

Applying for financial aid can be a confusing process. We can help you fill out the forms and help to answer questions you may have.

The most common ways to apply for financial aid are through CSS Profile (non-federal money) or FAFSA (federal money).

### **What is CSS Profile?**

CSS Profile is an online application for nonfederal student financial aid and it is available October 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

- Documents you will need include:
  - Most recently completed tax returns.
  - W-2 forms and other records of current year income.
  - Records of untaxed income and benefits for the current and previous tax years.
  - Current bank statements.
  - Records of savings, stocks, bonds, trusts etc.
- Fees and Payment Requirements Include:
  - Fee for initial application and one college report is \$25. Additional reports are \$16.
  - Fee waivers are available for low-income students.
- Some Tips for Divorced/Separated Parents:
  - If your parents are divorced or separated, we recommend you complete your application with your custodial parent's information first or the parent you lived with most during the past year.
  - All parents should be listed on the application. Select the parent or parents you lived with most during the past year. Indicate which parents' information will be provided on the application.

### **Filing for FAFSA:**

FAFSA is available October 1<sup>st</sup> each year and it is recommended that you fill it out as early as possible. You might need the following information or documents as you fill out the application:

- Your Social Security number (it's important that you enter it correctly on the FAFSA form!)
- Your parents' Social Security numbers if you are a dependent student
- Your driver's license number if you have one
- Federal tax information or tax returns including IRS W-2 information, for you (and your spouse, if you are married), and for your parents if you are a dependent student:
  - IRS 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ
- Records of your untaxed income, such as child support received, interest income, and veterans noneducation benefits, for you, and for your parents if you are a dependent student
- Information on cash; savings and checking account balances; investments, including stocks and bonds and real estate (but not including the home in which you live); and business and farm assets for you, and for your parents if you are a dependent student.

### **Reporting Retirement Accounts:**

Did you know that you don't have to include all types of retirement accounts when applying for financial aid?

When completing the FAFSA – retirement accounts do not need to be included as part of your investments. Retirement accounts will not negatively affect your financial aid status and awards.

When completing the CSS – retirement accounts do need to be reported. The total amount of your retirement account does not negatively affect your financial aid. However, the amount that you have contributed into your plan for that year, will be included as part of your income and used for determining financial aid awards.