



## Most Frequently Asked Questions about Financial Aid

### **What is financial aid?**

Financial aid is money provided to help bridge the gap between your own resources and the amount needed to pay for the cost of attending college. The primary responsibility for meeting the cost of a college education rests with the student and family to the extent they are able to pay. A formula that was established by the U.S. Congress takes into account your family's income and assets to determine this ability. Financial aid includes grants, work-study and student loans.

### **How do I apply for financial aid?**

You apply by completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You can do this online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) OR you can pick up a paper FAFSA in any financial aid office and mail it in.

### **How often do I need to apply for financial aid?**

Apply every year as soon as you can AFTER January 1. Your financial situation must be reassessed each year. However, after the first year you apply for financial aid, you probably will be sent a Renewal Application that will ask you to answer some questions again and update the answers to others. It is important to apply early!

### **Must I be admitted before I receive aid?**

YES! You must be formally admitted to Clatsop Community College before any aid can be disbursed for the term. However, an award can be offered and held until you complete the Admissions process. Contact the Admissions Office at 338-2411 in Towler Hall Room 200.

### **I have attended other colleges. Do I have to get transcripts?**

YES! The Financial Aid Office requires all transcripts to be submitted. Clatsop's financial aid policy has a funding limit of 135 credits which include all previous credits. Check with the Financial Aid Office for more information.

### **Can I use estimates when completing the FAFSA?**

You may estimate to the best of your abilities using W-2 forms, year-to-date payroll records, untaxed income statements, and any other income/asset records if applying before you have filed taxes. You will then need to make any corrections to your application after your taxes have been filed.

### **What happens after I apply?**

After your completed application is received by the Department of Education's processing system, you will be sent a Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR outlines the information you provided on the FAFSA and, if there are not any questions or need for additional information; your SAR will report your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). This EFC is the number used in determining your eligibility for federal student aid.

The EFC results will be sent to you and the schools that you list on your FAFSA. You will then receive letters from the Financial Aid Office asking for additional information or documents. Submit all requested documents promptly.

When all documents have been submitted, reviewed and processed, you will receive a Financial Aid Award Letter indicating the aid you are eligible to receive. You will also receive a Financial Aid Handbook full of important information about your award and the Satisfactory Progress Guidelines you are responsible for to maintain your award. Review all information carefully.

### **What is the Cost of Attendance?**

Each school has an established Cost of Attendance that includes the actual tuition and fees, a standard cost allowance for room and board, books, supplies, transportation and miscellaneous expenses. You may pick up a copy of the Cost of Attendance at Clatsop in the Financial Aid Office.

### **Do I have to be a full time student to receive financial aid?**

No, most federal programs are available for less than full time enrollment. However, the only funding available if you are enrolled less than \_ time (1-5 credits) is Pell grant and that is only if you meet all other eligibility requirements.

### **I live on my own so why do I need my parental information on the FAFSA?**

Parental information is used because the U.S. Congress has stated that families have the primary responsibility of funding a college education. Parent information is necessary if you are determined to be the dependent. The questions asked in Step Three of the FAFSA determine if you are considered dependent or independent regardless of where you live.

### **My parents are separated or divorced. Whose financial information should I include on the FAFSA?**

The parent you lived with most during the last 12 months. If you did not live with either parent, or if you lived with each parent an equal number of days, use the parent who provided the most support to you during the last 12 months or during the most recent calendar year that you were actually supported by a parent.

### **What if I'm getting married in a few months? How do I answer the marital status question now?**

Answer "Yes" only if you are married "as of the day" you sign your FAFSA. Otherwise answer "No". The FAFSA is a snapshot of your status as of the day it is signed and marital status cannot be changed within an award year.

### **If I am currently separated but filed a joint tax return, how do I fill out the application?**

Include only information about your own last year's income, current family size and assets, etc.

### **Can I receive financial aid from 2 schools for the same term(s)?**

No! You may apply for financial aid at any number of schools, but you CANNOT be paid from more than one school during the same term(s).

### **Someone told me I probably wasn't eligible based on my family's income. Should I still complete the FAFSA?**

YES! Financial aid is intended both to remove financial barriers for families who cannot afford the cost of an education beyond high school and to fill in the gap for families who can afford only part of the cost. Some loans and scholarships are available regardless of "need".

### **Can I apply for scholarships too?**

Absolutely! Clatsop's scholarships and all necessary information to apply are online at [www.clatsopcc.edu](http://www.clatsopcc.edu). Clatsop scholarships become available during Spring term and are awarded for the following academic year. You can also search on a national level through websites such as [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) and [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov). Be sure to review appropriate deadline dates.

**Please contact the Financial Aid Office at 503-338-2322 in Towler Hall 201 if you have any questions concerning the financial aid process. We will be happy to answer your questions!**