# Know Your Deadlines

**Federal Deadlines** - The FAFSA normally is available October 1<sup>st</sup> each year but, **for the 2024-2025 FAFSA, the application will not be available until December 2023.**

Normally apply anytime after October 1 in the year prior to when you will attend school

(AY 2024-25: 12/??/23 to 6/30/25)

**School Deadlines** - vary, check websites!

## PA State Grant Deadlines for FAFSA

**May 1, 2024** - First-time and renewal students attending colleges, universities & college transferrable programs (excluding community colleges)

**August 1, 2024** – First-time students attending community college; a business, trade or technical schools, hospital school of nursing; Open Admissions Institutions or a 2-year non-transferrable degree program at a Jr or 4-year college



# For Dependent Students, Who Reports Info on the 2024-25 FAFSA?

## YES

- Married parents living together
- Biological parents living together
- Divorced or separated parents:
  - The parent that provided the most financial support to student over the past 12 months
  - If equal, then the parent with greater income and assets
- Stepparent – If part of the student's household
- Adoptive parents

## NO

- Foster Parents
- Legal Guardians
  - By court order
- Anyone else the student is living with



# When Is A Student Automatically Considered “Independent”?

- Born prior to the year 2001
- Married (not separated)
- Veteran (includes active-duty personnel)
- Working on graduate level degree
- Legally emancipated minor or in a legal guardianship with someone other than their parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in state of residence
- Orphan, in foster care or ward of the court at anytime since the student turned 13
- Have legal dependents other than spouse
- Student deemed homeless by proper authority

***(PA State Grant status can be different)***



# FAFSA Parent Wizard

- Student is asked a number of questions in order to determine which parent's information is to be used on the FAFSA.
- The parent used on the FAFSA **may not** always be the parent the student lives with.
- If divorced or separated, it will be the parent who provided the most financial support for the student over the past 12 months.
- Use of the Parent Wizard will determine which parent is used on the FAFSA.

FAFSA<sup>®</sup> FORM 2024-25 Student Raya Tran Save FAFSA Menu

1 Personal Circumstances 2 Demographics 3 Financials 4 Colleges 5 Signature

### Tell Us About Your Parents

On the FAFSA<sup>®</sup> form, your “Parent” is your legal (biological or adoptive) parent or stepparent who supports you financially.

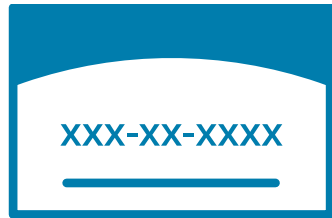
Are your parents married to each other?

Yes  No

**You will need to provide information for your parents**  
Based on your answers in this section, you'll need to provide information about both of your parents on your FAFSA form. You can invite your parents to your form so they can complete their required sections.

Previous Continue

# Documents Needed to Complete the FAFSA



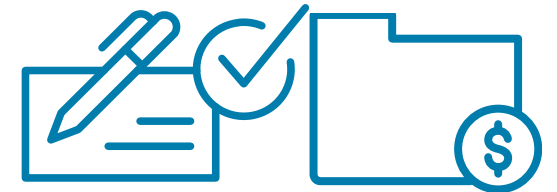
**Social Security Numbers**



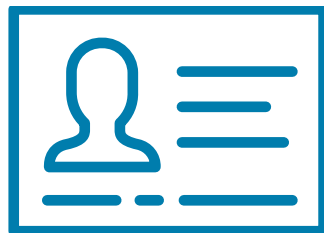
**Email Addresses**  
(Not high school email address)



**2022 Federal Tax Returns and W-2's**



**Current bank statements and records of other investment accounts (as of the FAFSA filing date) including 529 savings plans for student whom the FAFSA is being completed, stocks, stock options, bonds, mutual funds, CDs, real estate (not your home), rental property, farm value, value of business, etc.**



**Student & Contributor(s)  
Federal Student Aid  
Account (FSA ID)**



**Total child support from  
the most recently  
complete calendar year**

# Roles Within the 2024-25 FAFSA



Student



Parent and  
Parent Spouse



Student  
Spouse



Preparer

- Contributors will need an FSA ID to access the FAFSA application.
- No more ability to start a FAFSA form with just student identifiers.
- Parent and student contributors must log in separately to complete their respective sections.

# Who is a Contributor Starting with the 2024-25 FAFSA?

- Students will need to "invite" their contributors to complete their portion of the FAFSA.
- To invite contributors, students will need contributors First Name, Last Name, Security Numbers, Dates of Birth, and E-mail addresses.



# FSA ID - Screenshot of Account Creation Page

**Create an Account**

Step 1 of 7

**Personal Information**

I understand that I'll be required to certify that the information I provide to create an account is true and correct and that I'm the individual who I claim to be.

If I'm not the person I claim to be, I understand that I'm not authorized to proceed and that I should exit this form now. If I provide false or misleading information, I understand that I may be subject to a fine, prison time, or both.

First Name

Middle Initial

Last Name

Date of Birth  
Month:  Day:  Year:

Social Security Number

I don't have a Social Security number.

- Knowledge-based identity verification process
- Identity match required for each contributor to verify FSA ID
- The student's spouse, parent, or other parent are sent through the knowledge-based ID verification process when they do not have an SSN



# Consent

- Applicant and any required contributor on the FAFSA must provide consent. They are consenting to:
  - IRS Direct Data Exchange to import applicant, parent, parent spouse, and/or student spouse Federal Tax Information (FTI).
  - Redisclose FTI to state entities, institutions, and scholarship organizations.



# Create Your FSA ID Accounts

- The student applying for aid and all contributors providing information on the FAFSA need to create an FSA ID at [studentaid.gov/fsa-id](https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id).
- Create 4 days prior to completing the FAFSA.
- Legal signature for student and contributors.
- Users without an SSN will be able to acquire an FSA ID.

Social Security Number

Username

Email Address

Password

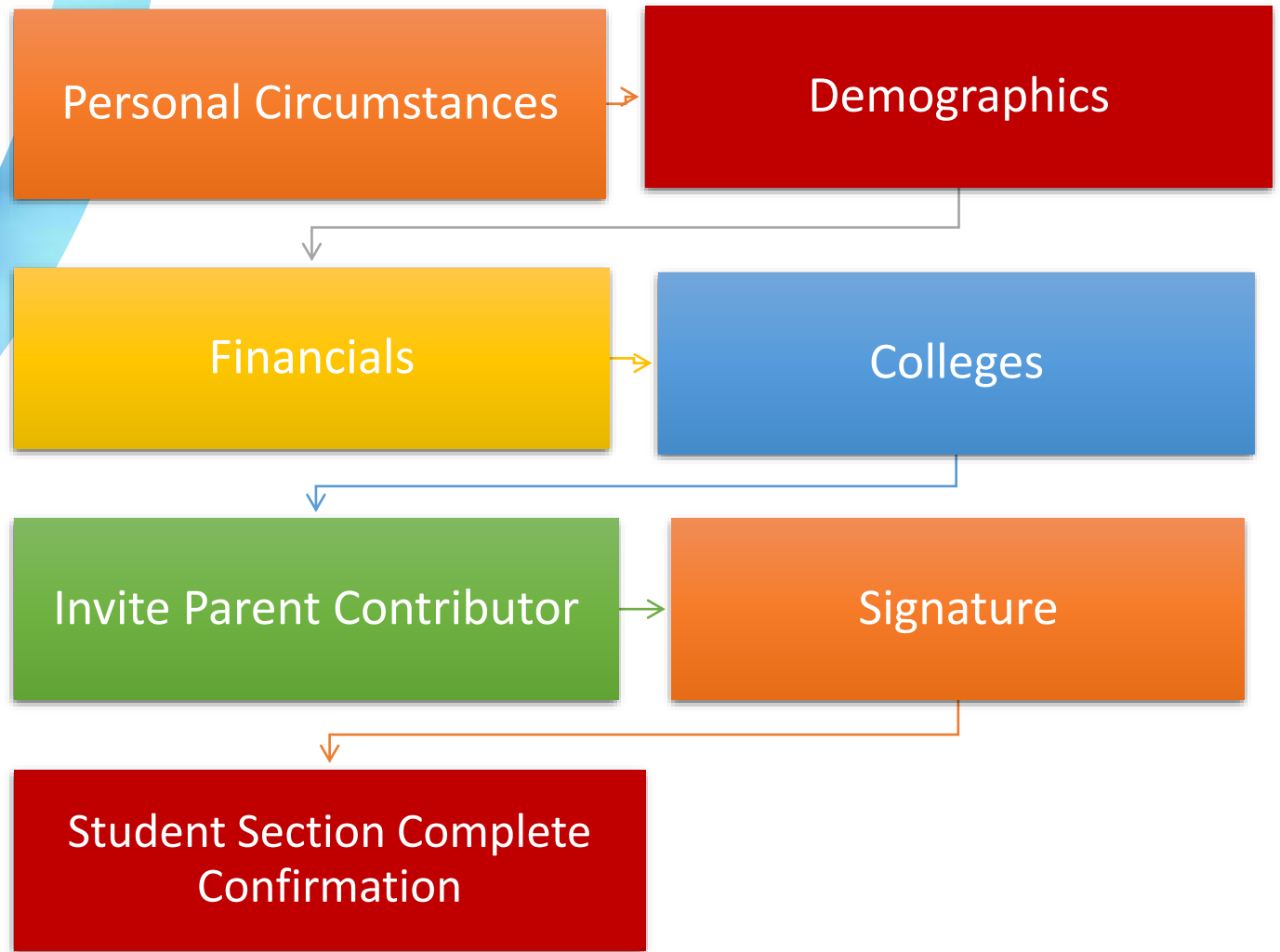
Mobile Phone

Security Questions

Enable Two-Step Verification

# FAFSA Steps – Dependent Student

1. Login – dependent student
2. Dependent Onboarding Steps
3. Verify Student Identity Information
4. Student Provides Consent



# Dependent Student Invites Parent

- The student is asked to enter personal information about their parents in order to send them an invite to their FAFSA<sup>®</sup> form. In this scenario, the student invites one parent.

FAFSA<sup>®</sup> 2024-25 Student Request

Personal Circumstances Demographics Financial College Signature

### Invite Parents to your FAFSA<sup>®</sup> Form

You will need to provide information for your parents. Based on your answers in the previous section, you'll need to provide information about both of your parents on your FAFSA form. You can invite your family members to your form to help you complete all required sections.

Enter names of parents, identified on the prior page, and we'll send electronic requests on your behalf.

Please make sure to provide information that your parents would use to login to Studentaid.gov.

Parent	Parent Spouse
First Name Alcina	First Name
Last Name Tran	Last Name
Date of Birth Month Day Year 00 00 2072	Date of Birth Month Day Year

Social Security Number (SSN) [SHOW] ⓘ  
 My parent doesn't have a SSN

Email Address  
alcinatran@school.edu

Confirm Email Address  
alcinatran@school.edu

Invite Parent

Social Security Number (SSN) [HIDE] ⓘ  
 My parent doesn't have a SSN

Email Address

Confirm Email Address

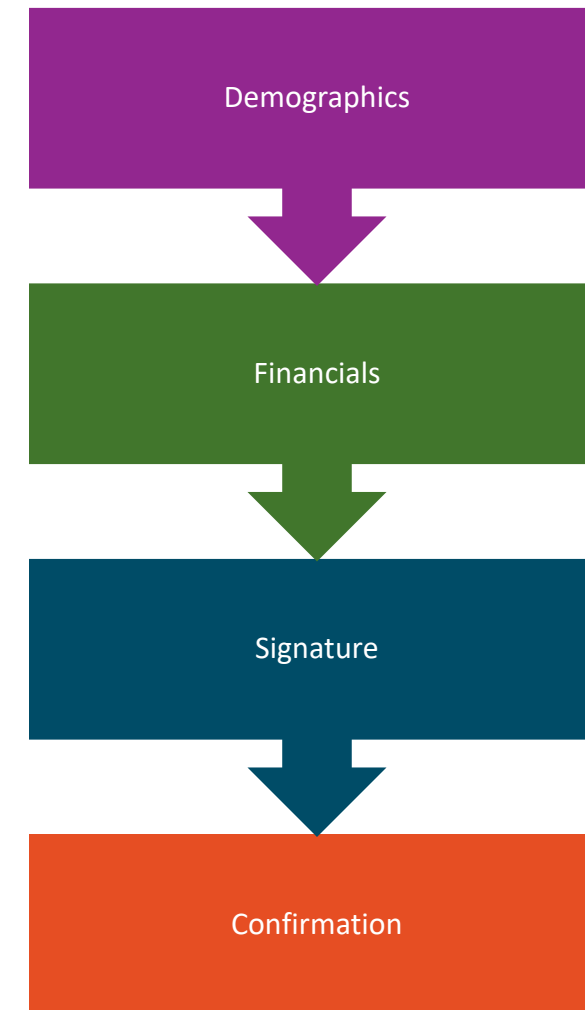
Invite Parent

Previous Continue

# FAFSA Steps – Parent Contributor

1. Following link in email invite – Parent Log In
2. Parent Onboarding Steps
3. Verify Parent Identity Information
4. Parent Provides Consent

Once all required data has been provided and all sections have been signed, any role can submit the FAFSA form



# FAFSA – School Selection

- List more than one!
- Only schools that are listed will be able to see your FAFSA information.
- Students can list up to 20 colleges at a time
- Schools can be added or deleted at any time
- Once the final school choice is made, students should update their PA State Grant record.

The image displays two screenshots of the FAFSA 2024-25 application interface for Student Raya Tran.

The top screenshot shows the "Your Colleges" section. It includes a "Continue" button and a "Previous" button. A text box explains: "In this section, you'll search for and select schools you're considering so they will automatically receive an electronic copy of your FAFSA form. You don't need to worry if you don't end up applying to them - there is nothing else you need to do."

The bottom screenshot shows the "Where should we send your FAFSA?" section. It includes a progress bar with steps: Personal Circumstances, Demographics, Financials, Colleges, and Signature. The "Colleges" step is currently active. Below the progress bar, it asks "Where should we send your FAFSA?" and provides search filters for State, School Name, and School Code. The "State" dropdown is set to "Cal" (California (CA)). A "Search" button is visible at the bottom.

# What is considered an asset?

## Report the current value at time of filing the FAFSA:

- ✓ Cash
- ✓ Checking
- ✓ Savings
- ✓ Stocks
- ✓ Bonds
- ✓ Certificates of deposit (CD)
- ✓ Bitcoin
- ✓ Mutual funds
- ✓ Net value of real estate

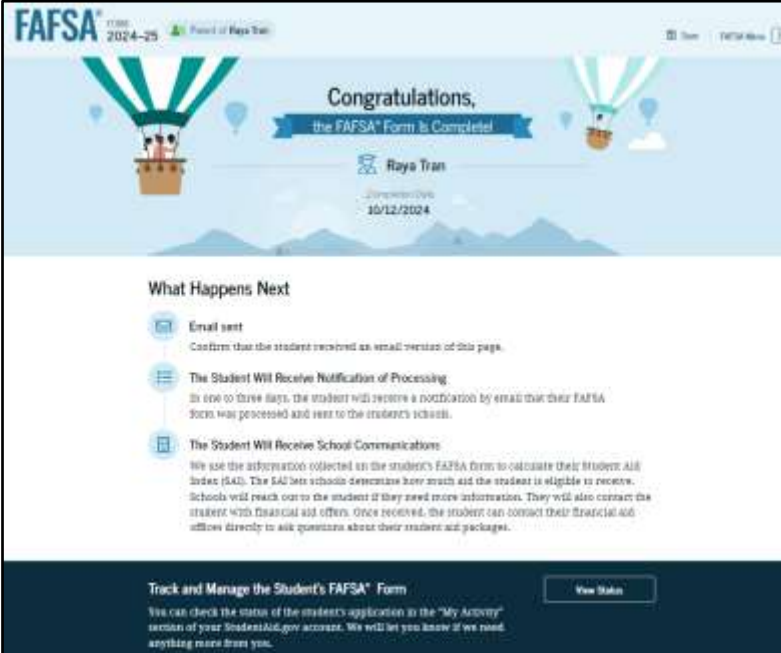
- Value of 529 accounts for the student owned by the parent(s) of a dependent applicant or owned by the student applicant
- Child support received for the most recently complete calendar year
- Net Worth of your businesses or for-profit agricultural operations.

## Not reported on FAFSA as an asset:

- Value of primary home
- Value of qualified retirement accounts
- Value of life insurance policies
- Value of personal property
- Value of 529 for any other family members (excluding applicant)

# FAFSA Confirmation

Upon submitting the student's FAFSA<sup>®</sup> form, the parent is presented an abbreviated confirmation page. This page displays information about tracking the student's FAFSA form and next steps. The student will receive an email with the full, detailed confirmation. With the student and parent sections completed and signed, the FAFSA form is now considered complete and submitted for processing.



The screenshot shows the FAFSA confirmation page for the 2024-25 school year. The page features a celebratory banner with hot air balloons and the text: "Congratulations, the FAFSA Form is Complete!". Below this, the student's name "Raya Tran" and the date "10/12/2024" are displayed. The main section is titled "What Happens Next" and contains three items:

- Email sent**: Confirm that the student received an email version of this page.
- The Student Will Receive Notification of Processing**: In one to three days, the student will receive a notification by email that their FAFSA form was processed and sent to the student's schools.
- The Student Will Receive School Communications**: We use the information collected on the student's FAFSA form to calculate their Student Aid Index (SAI). The SAI lets schools determine how much aid the student is eligible to receive. Schools will reach out to the student if they need more information. They will also contact the student with financial aid offers. Once received, the student can contact their financial aid offices directly to ask questions about their student aid packages.

At the bottom, there is a section titled "Track and Manage the Student's FAFSA Form" with a "View Status" button. The text below the button reads: "We can check the status of the student's application in the 'My Account' section of your StudentAid.gov account. We will let you know if we need anything more from you."



# PA State Grant Form (SGF)

- In addition to the FAFSA, first-time applicants must also complete the **PA State Grant Form (SGF)**.
- How to access SGF:
  - The link from FAFSA confirmation page
  - The link will only be available after all contributors have completed their sections.
- If the student submits the completed FAFSA, the student will see the confirmation page and there will be a link to complete the PA State Form on the confirmation page.
  - If the contributor submits the completed FAFSA, the student will receive the confirmation page via email. However, there is no link in the confirmation email.
- If the student misses the link or the completed FAFSA is submitted by a contributor, the student can log into the [Studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) account and access the link to complete the state grant from. **If the student's FAFSA is processed, they will click on "Apply for State Aid" on their My Activity page on [StudentAid.gov](https://StudentAid.gov).**

## If things change....

- Divorced or separated parents
  - Stepparents
  - Adoptive parents
  - Foster parents
  - Legal guardians
  - Living with others
  - Recent death or disability
  - Reduced income
- 
- ✓ Only the school can change a FAFSA related to circumstances
  - ✓ Decisions are final and can not be appeal to the U. S. Department of Education
  - ✓ Contact PHEAA for a PA State Grant re-consideration

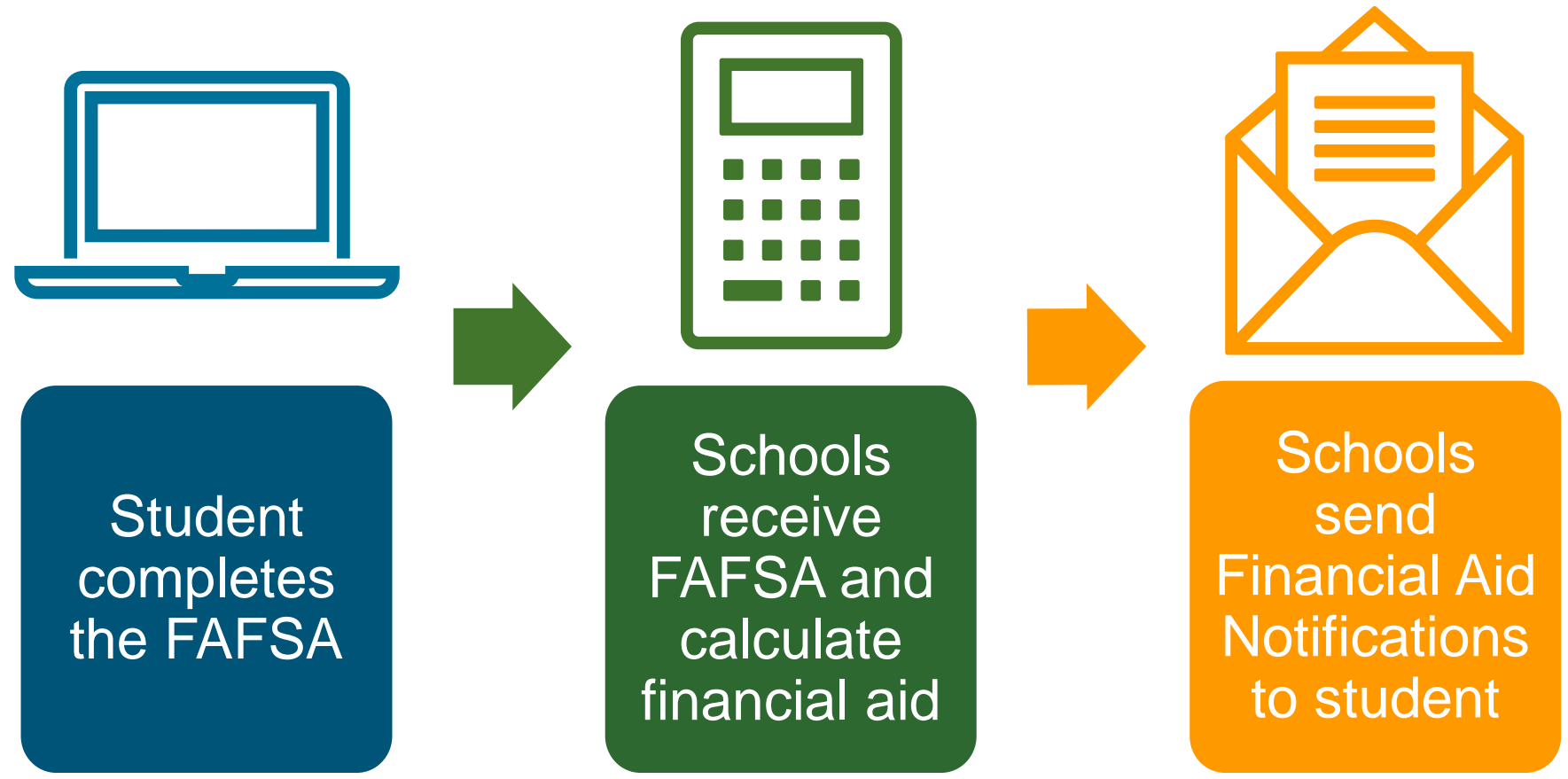
# Student Unusual Circumstances

Prevents student from contacting parents or contacting parents would pose a risk to student

A student may be experiencing **unusual circumstances** if they:

- Left home due to an abusive or threatening environment;
- Are abandoned by or estranged from their parents, and have not been adopted;
- Have refugee or asylee status and are separated from their parents, or their parents are displaced in a foreign country;
- Are a victim of human trafficking;
- Are incarcerated, or their parents are incarcerated, and contact with the parents would pose a risk to the student; or
- Are otherwise unable to contact or locate their parents, and have not been adopted.

# FAFSA is Filed... Now What?



# Need Analysis is Calculated by Your School



Schools use FAFSA calculations to determine a student's financial need based on –

## Two Components:

- The student's Cost Of Attendance at the chosen institution.
- The student's Student Aid Index (SAI).

SAI figure includes parent(s) & student's contribution.

# What School Costs Are Considered?



## Schools cost of attendance includes:

- Tuition and Fees
- Housing and Food
- Books, Course Materials, Supplies & Equipment
- Transportation
- Personal Expenses



# How is the SAI Calculated?

- Primarily income-driven
- Major factors for dependent student:
  - Parental & student - income and assets
  - Family size

**A student's SAI remains the same no matter which school the student attends.**



# Parents Income and Assets

## Income

- Income is based on 2022 year for AY 2024-25
- Tax filers report AGI from tax return
  - They are Not required to report income earned from work off the W-2
- Allowances are made for taxes, working households, and living allowances based on family size

## Assets

- Must report assets in their name, total cash, savings, and checking accounts (Include 529 accounts for the student, owned by parent(s) or by the student)
- Current Net Worth of investments, including Real Estate
- Current Net Worth of Businesses and Investment Farms
- After the Asset Protection Allowance is deducted from the value of the assets, 12% of the remaining asset value is used in the SAI calculation
- Not an asset: value of primary residence, personal property, qualified retirement accounts, and life insurance policies



# Student Income and Assets

## Income

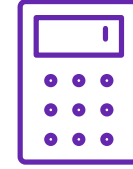
- Allowances are made for taxes
- Earnings from work-study are excluded
- Income protection allowance of up to \$9,410 and remaining income assessed at 50%

## Assets

- Dependent students must report assets in their name, total cash, savings, and checking accounts
- Current Net Worth of investments, including Real Estate
- Current Net Worth of Businesses and Investment Farms
- 20% of the value of the assets is used in the calculation of the SAI
- Not an asset: value of primary residence, personal property, qualified retirement accounts, and life insurance policies

# Calculating Financial Need

- Schools/colleges receive FAFSA information and calculate financial need
- Financial Aid Office (FAO) “packages” student based on financial need and available funding (varies from school to school)
- Financial aid notification sent to student



COA  
-SAI  
-OFA  
=NEED

A photograph of a green surface with several pencils. Handwritten in white chalk or marker is the equation: COA minus SAI minus OFA equals NEED.

# Financial Aid Notification

- Official notification from school about financial aid, terms and conditions
- Lists the type and amount of aid to be received
- Describes what must be done to accept or reject any aid
- Discloses students' rights, responsibilities and academic requirements

# Reviewing the Financial Aid Package

How much of the financial aid is free money?

Which awards are based on need, and which are based on merit?

Are there any conditions on the free money? GPA requirement?

Will awards increase as tuition increases?

Will awards change from year to year?

Will loans be needed?

# Financial Aid 101



## Federal & State Aid



# Federal Grant Programs

- **Pell Grant** - max award \$7,395 (2023-24)
  - Eligibility is the same for every postsecondary institution
- **Campus-based aid** – Eligibility determined by Financial Aid Office at each potential school
  - **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)** – max award \$4,000
    - Student must be enrolled at least half-time
    - **Awarded to most financially needy student**
  - **Federal Work-Study**...FAO determines
    - You must have financial need in order to qualify for work-study
    - A work-study position is not guaranteed and may even require an interview
    - Work-Study income removed from FAFSA eligibility calculation

# PA State Grant Program

- In-state – max award \$5,750 (full-time)-(2023-24)
- **Reciprocal states:** Delaware, DC, Massachusetts, Ohio, Vermont, West Virginia
  - Up to \$600 for full-time students (\$800 for veterans)
- Award amount determined in part by the cost of the school

**Must be at least half-time to be eligible**



# Financial Aid 101



## Federal Student Loans



# Federal Direct Student Loan Program

- Available to **ALL** students **REGARDLESS** of need
- Additional unsubsidized funds available for Independent & Parent PLUS denials
  - 5.50% interest rate (AY 23-24), 1.057% fee
  - Rates set every July 1st for the life of that year's loan; fees are deducted from disbursement
- In student's name, no collateral or credit check, must sign MPN
- Available loan amounts increase in subsequent years
- No payments required while attending school & six-month grace period
- Flexible Repayment options

## Based on FAFSA, students have a combination of:

- Subsidized: Federal government pays interest in school and grace status
- **Unsubsidized: interest accrues in school and grace**

StudentAid.gov &  
school's website!

# Federal Direct Stafford Loan Borrowing Limits



Undergraduate Students			Graduate Students
Annual Limits	Dependent Students	Independent or dependent students whose parents are unable to borrow a PLUS Loan	Graduate or Professional Studies
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>	<b>\$5,500</b> Total No more than \$3,500 may be subsidized	<b>\$9,500</b> Total No more than \$3,500 may be subsidized	<b>\$20,500</b> each academic year Graduate / Professional students are no longer eligible for subsidized loans
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>	<b>\$6,500</b> Total No more than \$4,500 may be subsidized	<b>\$10,500</b> Total No more than \$4,500 may be subsidized	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Year and beyond</b>	<b>\$7,500</b> Total No more than \$5,500 may be subsidized	<b>\$12,500</b> Total No more than \$5,500 may be subsidized	
<b>Aggregate Limits</b>	<b>\$31,000</b> Total No more than \$23,000 may be subsidized	<b>\$57,500</b> Total No more than \$23,000 may be subsidized	<b>\$138,500</b> Total No more than \$65,000 may be subsidized

# Federal Direct PLUS Loan

- For parents of dependent undergraduate students
- In parent's name for student costs
- Rates set every July 1st for the life of that year's loan; fees are deducted from disbursement
  - 8.05% variable/fixed interest rate; 4.228% fees
- MUST apply each year
- Principal can be deferred while student is in school; Interest will continue to accrue

**If denied - student is eligible for an additional \$4,000 unsubsidized loan**

# Private/Alternative Loans

- From private lenders or financial institutions
- In student's name/co-signers usually required
- Can borrow up to the Cost of Attendance
- Based on credit scores and debt-to-income
- Principal can be deferred while student is in school; Interest will continue to accrue
- Terms vary by lender – compare before making choices

**READ THE FINE PRINT**



# PA's Low-Cost Way to Pay for College!

Low, Fixed Rates

**3.82-7.69%**<sup>1,2</sup>  
APR

Effective as of 5/11/23

Learn more at [PHEAA.org/PAForward](https://PHEAA.org/PAForward)

1) **Annual Percentage Rate (APR) Calculations** – The lowest APR is based on the following assumptions: a loan of \$10,000 made in a single disbursement, a borrower who selected an Immediate Repayment Plan and a repayment term of 60 months, monthly payments of \$183.49 a fixed periodic interest rate of 4.10%, and a total amount repaid of \$11,009.34. The borrower in this sample qualified for a 0.25% Direct Debit benefit for the entirety of the repayment period. The highest APR is based on the following assumptions: a loan of \$10,000 made in a single disbursement, a borrower who selected an Interest Only Repayment Plan and a repayment term of 180 months, monthly payments of \$64.17 for 46 months and \$93.84 for 180 months, a fixed periodic interest rate of 7.70%, and a total amount repaid of \$19,843.12. The borrower in this sample did not qualify for any interest rate discounts. These APRs are estimates and may differ from the actual rates received.

2) The provided rate range applies to Parent loans and may change based on loan type, loan term, repayment plan, and applicable discounts (not all discounts apply to all loan products). See individual loan programs for more specific information. PHEAA uses applicant credit scores to determine eligibility and interest rates. Higher credit scores may mean an applicant is offered a lower interest rate. Applicants are subject to credit qualifications, completion of an application and credit agreement, and verification of application information. PHEAA reserves the right to discontinue all programs or benefits without prior notice.

# Financial Aid 101



## Scholarships

# Types of Scholarships



Postsecondary Scholarships



Local and Regional Scholarships



National Scholarships

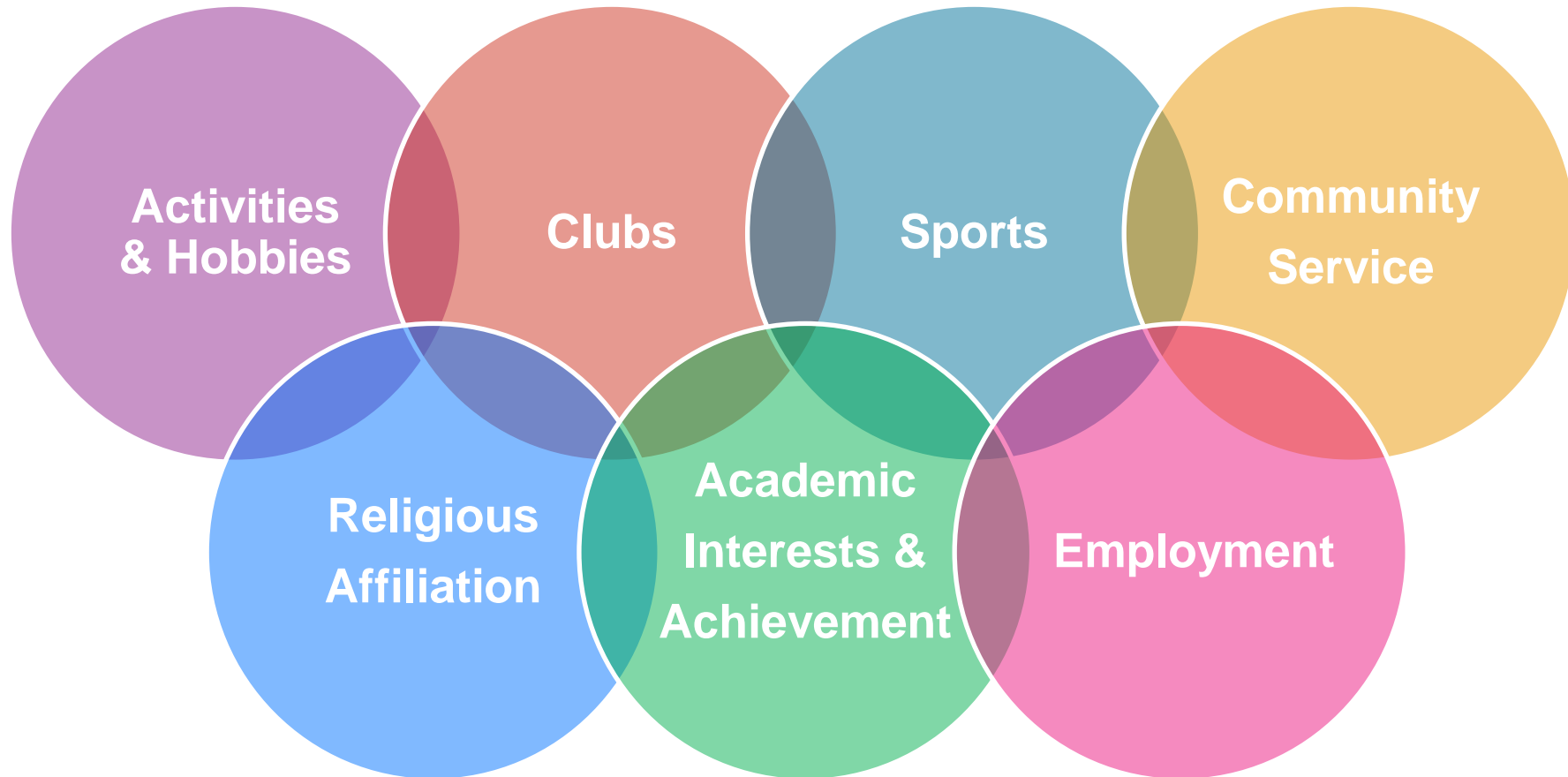
# Scholarship Search Tips

- Start searching early
- Use **FREE** scholarship search sites
- Don't ignore scholarships with smaller award amounts
- Don't miss deadlines
- Search for scholarships every year





# Your Scholarship Resume



# (Some) Scholarship Search Engines

- ✓ FastWeb.com
- ✓ Scholarshipamerica.org
- ✓ Goingmerry.com
- ✓ FinAid.org
- ✓ Cappex.com/scholarships
- ✓ Unigo.com/scholarships
- ✓ DoSomething.org/Scholarships
- ✓ CollegeScholarships.org
- ✓ Chegg.com
- ✓ Scholarships.com
- ✓ Scholarship-Page.com
- ✓ Colleges.Niche.com
- ✓ StudentScholarships.org
- ✓ BigFuture.Collegeboard.org
- ✓ **MORE....**

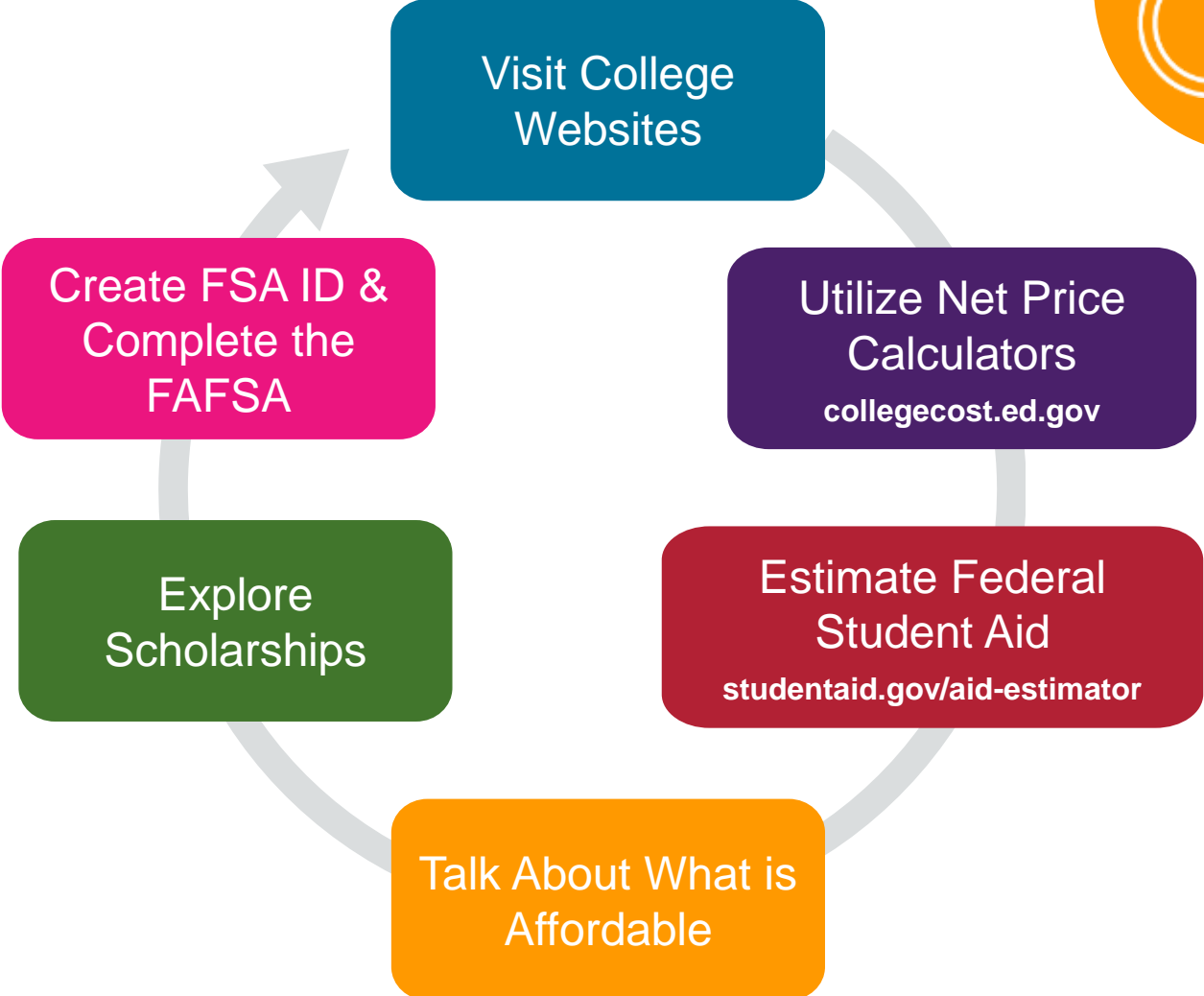


# Use Your Resources



- [PHEAA.org](http://PHEAA.org)
- [EducationPlanner.org](http://EducationPlanner.org)
- [MySmartBorrowing.org](http://MySmartBorrowing.org)
- [YouCanDealWithIt.com](http://YouCanDealWithIt.com)
- PHEAA toll free: 800-692-7392
- Federal Student Aid Info Center: 800-433-3243
- [StudentAid.gov](http://StudentAid.gov) – The one-stop shop site for all financial aid information.
- [StudentAid.gov/FAFSA](http://StudentAid.gov/FAFSA) – Direct link to the FAFSA

# What Can You Do Now?



# CONTACT INFORMATION



**Fran C. McKeown**

Higher Education Access Partner

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215-801-7097

[Frances.mckeown@pheaa.org](mailto:Frances.mckeown@pheaa.org)

