

FINANCIAL AID

BY BRIAN MCGILL



It is never too early to start looking for financial aid information. Apply for any and all grants/scholarships for which you may be eligible. Talk to the financial aid office at colleges you are interested in attending.

Applying for financial aid means that, as soon as possible, you need to create a budget, prepare copies of your income taxes, fill out and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and get an electronic PIN number from the federal Department of Education. You can use this number to “sign” your application when you apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The PIN may also be used as an electronic signature for student loans. Log onto: <http://www.pin.ed.gov>.

Financial aid is money you receive from a variety of sources to help pay the cost of education. These include scholarships, grants, work-study, and loans. The good news is that, regardless of income, most people are eligible for some form of financial aid.

Grants –

Need-based aid that does not have to be repaid. Federally-funded grants: Federal Pell Grants and Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG). State grants: Utah Centennial Opportunity Program for Education (UCOPE) and Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP).

Scholarships –

Like grants, scholarships do not have to be repaid. Generally scholarships are reserved for students with special qualifications, such as financial need and /or academic, athletic or artistic talent. Institutional scholarships can be based on financial need, academic ability or outstanding talent. Many are offered by both public and private colleges, though thousands of private scholarships are also available from other sources, such as UtahMentor.

The state of Utah also funds scholarships. The New Century Scholarship provides opportunities to Utah students who complete the requirements of an Associate Degree or its equivalent at a state college by September 1 of the year they graduate from a Utah high school. The Centennial Scholarship is a full or partial tuition scholarship that can be used at any postsecondary institution in Utah that is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Students are eligible for \$250 for every quarter that they graduate early from high school. Students must enroll in an approved college within one year of their high school graduation. Approved colleges are listed on the scholarship certificate.

Loans –

Must be repaid with interest. The main loan options are student loans, parent loans and private loans. Federal loans include: Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Stafford (Subsidized and Unsubsidized) Loans, and Federal Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS). The Terrel H. Bell Teaching Incentive Loan Program (TIL) is a state loan program that has a non-repayment feature for recipients who teach in a Utah public or private K-12 school.

Work-Study –

Provides students with employment opportunities both on and off campus. The program is normally based on a student’s financial need. Generally there are two forms of work study programs at the federal and state level. Federal Work Study allows students to work on or off-campus and is based on financial need. The Utah Centennial Opportunity Program for

Education (UCOPE) work study program is funded by the state for Utah residents. Financial need is also a requirement.

Benefits for Special Groups –

Several financial assistance programs depending on a person’s ability or disability, community/military service, etc. High school and colleges counselors are aware of most programs.

Remote Learning

by Cornel Garfman

A slew of online programs have cropped up for students who are too busy to attend a brick-and-mortar university. How can you tell the reputable institutions from the diploma mills?

- Find out if your chosen school is accredited by an agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (chea.org).
- Visit the Better Business Bureau’s bbb.org to see if the institution has a record of complaints.
- Don’t judge a school by its Web site—anyone can look official. Instead, complete the checklist at Geteducated.com, a great resource for weeding out phonies.
- Carefully review the school’s admissions policy, and avoid any “university” that fails to consider your academic record, GPA and test scores. Easy A’s are tempting, but they (probably) won’t get you into Harvard.

On the Web

<http://www.utahmentor.org>

<http://www.uheaa.org>

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>