



Financial Aid 101:

What High School Seniors
Need to Know About Funding
a College Education



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It's no secret that college is expensive. In addition to tuition, you have to purchase or rent textbooks and supplies, pay for room and board if you're not planning to live at home, and perhaps purchase a computer or another piece of expensive equipment to support your studies.

Fortunately, there is money available to help you fund your college education – you just have to know where to look. To make it as easy as possible, we've compiled a list of some of the best sources of funding. Read on to find out where money may be waiting for you.

Funding From the State of Michigan

Even if you're not eligible for federal financial assistance, you might qualify for financial aid from your state. In Michigan, student residents can research [MI Student Aid](#) to find programs and scholarships they're eligible to receive. Don't live in Michigan? Contact your [state grant agency](#) or visit the state government's website for more information on college funding.

Funding From Nonprofit, Private and Community Organizations

You'll have to dig deeper, but there is money available from unlikely sources like nonprofits and corporations. For example, one of your parents' employers may offer scholarship money. Many community organizations, such as the [Rotary](#) and your [local Chamber of Commerce](#), may also provide financial assistance for higher education.

Nearly every county in the State of Michigan has a community foundation that provides scholarships. Be sure to research your local community foundation to learn how to apply for these scholarships.

Here are a few places to start:

- [Grand Rapids Community Foundation](#)
- [Ann Arbor Community Foundation](#)
- [Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan](#)
- [Kalamazoo Community Foundation](#)
- [Bay Area Community Foundation](#)
- [Midland Area Community Foundation](#)

Find more opportunities by checking out this [comprehensive list of scholarships](#).

Scholarships From Davenport University

Davenport awards more than \$15 million in institutional and foundation scholarships each year. In fact, more than 95% of our students receive financial aid. For certain scholarships, applicants are automatically reviewed for eligibility once accepted into the university. However, there are plenty of other scholarships and grants students can take advantage of at Davenport – you'll just need to apply.

Find more information and a full listing of [Davenport University's scholarships here](#).

Federal Financial Aid – Grants, Work-Study, Loans

According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than \$120 billion is awarded to more than 13 million students each year through three types of federal student aid – grants, work-study funds and low-interest loans.

Grants

Grants are essentially free money. You don't have to repay a grant (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund). There are several types of federal grants available, such as the TEACH and Pell Grants. You can find comprehensive information about these [federal student grant programs here](#).

Work-Study

Work-study grants help pay education expenses by providing part-time work-related or community service jobs for eligible undergraduate and graduate students. It is available to full-time and part-time students. These positions are typically available on campus and within departments like marketing or institutional research, so students may be able to gain valuable experience for their resume by taking advantage of work-study as well. Students can use their paychecks to help fund their education and living expenses. [Learn more about work-study here](#).

Loans

Federal student loans are not much different than a loan you take out to purchase a car, but instead, you are borrowing money for college. Upon completion of your education, you must repay your loans with interest. The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, commonly referred to as "Direct Loans," is the U.S. Department of Education's federal student loan program. With these loans, the U.S. Department of Education is your lender.

Types of Direct Loans:

- **Direct Subsidized Loans** are made to eligible undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need. Some people refer to these loans as Stafford Loans or Direct Stafford Loans. Subsidized loans do not accrue interest while you are in school at least half-time or when loans are deferred after graduation.

- **Direct Unsubsidized Loans** are loans made to eligible undergraduate, graduate and professional students. Eligibility is not based on financial need. These may also be referred to as Stafford Loans or Direct Stafford Loans. It's important to understand if your loans are subsidized or unsubsidized because unsubsidized loans accrue interest while you are in school.
- **Direct PLUS Loans** are loans made to parents of dependent undergraduate students who need help paying for education expenses not covered by other financial aid. Eligibility is not based on financial need, but a credit check is required.
- **Direct Consolidation Loans** allow you to combine all of your eligible federal student loans into a single loan. By consolidating your loans, you have one monthly payment to one company, instead of multiple payments to several companies. Loan consolidation can also give you access to additional loan repayment plans and forgiveness programs.

Get more details about [why federal loans may be better for you than private loans, find amount limits and more.](#)

Important! Many forms of financial aid require you to fill out the FAFSA, even if you're not planning to take out federal loans.

Here's How to Get Started With FAFSA

It's easy to begin the application for federal student aid, regardless of the type, using the "FAFSA" form. "FAFSA" stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. We recommend filling out the form as soon as possible. Many high school students complete the form their senior year so that they have a better idea of the money they are eligible for and how much they'll need to find elsewhere.

Colleges and universities often have their own deadlines as well. You can usually find the FAFSA form on the [financial aid page](#) of the university you are considering. You can also [apply here](#).

You should add your college of choice and any others you are considering to your FAFSA so that your results can easily be seen by that college. To do this, you'll need to enter the school's FAFSA code. For example, Davenport's FAFSA code is 002249.

Still Looking For More Information?

Here are some additional resources you can use to find funding for your college education:

- [Federal Student Aid Checklist for High School Seniors](#)
- [CareerOneStop](#)
- [College Scholarship Directory](#)

Also, don't hesitate to reach out to [Davenport's Admissions Office](#) for a more personalized consultation on what kind of financial aid might be available to you.