



# Stay on Track with VSAC



While you're waiting for the presentation to begin... sign up for:

- Reminders, tips, & deadlines
- Free college planning resources
- Info on grants, scholarships, and loans
- Links to online applications, and more

[vsac.org/signup](https://vsac.org/signup)





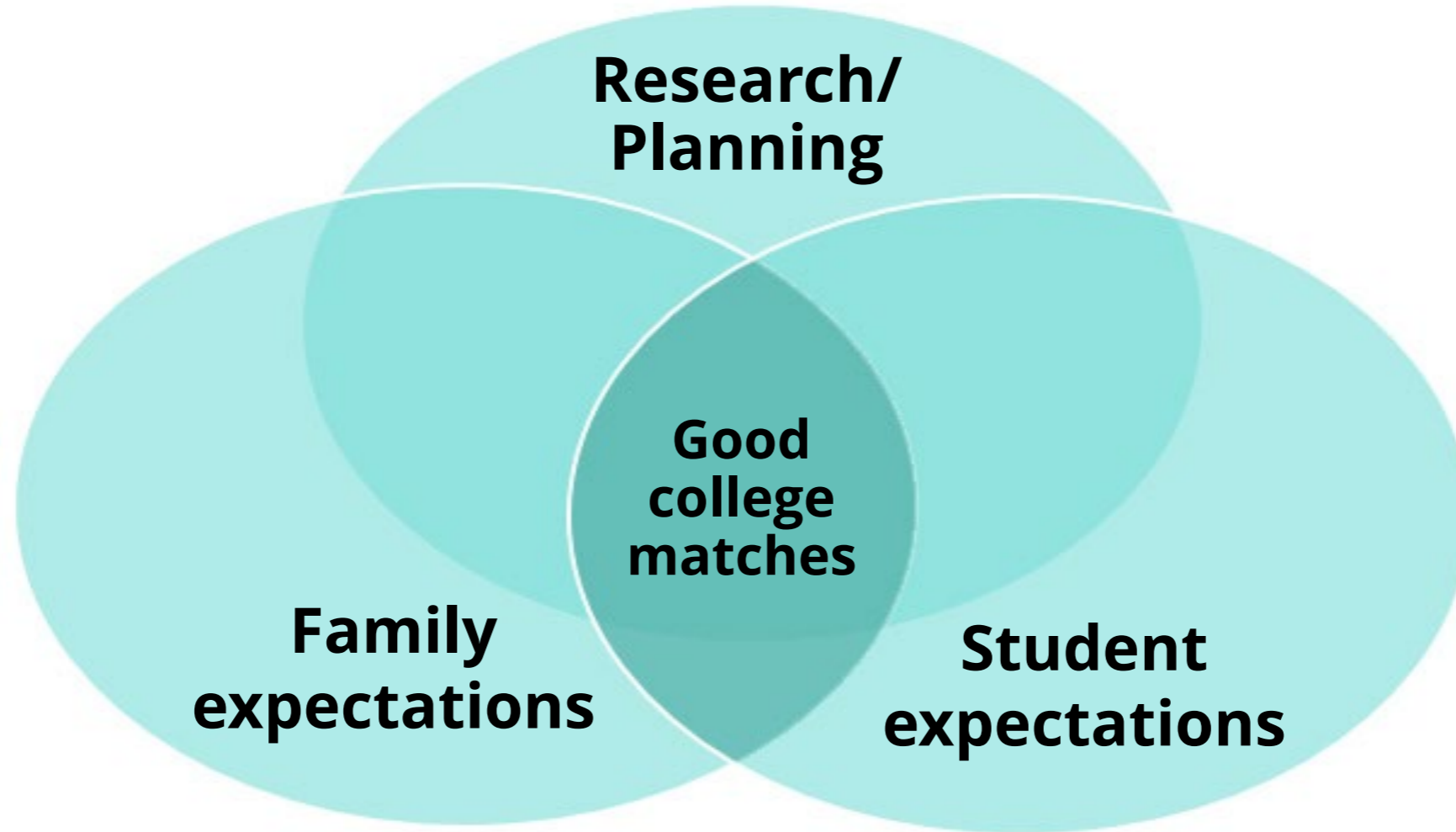


# Financial Aid & Managing College Costs

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation Spring 2025

# Communication = Success

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# Advertised college price

	One year	All years
<b>NE expensive college</b>	\$89,000	\$356,000
<b>University of VT</b>	\$35,800	\$143,200
<b>Vermont State University</b>	\$26,900	\$107,600
<b>Community College of VT</b>	\$14,200	\$28,400 (2 years)
<b>Vermont trade school</b>	\$35,000	\$35,000 (6 months)

# Net price

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*(minus)* —

**Cost of attendance**  
**Gift aid you receive**

(grants & scholarships)

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*(equals)* =

**What you need to pay**

# Average net price

	Cost —1 yr full-time	Net price
<b>NE expensive college</b>	\$89,000	\$26,000
<b>University of VT</b>	\$35,800	\$18,800
<b>Vermont State University</b>	\$26,900	\$15,600
<b>Community College of VT</b>	\$14,200	\$10,100
<b>Vermont trade school</b>	\$35,000	\$20,300

# College Scorecard



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**College Scorecard**

[Home](#)

[Search](#) ▼

[Compare](#) ▼

## Search and compare colleges

[Colleges](#)

[Fields of Study](#)

🔍 Enter college name (optional)

**SEARCH**

Quick search:

[Near Me](#) ↗

[All Colleges](#)

# Your role

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The family has the primary responsibility to pay for higher education.

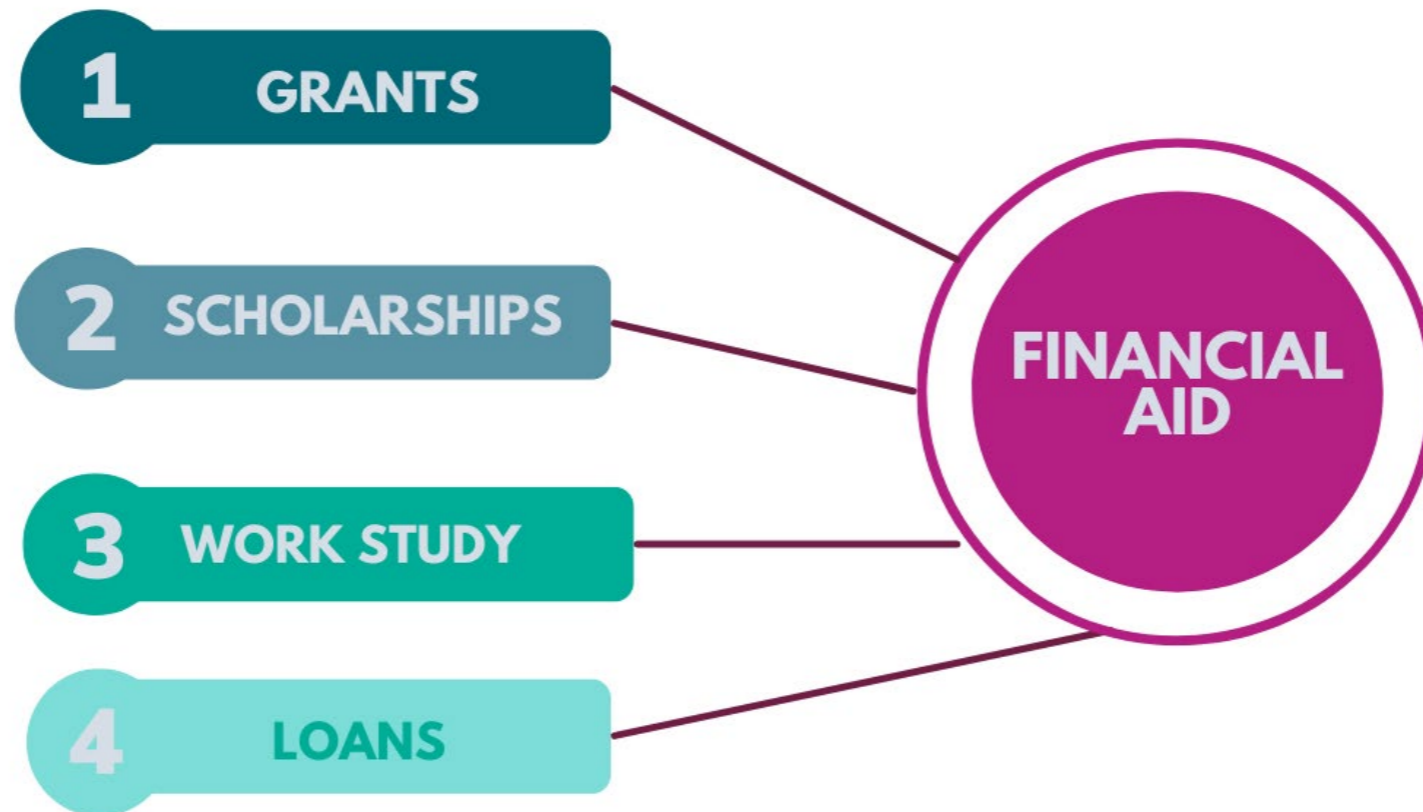
Financial aid is meant to *assist* families with paying for college.

- Parents
- Students



# Types of financial aid

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# Financial applications to submit

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Vermont grant application
- College financial aid forms
  - CSS Profile
- Scholarship applications
  - Career-focused funding application
- Loan applications



# How & when to apply — FSA ID

- Every student applying for federal aid must create an [FSA ID/studentaid.gov account](https://studentaid.gov). At least one parent of any dependent student must also create their own FSA ID.
- Takes time to set up:  
More security = more questions.
- Will also set up Two-Factor Verification to access Federal Aid account information.
- Use non-school email address.
- Must be confirmed in advance of FAFSA filing.



# How & when to apply

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## File your FREE Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- **Required.**
- Simplified form compared to past years' FAFSAs
- Available on **October 1, 2025** for the 2026-2027 school year.
- Use 2026–2027 version (the year student will attend college).
- Check college deadlines.
- Up to 20 colleges can be listed to receive FAFSA information.





# How & when to apply

## File your Vermont grant application

- Open to all Vermont residents on October 1, 2025.
- Use 2026–2027 version (the year student will attend college).
- Required for Vermont grant aid.
- Apply early, check status online, and complete “Do” list.
- Can fill out forms online, upload documents.
- **Students must create a MyVSAC account and set up multi-factor authentication before applying.**



“To  
Take the  
Vermont grant  
with you —  
to in-state &  
out-of-state  
colleges

# How & when to apply

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## CSS Profile

- Only required for some colleges.
- Use 2026–2027 version (the year student will attend college).
- Required for those colleges' institutional aid.
- Earlier deadlines for EA and ED applicants.
- Can fill out form online, upload required documents to IDOC.
- **For help, please refer to [CSS Profile FAQ page](#), or call CSS Customer Service line at 844-202-0524.**



# Determining financial need

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## What is the Student Aid Index (SAI) and how is it determined?

**The SAI from the FAFSA is the starting point from which financial aid will be determined.**

- Income – both student and parent(s)
- Family size
- Federal Poverty Level for a given year: for 2026-2027 FAFSA, 2024 tax figures will be used
- Assets

# Maximizing financial aid



- Do well in school.
- Challenge yourself.
- Increase school and community involvement.
- Communicate special circumstances to financial aid offices and VSAC.
- Research scholarships.
- Apply for scholarships.



# Ways to reduce costs

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- Look farther (in state, other states, Canada).
- Dual enrollment
- Early college
- Advanced Placement
- NEBHE Tuition Break
- Start at a school that costs less, then transfer
  - Consider Vermont Transfer Guarantee
- Consider attending local and commuting.
- Consider service.
- Check out Workforce Development/Career Focused Funding.



# Ways to pay

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## Past income

- Savings
- College savings plan

## Present income

- Payment plans
- Tax credits
- Scholarships

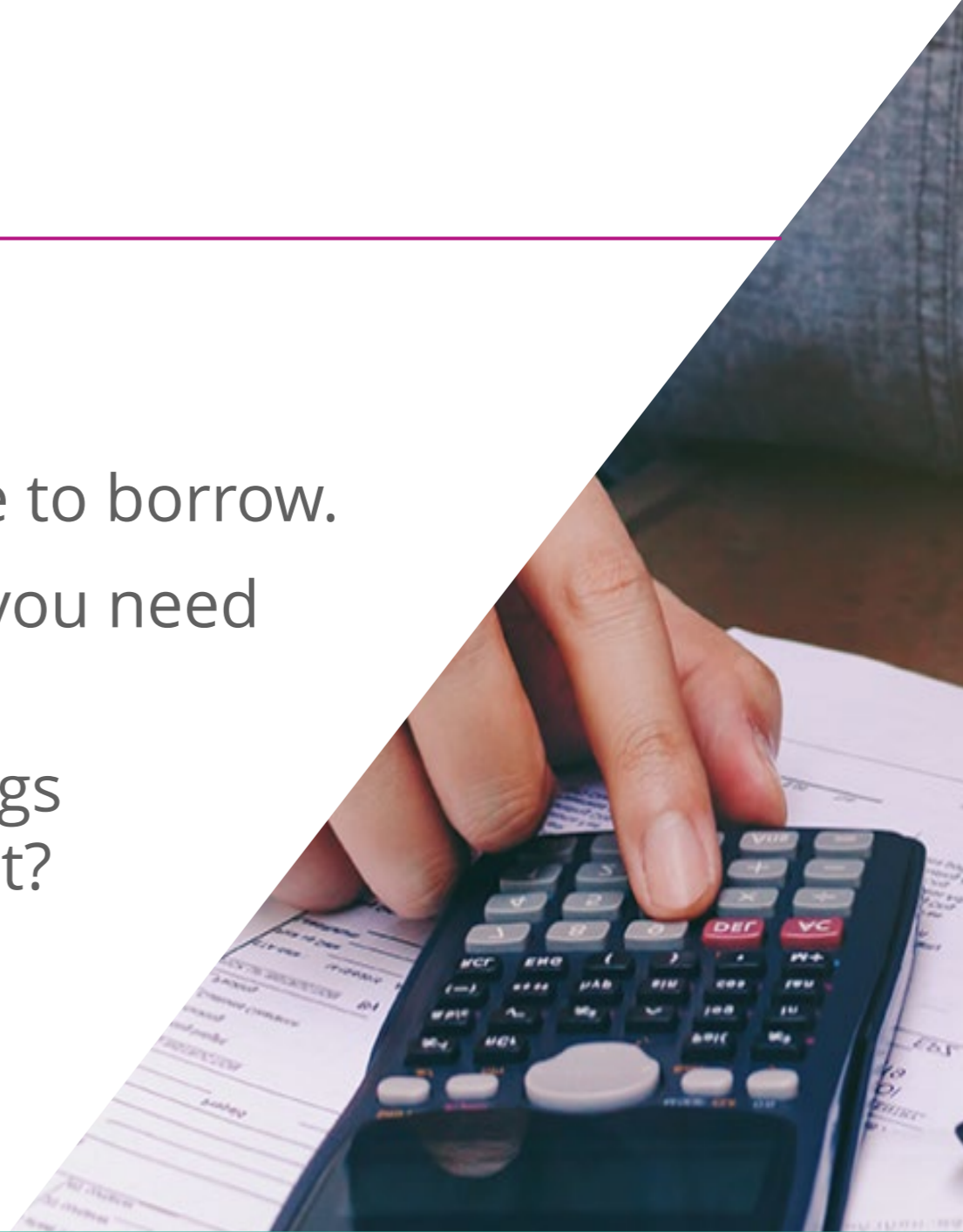
## Future income

- Parent PLUS loan
- Additional student loans
- Private loans
- Other borrowing options
- Workforce Development/Career-focused funding

# Ways to pay

## Savings

- The more you save, the less you have to borrow.
- What can you add to savings before you need to borrow for college?
- How much can students add to savings through gifts or summer employment?



# Ways to pay

## Federal loans for Dependent students

	Annual eligibility	Cumulative borrowed
Freshman year	\$5,500	\$5,500
By sophomore year	\$6,500	\$12,000
By junior year	\$7,500	\$19,500
By senior year	\$7,500	\$27,000



# Student loan options

Federal or non-federal	Available from	Loan type	Interest rate 2024–2025	Accept or compare?
Federal	Your college	Direct loans for students	<b>6.53%*</b>	Accept these first.
Non-federal	VSAC	VT Advantage Student —fixed rate	<b>4.75%–8.57%</b> APR	Compare these loans.
Non-federal	Nonprofit organizations, banks, credit unions, other private lenders	Alternate loans (often called private loans)	Varies by lender (variable and fixed).	Compare these loans.

*\* Each year on July 1, the U.S. Department of Education sets a new rate.*

# Parent loan options

Federal or non-federal	Available from	Loan type	Interest rate 2024-2025	Accept or compare?
Federal	Your college	PLUS loan for parents	<b>9.08%*</b>	Compare these loans.
Non-federal	VSAC	VT Advantage Parent — fixed rate	<b>4.75%–8.93%</b> APR	Compare these loans.
Non-federal	Nonprofit organizations, banks, credit unions, other private lenders	Alternate loans (often called private loans)	Varies by lender (variable and fixed).	Compare these loans.

*\* Each year on July 1, the U.S. Department of Education sets a new rate.*

# Calculators

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## Federal Student Aid Estimator

- SAI Calculator
- Federal Aid estimates


## Mappingyourfuture.org

- Student loan debt/salary wizard

# Next steps for junior year

- Online college searches.
- College Scorecard to gather net price information.
- College Net Price calculators for specific net price information
- Family discussions about choosing and paying.
- Research scholarships.
- Create a free, college and scholarship-appropriate email address.

**VSAC** PLANNING FOR COLLEGE OR TRAINING



## Junior Year Planning Checklist

For Students & Parents

**September**

- Review your courses and grades with a school counselor** to be sure you're on track for graduation and college admissions requirements. Are you taking challenging math and science, plus a foreign language?
  - Talk about work-based learning and job shadow opportunities.
  - Consider taking a dual enrollment course in the spring or enrolling in early college senior year.
- Register for the October PSAT.** Top scorers of this SAT prep test may qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Find free practice quizzes and videos at [kaptest.com/study/psat](https://kaptest.com/study/psat).
- Attend college fairs & career fairs.** The NEACAC (New England Association of College Admission Counseling) college fairs are this month. Go to [neacac.org](https://neacac.org) for the schedule and locations closest to you. Start developing a list of schools that interest you.

**October**

- Take the PSAT this month,** even if you already took it last year (only junior-year scores are used for the National Merit Scholarship competition). Visit [kaptest.com/study/psat](https://kaptest.com/study/psat) for free practice quizzes and videos.
- Visit colleges.** You don't need to go far. Vermont has 15+ schools you can visit just to get a feel for different college campuses. Choose a few and visit during school breaks or on a Saturday, or attend an Open House event.

**November**

- Check in.** How is the year going so far? If you need help with study strategies, test-taking skills, or organization, talk to your teachers now so you won't fall behind.

**For many families, planning for life after high school can seem overwhelming.**




**For more than 50 years, we've been helping students go to college. We're here to help you too.**

**This step-by-step checklist will help you know what to do and when to do it.**

TOLL FREE  
800-642-3177

ONLINE  
[vsac.org](https://vsac.org)

EMAIL  
[info@vsac.org](mailto:info@vsac.org)


Vermont Student Assistance Corporation 10 East Allen Street PO Box 2000 Winooski, VT 05404

# Next steps for senior year

- Research forms and deadlines required by colleges. Meet earliest deadline.
- Create studentaid.gov accounts — [FSA ID](#), one for student and [one \(possibly 2\) for parent\(s\)](#).
- Create [MyVSAC](#) account for student.
- Gather family financial info to file applications.
- File the VT grant application and FAFSA.
- File VSAC's Unified Scholarship Application.
- Apply for other scholarships.

VSAC

PLANNING FOR COLLEGE OR TRAINING



## Senior Year Planning Checklist

For Students & Parents

**August**

- Research colleges & identify schools** or training programs you may want to consider. At [vsac.org/compareprograms](https://vsac.org/compareprograms), download VSAC's comparison chart to start building a wish list of schools.
- Explore college costs** at [collegenavigator.gov](https://collegenavigator.gov) once you've started your college list. Find info on tuition and fees, housing, admission, graduation rates, campus safety, and more.
- Get a head start on your college admissions essay.** At [commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org), find essay prompts for the Common Application; and for essay-writing tips, visit [vsac.org/essay](https://vsac.org/essay).




**September**

- Meet with your school counselor** to talk about your college options.
  - Review college admissions and financial aid applications.
  - Develop a résumé and talk about doing a job shadow.
- Register for standardized tests** (SAT, ACT), if required, at [collegeboard.org](https://collegeboard.org) and [act.org](https://act.org).
- Attend college fairs & career fairs.** The NEACAC (New England Association of College Admission Counseling) college fairs are this month. At [neacac.org](https://neacac.org) you'll find a schedule so you can plan to attend the site closest to you.
- Work on the Common Application** at [commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org). Add schools to your "My Colleges" list and review the supplements to identify additional info you may need to send.
- Ask for recommendation letters.** For suggestions, visit [vsac.org/recommendations](https://vsac.org/recommendations).
- Create a file folder** for each college you're applying to. Look at websites for virtual tours and chats.
- Prepare for financial aid and FAFSA.** Financial aid is money that a student receives to help pay for college or career training, including grants and scholarships (that don't have to be paid back), work-study, and loans. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used by colleges, universities, and VSAC to provide financial aid. Learn about it at [vsac.org/fafsa-first](https://vsac.org/fafsa-first).
  - Gather documents to apply; for a list, visit [fafsa.ed.gov/help/before003.htm](https://fafsa.ed.gov/help/before003.htm).
  - Create FSA IDs at [fsaid.ed.gov](https://fsaid.ed.gov). The student and one parent will each need their own ID to sign the FAFSA electronically.
  - Print out our checklist at [vsac.org/financialchecklist](https://vsac.org/financialchecklist) to keep you on track through the entire financial aid application process.
- Know your deadlines for admissions and financial aid.** At college websites:
  - check whether you need to submit the CSS Profile or other financial aid applications.
  - identify financial aid application deadlines.

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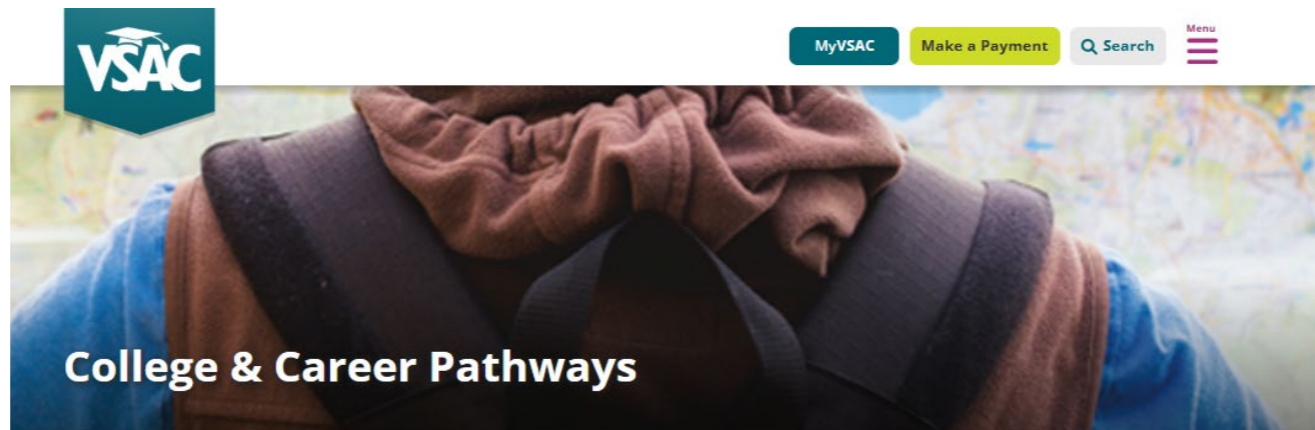
# VSAC resources

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VSAC Paying for College website:

[www.vsac.org/financial-aid-college-costs](http://www.vsac.org/financial-aid-college-costs)

Career and College Pathways resources: [vsac.org/ccp](http://vsac.org/ccp)

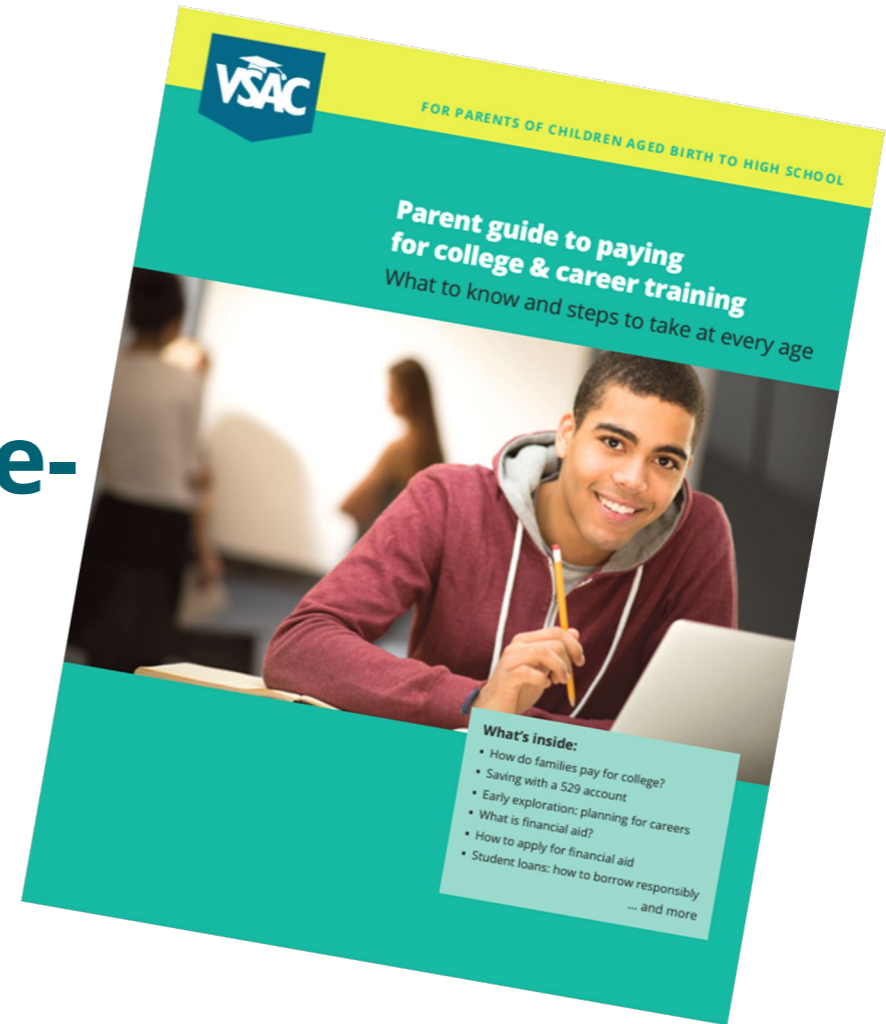


**Free events for families to plan for education and training after high school!**

WHAT ATTENDEES  
HAVE TOLD US

# VSAC's paying for college guide

Available at  
[vsac.org/financial-aid-college-costs](https://vsac.org/financial-aid-college-costs)



# Financial aid forms help – for when you are ready

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## Phone:

- FAFSA and VT grant: 833-802-8722  
*Mon–Fri, 8:00 am–4:30 pm*
- FAFSA: 800-4 FED AID (800-433-3243)  
*Mon 8 am–9 pm, Tues/Wed 8 am–8 pm, Thurs/Fri 8 am–6 pm*

## Online:

- FAFSA — chat/chatbot assistance while filling out application
- VSAC –
  - Resource Center offering Virtual and In-Person FAFSA Help – check [vsac.org/events](https://vsac.org/events) for details later this fall.
  - And/or email [ResourceCenter@vsac.org](mailto:ResourceCenter@vsac.org) to request an appointment.

# VSAC's education loan guide

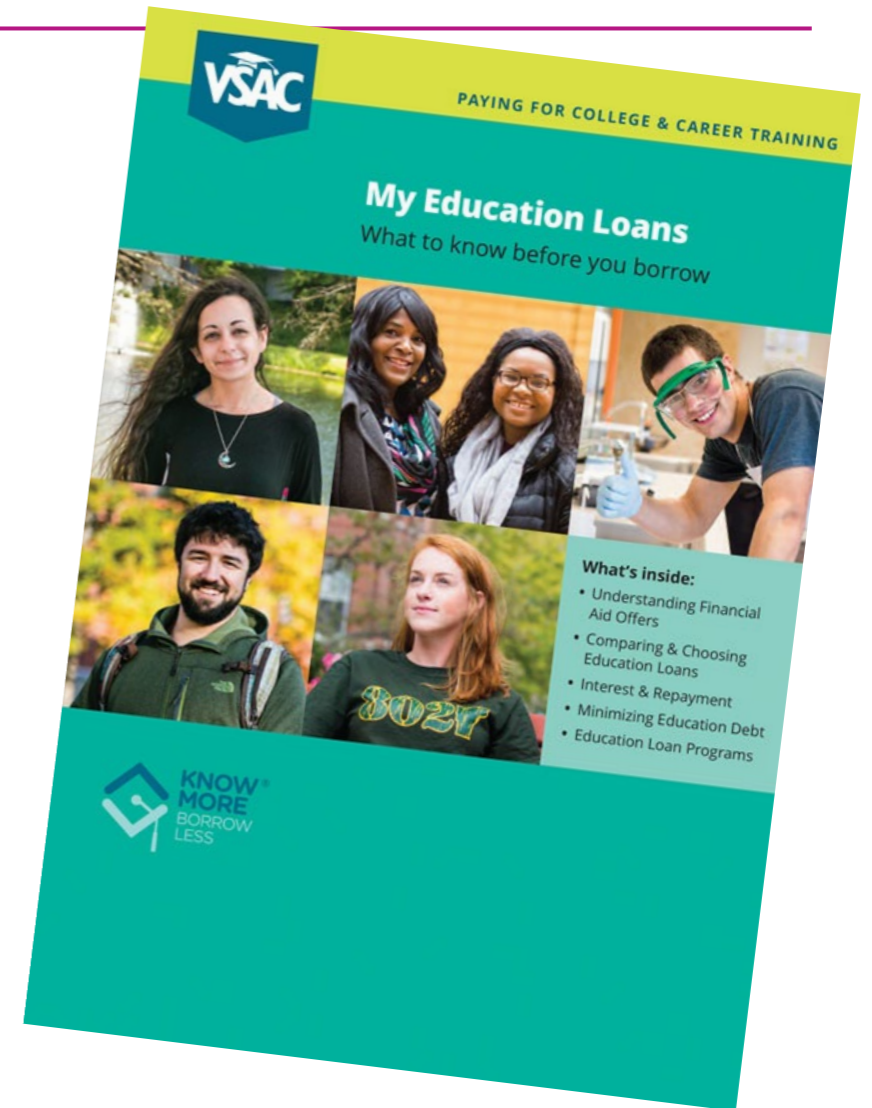
*With expanded section on ways to minimize education debt*

Available at

[vsac.org/pay-resources](https://vsac.org/pay-resources)

or order a printed copy by e-mailing

[publications@vsac.org](mailto:publications@vsac.org)







**Follow VSAC for more great info, events, resources, and information.**



**THANK YOU!**