

Financial Aid Advisor Program

The Wake County Public School System's (WCPSS) Financial Aid Advisor Program (FAAP) helps high school students and their parents locate financial aid for post-secondary education. All WCPSS high schools have a financial aid advisor who works one day a week in the school student services centers to help students and their families looking for funds to meet the costs of higher education. FAAP has been very successful in guiding students through the financial aid process, serving more than 9,000 students each year.

FAAP Provides:

- **Individual Assistance** - Senior students can receive help on finding, applying for and obtaining financial aid from federal and state sources as well as individual institutions.
- **Financial Aid Workshops** - Advisors participate in workshops for students and families in conjunction with high school counselors and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs).
- **Financial Aid Resources** - Advisors have print materials and online resources that can help with the financial aid process.

Timeline

August – June Search for scholarship opportunities. Check with colleges/universities and their financial aid offices. Be alert to scholarship information found in your high school scholarship bulletins and on the WCPSS scholarship website www.scholarshipplus.com/wake.

September – April Meet with your school financial aid advisor for information about the financial aid process. Get your Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID), which is available anytime and required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Complete the FAFSA, available online October 1.

September – December Determine Important Deadlines

- **North Carolina Deadline** - As soon as possible after October 1. Awards made until funds are depleted.
- **Federal Deadline** - Online applications must be submitted by midnight Central Time on June 30 of the year the student graduates. Any corrections or updates must be submitted by midnight Central Time, September 15 after the student graduates high school.
- **College Deadline** - Check with the college(s) you are interested in attending. You may also want to ask your college about its definition of an application deadline - whether it is the date the college receives your FAFSA, or the date your FAFSA is processed.

October – February Attend college fairs and financial aid workshops. Use the Residency Determination Service (RDS) to determine residency in NC to qualify for in-state tuition and to establish eligibility for state grants.

November – May Watch for a Student Aid Report (SAR) after completing the FAFSA. (3 -5 days up to 2 weeks depending on how you submitted your form). Watch for award letters and other correspondences from college financial aid offices regarding eligibility.

Frequently Asked Questions

Information adapted from Princeton Review Online

What is financial aid? Financial aid is money that helps students and their families pay for college.

When do I apply? After October 1 of the student's senior year, submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to start the financial aid process.

How do I apply?

Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov

- Complete and submit the FAFSA online (Recommended) or
- Print the FAFSA from online, fill it out, and submit it by mail or
- Request a FAFSA by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243). Once you receive it, complete it and submit it by mail.

In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges have their own forms or use the College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid Profile Form for non-federal aid. Take your time and be thorough when completing forms.

How often do I need to apply? You will need to complete the FAFSA and other required forms every year that you are in school.

What is the process once I've applied? The FAFSA is used to determine your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is the amount that your family will be expected to contribute. Once you have chosen a college, that institution's financial aid officers (FAOs) will put together a package of grants and scholarships, federal work-study and/or loans that will be applied to the difference between the Cost of Attendance (COA) and your EFC.

What if the package isn't enough? There may be some room for negotiation, particularly if your family's financial situation has changed since you submitted the FAFSA. Be sure to discuss alternative funding sources with your chosen institution's financial aid officers (FAOs).

What does it really cost to go to college? You should check with the schools you want to attend and ask about extra costs such as fees, books, supplies, parking, health insurance, etc.

Additional Resources

- **FAFSA application online:** www.fafsa.ed.gov
- **Wake County Schools Scholarship Website:** www.scholarshipplus.com/wake
- **College Foundation:** www.cfnc.org/
- **Federal student aid info & publications:** <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/>
- **The College Board:** www.collegeboard.org/
- **NC Residency Determination Service:** <https://ncresidency.cfnc.org/residencyInfo/>

Go to college and university websites for specific scholarships and financial aid information for that institution.