

I teamed up with the Department of Education to provide high school students and parents in the First Congressional District of Virginia information on financial aid options for higher education. The video includes information on state and federal student aid and presentations which cover topics such as scholarship searches, the state and federal financial aid step-by-step process, and types of financial aid available whether attending a vocational school, a community college, or a four-year college.

Guides students through the process of locating and applying for financial aid. Prepared by the Congressional Research Service for Members of Congress, updated *January 2010*.

- [The basics: getting started](#)
- [Student aid and where it comes from](#)
- [Targeted aid for specific groups](#)
- [Repaying your loans](#)

The basics: getting started

[TOP](#)

-

Start gathering information early.

-

Free information is readily available from:

High school counselors

College and career school financial aid offices (where you plan to attend)

Local and college libraries

[Student Aid on the Web](#) (U.S. Department of Education)

Other Internet sites (search terms *student financial aid* OR *assistance*)

-

Ask questions: counselors may know if you have exceptional circumstances that affect your eligibility.

-

Keep copies of all forms and correspondence: *you must reapply for aid each year.*

-

Parents of students: save money long before your child attends college.

[FinAid: for Parents](#)

[College Savings Plan Network](#) (state "Section 529" plans)

[Tax incentives for higher education expenses](#)

-

Good overviews:

[Cash for College](#)

[FinAid: The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid](#)

[Financial Aid: You Can Afford It](#)

[Looking for Student Aid](#)

[Mapping Your Future](#)

[Paying for College](#)

-

Beware of scholarship scams -- don't pay for free information!

[Department of Education](#)

[Federal Trade Commission](#)

Student aid and where it comes from

[TOP](#)

Basic assistance categories:

-

Financial need-based

Remember that students and their parents are responsible for paying what they can -- financial aid is a supplement, not a substitute, for family resources.

-

Non need-based

Factors include academic excellence, ethnic background, or organization membership. Corporations may also offer assistance to employees and children.

Federal Student Aid:

- Provides nearly 70% of student aid under Loans, Grants and Work/study programs.
- Available to all need-based applicants; some loans and competitive scholarships for non need-based.
- Free information from the United States Department of Education:
 - [Student Aid on the Web](#)
 - [Financial Aid Resource Publications](#)

- **Loans** are the most common federal aid and must be repaid when you graduate or leave college.
 - Stafford Loans (FFELs and Direct Loans) include:
 - [Federal Family Education Loans](#) (FFEL) from private lenders, such as banks and credit unions, guaranteed by the federal government.
 - [Federal PLUS Loans](#) parental loans, not need-based.

 - [Perkins Loans](#) [[Download a free PDF reader](#)] for the most needy undergraduates; through participating schools.

- **Scholarships/grants** are mostly need-based and require no repayment:
 - [Pell Grants](#)
 - [Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants](#) (FSEOG)

- **Other grants, scholarships, and fellowships**, mostly graduate level: search the [Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance](#) (CFDA) by *Beneficiary*, such as "Student or Trainee" or "Graduate Student". (
 - **"Congressional" scholarships:**
 - Named for Member of Congress or other prominent individual (such as Byrd Honors Scholarships, Fulbright fellowships)
 - Merit-based and highly competitive
 - Members of Congress do *not* play a role in selecting recipients
 - **Work study** programs allow you to earn money while in school:
 - [Federal Work Study Program](#) : college campus jobs
 - [Student Educational Employment](#) : jobs with the federal government
- For questions not covered by the Department of Education Web site, call the **Federal Student Aid Information Center** at 1-800-433-3243.

States offer residents a variety of scholarships, loans, and tuition exemptions.

- Check with your [State Higher Education Agency](#) and [State Guarantee Agency](#).
- Consider prepaid tuition and college savings ("Section 529") plans: [College Savings Plans Network](#).
- Search your Internet browser under terms such as **student financial aid** or **assistance** AND *your state*.

Colleges and universities provide some 20% of aid, most need-based. Check [university Web sites](#) and the institution's financial aid office when you apply for admission.

Private foundations, corporations, and organizations offer scholarships or grants:

[College Board Scholarship Search](#)
[FastWeb](#)
[Grants for Individuals](#)

Targeted aid for special groups

[TOP](#)

- [Grants for Minorities](#) : Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, Latinos, Native Americans, and Other Ethnic Groups
- African Americans: [For Students: Scholarships](#)
- Disabled students: [Financial Aid for Students with Disabilities](#)
- Foreign students: [Financial Aid for International Students](#)
- Hispanic Americans: [Scholarships](#)
- Law school students: [Financial Aid for Law School](#)
- Medical students: [Financing Your Medical Education](#)
- Native Americans: [American Indian College Fund](#)
- Study abroad (for U.S. and non-U.S. citizens): [International Financial Aid](#)
- Veterans: [Education Benefits](#)

Interested in public service?

Federal assistance programs seek to encourage people to work in geographic areas or professions where there's a particular need (such as doctors in underserved areas); encourage underrepresented groups to enter a particular profession; and provide aid in exchange for services provided (such as military service).

- [AmeriCorps Education Award](#)
Volunteers who complete one year of service receive an education award for current higher education expenses or to repay student loans.
- [Army Tuition Assistance](#)
Additional benefits for Army personnel.
- [Bureau of Health Professions](#)
Scholarships and loans to needy health profession students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- [e-Scholar](#)
Scholarships, grants, fellowships, internships, and cooperative education with federal agencies.
- [Indian Health Service](#)
Scholarships for American Indian/Alaskan Native health profession students and loan

repayment for persons working in IHS facilities.

- Military academies:
 - [United States Air Force Academy](#)
 - [United States Coast Guard Academy](#)
 - [United States Merchant Marine Academy](#)
 - [United States Military Academy](#)
 - [United States Naval Academy](#)
- [National Health Service Corps](#)

Scholarships and loan repayment for health profession students who agree to work in underserved areas.

- [Nursing Scholarships](#)
Offered in exchange for two years of service in areas with critical nursing shortages.
- Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC)
For students who want to be commissioned as officers after graduating from college.
 - [United States Air Force ROTC](#)
 - [United States Army ROTC](#)
 - [United States Navy ROTC](#)

Aid for private K-12 education: No direct federal assistance, check with schools themselves:

- [Coverdell Education Savings Accounts](#) : for elementary and secondary school expenses as well as higher education.

Repaying your loans

[TOP](#)

After college, the **federal government** has ways to help you [repay your loans](#) .

- Eligibility depends upon the type of loan, when it was made, and whether it's in default. Check with your loan officer to find out if you qualify.

- [Loan Consolidation](#) : combine your federal loans into a single loan with one monthly payment.

- Sometimes loans may be canceled in exchange for public service.

Teachers: [Cancellation/Deferment Options](#)

Health professions: [National Health Service Corps](#)

Law school graduates: [State Loan Repayment/Forgiveness Programs](#)

Medical school graduates: [Loan Repayment Program](#)

Federal employees: [Federal Student Loan Repayment Program](#)

- If you are having problems with your loan and all other approaches fail, contact the

Department of Education's [Office of the Ombudsman](#) .