




## Financial Aid Calendar: Step by Step

Applying for financial aid is a process that requires planning. Start early and keep records. It is a good idea to come up with a calendar and set deadlines. Start at least one year before high school graduation.

	
<b>High School Junior Year</b>	
✓	<b>Step 1. Prepare to Graduate</b> Make sure you are on track to graduate. Check with your counselor, advisor or graduation coach about school graduation requirements.
✓	<b>Step 2. Get Organized</b> Establish a place, box or folder for your collection of school catalogs and financial aid materials.
✓	<b>Step 3. Go to the Federal Student Aid Website</b> Start learning about your options. Be sure to read <i>Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid</i> . <a href="http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/">www.studentaid.ed.gov/</a>
✓	<p><b>Step 4. Ask Questions and Get Answers</b></p> <p><b>You Asked:</b> What is financial aid? <b>We Said:</b> Financial aid is money to help meet school costs.</p> <p><b>You Asked:</b> Where does most financial aid come from? <b>We Said:</b> Most money comes from federal and state government. Most aid programs are administered by schools.</p> <p><b>You Asked:</b> What kinds of aid are available? <b>We Said:</b> Grants, loans, scholarships, and work programs are all available. Federal, state, and local organizations as well as schools have money to award. Aid is often described in terms of need-based or non-need based.</p> <p><b>You Asked:</b> What is need-based aid? <b>We Said:</b> Most federal aid is need-based and covers tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Need-</p>

based aid is calculated by subtracting family contribution from the cost of attendance. Link to a financial aid calculator to determine eligibility.

[www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DirectLoan/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DirectLoan/index.html)

**You Asked:** What is non-need based aid?

**We Said:** Schools and organizations give awards based on academics, athletic ability, family heritage, and more. Each school or organization has different criteria.

**You Asked:** What are grants?

**We Said:** Grants are money awarded to students that does not have to be repaid. Grants are available from the federal government, schools and organizations. Sometimes grants have eligibility requirements.

**You Asked:** What are loans?

**We Said:** Loans are money borrowed by students that must be paid back. Loans may come from banks, government agencies, and private organizations.

**You Asked:** What are scholarships?

**We Said:** Scholarships are money awarded to students that is not paid back.

**You Asked:** What is FAFSA?

**We Said:** FAFSA stands for the Free Application of Federal Student Aid. Most schools require the FAFSA as part of the admissions packet. You can download this form. [www.fafsa.ed.gov/](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/)

**You Asked:** When should I apply?

**We Said:** Submit the FAFSA and apply for federal aid on or near January 1. Ask for information about school financial aid deadlines when you apply for admission. Research private organization awards and apply during their application period.



**Step 5. Begin Award Search** Take a look around and start learning about your options.

§ Federal Student Aid Information Center

	<p><a href="http://www.ed.gov/finaid.html">www.ed.gov/finaid.html</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Direct Loans <a href="http://www.ed.gov/DirectLoan">www.ed.gov/DirectLoan</a></li> <li>§ Georgia Student Finance Commission <a href="http://www.gacollege411.org">www.gacollege411.org</a></li> <li>§ Veterans Information <a href="http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm">www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm</a></li> <li>§ Workforce Investment Act <a href="http://www.gcic.edu/gawia">www.gcic.edu/gawia</a></li> </ul>
✓	<p><b>Step 6. Get HOPE Scholarship Information</b> Understand the rules about earning a HOPE scholarship.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gacollege411.org/FinAid/ScholarshipsAndGrants/HOPEScholarship/default.asp">www.gacollege411.org/FinAid/ScholarshipsAndGrants/HOPEScholarship/default.asp</a></p>
✓	<p><b>Step 7. Learn About Scholarship Scams</b> Avoid award scams and bogus lenders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ College Board <a href="http://www.collegeboard.com/parents/pay/scholarships-aid/21400.html">www.collegeboard.com/parents/pay/scholarships-aid/21400.html</a></li> <li>§ Federal Trade Commission <a href="http://www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams">www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams</a></li> <li>§ U.S. Department of Education <a href="http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/misused/sscams.html">www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oig/misused/sscams.html</a></li> </ul>
✓	<p><b>Step 8. Check out Information Parents Can Use Brochures</b> Go to GCIC and download 5 brochures.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gcic.peachnet.edu/CRN/CRNMain.htm">www.gcic.peachnet.edu/CRN/CRNMain.htm</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ <i>After High School, What Next?</i></li> <li>§ <i>Career Decision-Making</i></li> <li>§ <i>Financial Aid</i></li> <li>§ <i>Graduating from High School</i></li> <li>§ <i>Special Populations</i></li> </ul>
✓	<p><b>Step 9. Increase Your Chances</b> Winning award money for school is an achievement. By planning ahead and working hard, you can increase your chances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Make good grades in school</li> <li>§ Volunteer in your community</li> <li>§ Join clubs and organizations</li> <li>§ Seek elected positions in high schools</li> <li>§ Participate in extracurricular activities</li> </ul>
✓	<p><b>Step 10. Get the Right Job</b> Some companies have educational benefits available for full-time and part-time employees (including summer workers). If you are looking for a job ask if these benefits</p>

are available for you.



## High School Senior Year



**Step 1. Research and Apply to Schools** Contact several schools for admissions and financial aid materials. Much of this information is available online at school websites. Complete each application and keep a copy. Work with your counselor, advisor or graduation coach to get all of the necessary letters of reference and transcripts. GCIS can help you, check-out the Georgia Schools file and Programs of Study file.



**Step 2. Attend H.S. Financial Aid Night** Most high schools provide a financial aid forum for students and parents at least one or more nights each year. Plan to go.



**Step 3. Learn about the Academic Common Market** Some programs of study are not available at public colleges in Georgia. If you are interested in these programs (photojournalism, culinary arts and more), contact the Academic Common Market for a list of out-of-state schools that allow Georgia students to enroll and pay in-state tuition. [www.sreb.org/programs/acm/acmindex.asp](http://www.sreb.org/programs/acm/acmindex.asp)



**Step 4. Discover Distance Education** Distance Education programs allow students to work at their own pace and schedule. Many do not require any on-campus time. More than 56% of all postsecondary schools offer distance education, the GCIS Georgia Schools file can help you find these schools.


- § Distance Education & Training Counsel [www.detc.org](http://www.detc.org)
- § Electronic Campus [www.electroniccampus.org](http://www.electroniccampus.org)
- § US Distance Learning Association [www.usdla.org](http://www.usdla.org)



**Step 5. Obtain the FAFSA** You can get the FAFSA from a variety of sources. There is no fee to apply for federal financial aid. Apply as soon after January 1 as possible.

- § Online at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)
- § High school counselor or graduation coach
- § College financial aid officer
- § Local public library

	<p>§ Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800.433.3243</p>
✓	<p><b>Step 6. Determine Eligibility</b> In order to receive federal financial aid you must meet the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen with a valid Social Security Number</li> <li>§ Have a high school diploma or GED</li> <li>§ Be enrolled in an eligible program as a regular student</li> <li>§ Register with the Selective Service if you are a male between 18 and 25</li> </ul>
✓	<p><b>Step 7. Check-out Federal Work-Study Program</b> This program provides jobs for undergraduate and graduate students who have financial need. Some jobs are intended to supplement an educational program (a chemistry major might have a job as a lab assistant) while other positions just provide employment. To apply for this program, fill out the FAFSA. Then work with the financial aid office at your school to find out about open positions.</p>
✓	<p><b>Step 8. Expand Your Award Search</b> Now is the time to get serious about your search for financial aid! Your school, public library and GCIS Financial Aid file have information about thousands of awards. In addition, search engines on the web can help you find even more opportunities. Be sure to ask your counselor, advisor or graduation coach for information about local awards.</p>
✓	<p><b>Step 9. Remember HOPE Scholarships</b> If you graduated from a Georgia high school and have good grades, you may be eligible for a HOPE scholarship.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gacollege411.org/FinAid/ScholarshipsAndGrants/HOPEScholarship/default.asp">www.gacollege411.org/FinAid/ScholarshipsAndGrants/HOPEScholarship/default.asp</a></p>
✓	<p><b>Step 10. Review Your Student Aid Report</b> Six to eight weeks after you submit your FAFSA the federal processor will send you a Student Aid Report (SAR). It will show the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Check the numbers on the SAR Part Two for accuracy. Submit corrections. You will receive an award letter from the schools you chose that will tell you if you are eligible for aid and the amounts and types of aid the school can offer.</p>
✓	<p><b>Step 11. Try an Internship or Co-op</b> Most schools have paid internships or co-ops available for students. Contact school administrators or check-out the websites of organizations and</p>

	agencies.
	<p><b>Step 12. Look Ahead</b> Here are a few more things to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>§ You must reapply for financial aid each year. A renewal FAFSA is sent to each previous year's applicant by the federal processor.</li><li>§ Financial aid may be available during the summer term. Ask your school aid administrator in early spring.</li><li>§ You can keep track of the student aid you have received by checking out: <a href="http://www.studentaid.ed.gov">www.studentaid.ed.gov</a>. Click on "Repaying Your Loans."</li><li>§ HOPE scholarship monies cover tuition, mandatory fees and provide a book allowance. You must pay for room, board, and some other fees. Even with HOPE, your costs may average \$6,000 to \$10,000 per year for Georgia public colleges and universities.</li><li>§ Most schools have some paid internships and co-op programs. Be sure to ask a financial aid or departmental administrator.</li></ul>