

Applying for Federal and Maryland State Financial Aid

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA is the financial aid application you will need to complete in order to apply for federal and state student grants, work-study, and loans. **There is no charge for completing or submitting the FAFSA.** Apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

You must reapply for financial aid every year. You should reapply for financial aid starting in January, for the following academic year.

Students should complete the FAFSA before March 1, to be considered for Maryland State financial aid from the Maryland Higher Education Commission, Office of Student Financial Assistance.

You should complete the federal income tax return before completing the FAFSA. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool allows students and parents to access the IRS tax return information needed to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students and parents may transfer the data directly into their FAFSA.

You do not have to file your income tax return with the IRS before you fill out the FAFSA. You will need the following documentation readily available when completing the FAFSA:

- Your (and your parents' if applicable) Social Security Card,
- Your driver's license or state ID card,
- Your (and your spouse's or parents' if applicable) federal income tax return and W-2 earnings statement and
- Your (and your spouse's or parents' if applicable) current bank statement and records of stocks, bonds and other investments

Once you have completed the FAFSA, you will receive your Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR contains the information you reported on your FAFSA and your personal Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is your federal aid eligibility index. The U.S. Department of Education uses a federally mandated formula or Federal Methodology to calculate your family's EFC. The EFC determines eligibility for federal financial aid. Your SAR must be complete and correct before you can receive federal student aid.

If you do not use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to provide tax information and your college requests a copy of your tax return or your parents' tax return, you may be required to obtain an official tax transcript from the IRS.

The Student Financial Aid Office at HCC will electronically receive your SAR and send an e-mail requesting additional information, if needed. Students must promptly provide all documentation, such as income tax returns if requested. The WebAdvisor Student Menu has a link to My Financial Aid Documents listing the items needed to complete the financial aid file.

The Student Financial Aid Office will send the student an award notification e-mail once all supporting documentation has been received and the financial aid has been processed. Students can view their financial aid award on WebAdvisor.

To apply for Federal Work Study (FWS) a student should (1) complete the FAFSA, (2) review the student jobs listed on the human resources page of the college's website and (3) apply for and accept an on-campus student worker position.

To receive student loan funds, you must:

- Complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov.
- Complete the entrance counseling and the Master Promissory Note at www.studentloans.gov (Note: you will need your FAFSA Pin Number to complete this step).

- Sign the HCC Award Notification, printed from WebAdvisor, and return it to the Student Financial Aid Office. The award notification will be available on WebAdvisor once your loan has been processed.

How HCC Awards Federal and MD State Financial Aid

Student applications are reviewed for completeness and accuracy. The student is notified by email and WebAdvisor if documentation is missing or if there are discrepancies in the information. It is the student's responsibility to submit copies of the documentations needed to complete their file. Students, whom the Department of Education selects for verification, must complete the verification process within three weeks of notification from HCC. Once the file is complete and correct, the aid is awarded. Federal financial aid awards are based on financial need.

The selection of students for federal grants and Federal Work Study is based on the criteria established by the program and the funds available to award. Financial need is determined by the cost of education in relation to the amount reasonably expected to be contributed by parents, spouse and/or the student. This contribution is determined by an analysis of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Estimated cost of education budget information is available on the Paying for College portion of the HCC Web site. Student awards may be viewed over a secure web site: Web-Advisor.

Federal Financial Aid Programs (Title IV)

Federal Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Pell Grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who have financial need. For many students, Pell Grants provide a foundation of financial aid to which other aid is added. The amount of the grant depends on the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and the number of credits for which the student enrolls.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) is for undergraduates with exceptional financial need, who receive Federal Pell Grant Funds and are enrolled in six (6) credits or more. FSEOG does not have to be paid back. There is no guarantee that every eligible student will be able to receive FSEOG; awards are based on the availability of funds. Students wanting to receive FSEOG need to have a complete file with the Student Financial Aid Office as early in the year as possible.

Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant is for students who are not eligible for a Pell Grant but whose parents was members of the U.S. Armed Forces and died as a result of service performed in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001. Additional Student Eligibility Requirements:

- Be under 24 years old *or*
- Enrolled in college at least part-time at the time of the parent's or guardian's death.

The grant award is equal to the amount of a maximum Pell Grant for the award year – not to exceed the cost of attendance for that award year.

Federal Work-Study Program (FWS) program provides part-time jobs for students who have financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay for educational expenses.

Students must be enrolled in a minimum of six (6) credits in order to receive a FWS award. Students may work during the semester as an FWS employee in various departments and divisions of the college. The number of hours a student can work is based on the degree of financial need.

Federal Direct Loans are low-interest loans for eligible students to help cover the cost of higher education. Eligible students borrow directly from the U.S. Department of Education.

There are two types of Federal Direct Stafford Loans:

- **Subsidized** – based on financial need and federal government pays interest during the student's enrollment in school.
- **Unsubsidized** – not based on financial need and borrower is responsible for interest payments

Unsubsidized Stafford Loans require that you, the student, pay the interest that accrues while you are attending school. If you choose to defer the interest until after graduation, the interest will be capitalized, resulting in a larger principal balance and more interest paid.

Students may qualify for either of the above types of Stafford Loans or a combination of the two.

In addition to filing the FAFSA, the student must complete the entrance counseling and MPN: Master Promissory Note at the Direct Lending Web site, www.studentloans.gov. Students may complete the entrance counseling and the MPN prior to receiving a loan award.

If you have a complete financial aid file, your student loan and any other aid you are eligible for will be awarded.

- Freshmen students will be awarded \$5,500 (depending on need \$2,000 or more will be unsubsidized).
- Sophomore students, who have completed at least 30 credit hours, will be awarded \$6,500 (depending on need \$2,000 or more will be unsubsidized).

Prior to receiving loan funds, the student must go to WebAdvisor to print the award notification. Students must sign the award notification and return it to the Student Financial Aid Office to receive loan funds. **Students must be enrolled in six (6) or more credits per semester in order to be eligible for loan funds.**

An independent student or a dependent student whose parent has been denied a parent loan and requires additional UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN FUNDS to pay for college expenses can request an additional \$4,000 unsubsidized loan using the additional unsubsidized Loan Request form at the HCC Web site at www.hagerstowncc.edu.

The maximum loan amounts that may be borrowed by independent students or a dependent student whose parent has been denied a parent loan are:

- Freshman students will be awarded \$9,500 (depending on need, \$6,000 or more will be unsubsidized loans).
- Sophomore students, who have completed at least 30 credit hours, will be awarded \$10,500 (depending on need, \$6,000 or more will be unsubsidized loans).

All loans are processed for the fall semester and spring semester, unless you are graduating from HCC in December.

All loans are disbursed in two disbursements. Half of the certified loan amount is disbursed during the fall semester and the second half is disbursed during the spring semester.

Students should carefully consider how much they will need to borrow. They should consider the burden repaying loans will impose on them and their families after leaving school.

Aggregate Loan Limits: Maximum limit while working on all undergraduate degrees:

- Dependent students are limited to \$31,000 (no more than \$23,000 of which can be subsidized)
- Independent students are limited to \$57,500 (no more than \$23,000 can be subsidized)

Parent Loans for Undergraduate Dependent Students (PLUS) are for parents who want to borrow to help pay for their dependent children's educational expenses. Parent borrowers generally must begin repaying principal and interest within 60 days after the loan is completely disbursed. They may apply for deferment of payment with their lenders.

Students and parents wishing to apply for education loans must meet all requirements for Federal Financial Aid, complete the FAFSA, and complete a PLUS Borrower Information sheet, available on the Web site at www.hagerstowncc.edu.

Maryland Grants and Scholarships Programs

The Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA), a division of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, awards Maryland financial aid funds. To be eligible for this assistance, you and your parents (if a dependent student) must reside in Maryland for twelve months or more. Maryland residents should **complete the FAFSA before March 1**, to be considered for Maryland Grants and Scholarships.

Additional application information is available at www.MDgo4it.org.

Maryland Legislative Programs

Senatorial Scholarship: Maryland Senators award these funds. Contact the senator for further application instructions. If you do not know how to contact your state senator, please contact the Board of Supervisors of Elections for your county. (Washington County: 240-313-2050 or www.mdelect.net)

Delegate Scholarships: Maryland Delegates award these funds. Contact the Delegate for further application instructions. If you do not know how to contact your state delegates, please contact the Board of Supervisors of Elections for your county. (Washington County: 240-313-2050 or www.mdelect.net)

Maryland Need-based Aid Programs

Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access Grant: Current high school seniors who will complete a college preparatory program or students who graduated prior to the current academic year who provide written documentation explaining why they were unable to attend college within one year of graduating from high school may apply for this grant. Applicants must complete the FAFSA by March 1 of each year and the Howard P. Rawlings Guaranteed Access Grant application. Eligible applicants must be fulltime, degree-seeking students.

Howard P. Rawlings Educational Assistance Grant: Students attending community colleges will be awarded an Educational Assistance Grant equal to 60% of OSFA adjusted need. Funds may not be available to award all eligible students. Eligible applicants must be full-time, degree-seeking students. To renew an award, students must maintain satisfactory academic progress and submit the FAFSA no later than March 1 each year.

Part-Time Grant: Eligibility for this grant is based on financial need as determined by the FAFSA and availability for funds provided by OSFA. It is suggested that the FAFSA be completed as soon as possible after January 1 each year. Recipients are selected by HCC. To be eligible the student must be attending part-time and be enrolled in a degree-seeking program of study.

Maryland Merit-based Programs

Distinguished Scholars Awards: Current high school juniors may apply or may be nominated by their high school guidance counselor. Finalists in the National Merit Scholarship and National Achievement Scholarship programs will automatically receive the award if they attend HCC or another Maryland institution. Achievement applications may be obtained from high school guidance offices.

Distinguished Scholars Community College Transfer program: Maryland residents who have completed 60 credit hours at a Maryland community college and are transferring to a Maryland four-year institution of higher education may apply for this scholarship. Applicants must complete the Distinguished Scholar Community College Transfer application and submit an official college transcript(s).

Maryland Workforce Shortage Assistance Grant: Workforce Shortage Assistance Grant was established based on critical shortages in the workforce in Maryland. Eligible majors and employment fields are determined bi-annually. Both merit and need based criteria are used when selecting recipients.

Community Scholarships

Students applying for scholarships must complete a separate scholarship application. Scholarship information is available on HCC's financial aid Web site. This scholarship page contains a list of scholarships made available through local community organizations.

Students receiving scholarship money from outside organizations must notify the Financial Aid Office. Make sure the student's name and HCC Student ID number are recorded either on the check or scholarship award notification letter.

HCC works with many local and national organizations to award student scholarships. Any scholarship checks students receive should be sent to or brought in to the Finance Office at HCC to be applied to the student's account. This helps the Student Financial Aid Office calculate a student's total award package. Many organizations base scholarship awards on things like enrollment status, program of study, GPA, and which high school a student attended. Feel free to contact the Student Financial Aid Office for information on community scholarships.