

CHECKLIST 4: FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- Talk to your college advisor or guidance counselor about financial aid options in college. Scholarship applications are available through the counseling and college advising offices.
- Scholarships are available throughout the year on local, state and national levels, so check the deadlines and give yourself plenty of time to apply.
- If you need a letter of recommendation for a scholarship application, give the teacher, coach or counselor a minimum of two weeks to get it ready for you.
- Check out scholarship pages at www.aefcool.org; www.cfabilene.org and the guidance counselor's office/COOL office.
- Read about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.gov. If you are not eligible to apply for federal aid, you may still be eligible for state aid through the Texas Application for State Financial Aid, so see your college advisor if you have questions or visit www.aie.org/State/FAFSA.
- You and your parent will need to create a four digit PIN so you can electronically sign your FAFSA and use the IRS linking feature to transfer tax returns.
- After January 1, 2014, you and your parents can complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid at www.fafsa.gov. You and your parents will want to file your tax return from 2013 as soon as possible since this is the primary document used in the FAFSA. Compile any other financial information that might be needed. You might be eligible to receive free tax prep help from the Center for Economic Opportunity located at 1102 North 3rd Abilene Texas 79601; just call 325-672-8980 first for an appointment.



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- The Student Aid Report (SAR) notifies you via mail or email for financial aid.
- The US Department of Education sends your SAR to all the schools listed on your FAFSA.
- Look for verification forms from the colleges listed on your FAFSA. You and your parents will need to complete these additional forms as soon as possible. A delay in returning these forms (many are online) can significantly delay your financial aid award.
- Compare financial aid packages between your schools.
- Pick the college you want to attend.
- Accept all or part of the award.
- You and your parent, if you both accept a federal loan, will need to complete the master promissory loan process at www.studentloans.gov.
- Inform your college of any civic scholarships you have received.
- For specific information on the types of grants and loans offered through the federal and state governments via the FAFSA process, please visit www.aefcool.org.

