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# Money for College

**Student aid for college is divided into two main types, need-based and merit-based. Scholarships can either be need-based, merit-based or a combination of both!**

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## **Need-based Aid**

Need based aid is dependent on your family's financial situation. To apply for need based aid you begin by filling out the FAFSA form online (after Jan 1 of the year you will enter college). You can also use the estimator function at the FAFSA website to get an idea of what your estimated family contribution might be anytime during your college search process. Almost all families should fill out the FAFSA! Some schools will require other forms as well as the FAFSA for their need based financial aid. Check the financial aid website of the colleges you are interested in attending for complete information. (Hard Copies of the FAFSA in Spanish are available in the Counseling office.) Many outside scholarships are also need based.

## **Merit-based Aid**

Merit Aid is awarded based on criteria other than financial need alone. This category includes scholarships for athletic, academic, artistic, community service, etc. It is important to remember that some scholarships may use both need and merit assessments in their determination of awards. The majority of merit money is awarded directly from the colleges themselves. Search for information on these awards at the individual college website (may be through the financial aid page or a scholarship page). At some colleges there are very specific requirements to meet if you want to be considered for merit scholarships, so pay close attention to the details! Merit awards from outside sources are also available.

## **Financial Aid Websites**

- FAFSA <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> (*Website to apply for federal student aid*)
- [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) (to obtain pin number for FAFSA account)
- [www.collegeinvest.com](http://www.collegeinvest.com) (Colorado 529 Plan)
- [www.savingforcollege.com](http://www.savingforcollege.com) (all 529 Plans)
- CSS Profile: [www.collegeboard.org/profile](http://www.collegeboard.org/profile) (*a form used by some private colleges, universities, and organizations to award scholarship money*)

*Register and apply for financial aid using the CSS Profile form. Some schools will request you fill out this form*

- College Board's Financial Information Page: [www.collegeboard.org/pay/index.html](http://www.collegeboard.org/pay/index.html)
- [www.ed.gov/prog\\_info/SFA/FAFSA](http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FAFSA)
- [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)
- [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)
- <http://www.petersons.com/resources/finance.htm>
- WUE: [www.wiche.edu/sep/wue](http://www.wiche.edu/sep/wue) (*opportunity for reduced tuition for Colorado residents applying to colleges in certain partnering states*)