

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

Numerous inquiries are made by students and their parents about financial aid programs available at our school. In anticipation of some of the questions you may have, the following information is provided for you to review.

## FAFSA / APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

### How Do I Apply For Financial Aid?

To be considered for the Federal Pell Grant and Federal Direct Student Loan programs you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In addition, the federal government mandates that institutions verify at least 30% of its applicants. Students who are selected to undergo this process will be mailed a written notification of the selection. The written notification will include a Verification Form to complete and a list specific documentation that must be returned to the Coordinator prior to financial aid being awarded.

### Where Do I Get The Applications?

The paper FAFSA is no longer available at high school guidance offices or at college/university financial aid offices. You must complete the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). If you do not want to complete the FAFSA online, you can contact Federal Student Aid at 1-800-433-3243 to have one mailed to you.

Returning students who were awarded financial aid in the previous award year will be able to complete a Renewal FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). If you do not want to complete the Renewal FAFSA online, you can contact Federal Student Aid at 1-800-433-3243 to have one mailed to you.

Only returning students who borrowed a Federal Direct Student loan in the prior award year will not be required to complete a new Master Promissory Note (MPN). Their initial MPN is good for a period of ten years once it has been signed.

### Do I Need To Be Admitted Before I Can Apply For Financial Aid?

**NO.** You can fill out the FAFSA and list up to 10 schools to receive the information before admission. However, to actually receive an award (estimated or actual) offer, you must be admitted to the school.

### What Are The Deadlines Or Suggested Completion Dates For Financial Aid?

Students can generally complete their applications at any time prior to the start of the program. It is important that students contact the Office of Financial Aid to receive appropriate deadlines that are based upon their program of enrollment.

### When Will I Receive Information Regarding The Action Taken On My Applications?

The anticipated dates for receiving information are as follows:

**Federal Pell Grants (FAFSA application)** - Four to six weeks after the FAFSA has been mailed to the federal processor, a Student Aid Report (SAR) will be sent to the student (sent via mail through the postal service or sent via email if an email address is provided or the application is done online). If you apply on-line, you will receive a response via email within one to three days. Please refer to the SAR for an initial indication of your eligibility for a Pell Grant.

**Federal Direct Stafford Loans** - The student's maximum eligibility will be indicated on the student's award letter. Award Letters will be mailed to students prior to the start of their program.

### I Received A PHEAA State Grant Notice And It Says I Can't Get a State Grant. Why is that?

- When you complete the FAFSA application you are actually completing two applications in one--both a Federal and State Grant application. You will receive a PHEAA State Grant notice in the mail explaining to you that you are not State Grant Eligible because our institution does not participate in this program. This is an accurate statement. We are not a 2- or 4-year degree granting institution, therefore, our institution is not eligible to participate in the State Grant Program. You do not have to complete and return the State Grant Notice.

## **Why Do I Have To Put My Parents' Tax Information On The FAFSA If They Are Not Paying For School?**

The federal government expects both the parents and the student to contribute to the student's educational cost. Regardless of whether a parent will or will not contribute to your education, their income and assets must be reported and be used to determine your financial aid. Even if you do not live with your parents, if you are considered dependent by the federal government, you are required to provide parental information. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) has questions for you to answer to determine if you are dependent or independent. Refer to the FAFSA instructions for instructions regarding parental information.

## **What Do I Do When I'm Considered Dependent But My Parent(s) Won't Provide Information Or Sign My FAFSA? Can Someone Else Sign It?**

**NO.** No one other than your parent may legally sign the FAFSA (refer to the FAFSA to determine who is considered a parent). Unless your parent(s) provide the required information and sign the FAFSA, you cannot be considered for any need-based financial aid, including Federal Stafford Loans. If you find yourself in this situation, you should contact your Financial Aid Counselor at the Office of Financial Aid to help you explore other possibilities.

## **I Do Not Live With My Parents, But Live With Another Relative. Should I Put Their Information On The FAFSA As My Parent?**

**NO.** No one other than your parent may provide financial information or sign the FAFSA. If you reside with grandparents, aunt/uncle, or someone other than your parents, contact the Office of Financial Aid as soon as possible to speak to a Financial Aid Counselor about your situation.

## **My Parents Make A Lot Of Money, So I Probably Won't Qualify For Financial Aid. Should I Still Apply?**

**YES!** Many families mistakenly think they don't qualify for aid and prevent themselves from receiving financial aid by failing to apply for it. In addition to grants, there are sources of aid, such as low interest loans - Federal Stafford and Federal PLUS loans - that are available regardless of need. It is wise to have something to fall back on, in case your family finds themselves in a financial crunch.

## **I Want To File My FAFSA But I Have Not Yet Completed My Tax Returns Or My Parents Haven't Filed Theirs. What Should I Do?**

You may use estimated tax information on the FAFSA based on your and your parents' W-2 forms. When the federal taxes are completed, you can update your Student Aid Report (SAR) or make corrections online (if you filed using FAFSA on the Web) using the correct information. It is recommended that you have your taxes prepared early so the information you report is accurate and you avoid having to make updates later. If you initially file using estimated amounts, no financial aid can be awarded until taxes are filed and updates have been made.

## **My Parents Are Divorced. The Parent I Reside With Is Remarried. Do I Have To Provide My Step-Parent's Income And Assets On The FAFSA, Even If I Am Not Supported By The Step-Parent?**

**YES,** provided that the parent you are living with is the one completing the FAFSA (your custodial parent). If your parent is married to your step-parent at the time you complete the FAFSA, both your parent and step-parent must report their income and assets, even if they weren't married the previous year (i.e. filed separate tax returns).

## **Why Should I Get A Federal PIN And Apply Online?**

The paper FAFSA is no longer available at high school guidance offices or at financial aid offices so students must complete the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and a PIN number is required in order to sign the on-line application. The online application assists you in filling out the information correctly and helps minimize mistakes. It also allows you to access your application to make updates to your FAFSA online using your PIN. If you do not want to complete the FAFSA online, you can contact Federal Student Aid at 1-800-433-3243 to have one mailed to you. You can also use your PIN number to electronically sign your Master Promissory Note for the Federal Stafford Loan online.

### **When Will My Financial Aid Award Be Ready?**

To receive an award letter, the student must first complete the FAFSA. Once the school has received information from the FAFSA, an estimated award can be made for most students. Students can contact the financial aid consultant or the PN Program Coordinator to discuss their estimated awards. Actual awards are not made until students have been admitted to school and all required paperwork has been submitted.

**Incoming students** - Award letters are sent to admitted students prior to the start of their program. Students who have not received an award letter prior to the start of school have either not completed the required applications or have not submitted all the required paperwork.

<b>PAYMENT / DUE DATES</b>
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### **What Are The Anticipated Payment Dates For School Tuition And Fees?**

**YES.** See page 3 of your Financial Aid Handbook for a list of amounts and due dates. Any tuition or fees not covered by anticipated financial aid will be invoiced by the term. Students will receive an invoice from the MJCTC Business Office. Students may contact the Business Office Accountant, Mrs. Melinda Kenepp at her MCSD office at 717-447-2517 or at MJCTC every Wednesday. Her email address is mkk08@mcsdk12.org.

### **Will The School Extend Credit To Me Until My Aid Is Received?**

For those individuals who have been officially approved for financial aid, the school will extend credit until financial aid is received. Any balance due to the school after all aid has been awarded is the responsibility of the student. Students will be sent an invoice for funds owed every term.

### **How Do I Pay For Books?**

The cost of books is covered in the equipment fees for each term; therefore, no additional money is needed to purchase books.

### **How Do I Check On My Financial Aid?**

You may contact the Coordinator, Mrs Lentz or the financial aid consultant Ms. Heller. Contact information is found on page 24 of your Financial Aid Handbook.

### **How Do I Check On My Account Balance?**

You can check on your tuition account balance by contacting the MJCTC Business Office or emailing Ms. Kenepp. Contact information is located in the contact information section of your Financial Aid Handbook or on our website.

### **I Received My Award Letter And I Still Need More Money. What Can I Do?**

If you are a dependent student, your parents may consider applying for a Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS). They can borrow any amount, up to the cost of your attendance. If they are denied for any reason, the student may borrow more money in Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans. A copy of the denial must be on file and the student or parent must contact the financial aid administrator, the PN Coordinator, to indicate the amount the student wants to borrow additionally in Stafford Loans. See the section on Federal Stafford Loans to determine the maximum amount the student can borrow additionally. Students who are independent are automatically eligible for the additional Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans.

If your parents know they will be approved for a PLUS Loan, but do not want a loan in their name, you can consider a private loan. Check the requirements for each individual loan. Look into sources through the local CareerLink and the WATCH program.

### **Will The School Allow Me Or My Parents To Make Monthly Payments To The School?**

**YES.** Students and/or parents can setup a Monthly Payment Plan directly with the school. Contact the Business Office, Melinda Kenepp, for details on how to initiate a payment plan. Students making payments to the school are required to have all tuition and fees paid before the end of each term. Students who have not

made satisfactory payments and have a balance at the end of the term will not be eligible to take their finals or graduate from their program.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING AID ELIGIBILITY

### **One Of My Parents Lost His/Her Job And My Family Is In A Financial Bind. Can The Office Of Financial Aid Help Me Out?**

If your family experiences a change in income due to an unusual circumstance (loss of job, reduced hours, separation or divorce, death in the immediate family) contact the Office of Financial Aid regarding your situation. It may be possible to reevaluate your financial aid eligibility.

If your family has high unreimbursed medical expenses or pays private school tuition for elementary or secondary school (K-12), your financial aid eligibility may be re-evaluated. Contact the Office of Financial Aid for further information.

## LOANS (PLUS, STAFFORD, ALTERNATIVE)

### **My Parents Know They Will Be Denied A Plus Loan. Is There A Way To Quickly Apply For A Plus Loan?**

If parents know they will be denied, they can complete an Online Pre-Approval through the US Dept of Ed website [www.studentloans.gov](http://www.studentloans.gov). If a parent is denied the PLUS loan, the parent has the right to request that the credit check be reviewed a second time prior to making a determination.

### **What Is The Difference Between A Subsidized Stafford Loan And An Unsubsidized Stafford Loan?**

The school determines the amount of Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans the student is eligible to receive. You must have financial need in order to receive a Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan.

A **SUBSIDIZED** loan means that the government subsidizes the interest while you are in school - you are not required to pay interest, nor does it accrue on your loans until you are out of your grace period and in repayment.

An **UNSUBSIDIZED** loan means that you do not have financial need; therefore the federal government requires that you start paying the interest on your loan as soon as it is disbursed, or it will capitalize and you will have to pay it back when you start paying on your loans. It is recommended that, if you have an unsubsidized Stafford Loan, you pay the interest while you are in school to avoid larger payments when you enter into repayment on your loan. You will receive an interest statement every 3 months whether you elect to pay the interest now or have it capitalized.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### **How Do I Reduce The Amount Of My Federal Stafford Loan Or Cancel The Entire Loan?**

Students may cancel all or a portion of the loan prior to receiving the loan or within 30 days after the date the school has sent notification that the loan funds have been credited to the student's account. To cancel all of or a portion of your loan, contact the Coordinator, Mrs. Lentz.

### **Who May Inquire About My Financial Aid Record?**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) protects the confidentiality of student records. Only those individuals, who provided information on a student's FAFSA, can request information regarding the student's financial aid file. Therefore, if a student would like their financial aid information released to another individual and/or agency, the student must complete the [Authorization Release Form](#).

### **What Records Should I Retain?**

Keep copies of all your applications along with the base year federal income tax form used to complete your FAFSA application in order to document your adjusted gross income or other data which appears on the 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ form. Also keep copies of all award letters as well as any letters you send to or receive from various agencies.

### **If I Withdraw From Class, Will It Affect My Financial Aid?**

If students are considering a withdrawal from school, they are urged to discuss their student account status with someone in the Office of Financial Aid prior to making their final determination. Students who withdraw may end up owing a balance to the school, a balance to the U.S. Department of Education, a balance on a Stafford loan or a balance to all parties listed.

### **I Was Selected For Verification. What Does That Mean?**

The U.S. Department of Education requires that 30% of all students who apply for financial aid must be verified. Verification is the process to make sure that the information reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is accurate. Some applications are selected because of inconsistent information, while others are randomly selected. Any student who is selected will be notified by the Coordinator and requested to submit required information. (See page 16-17 of your Financial Aid Handbook)

### **What Is Identity Theft And Should I Be Concerned About It?**

Identity theft is a serious crime and can affect anyone. It occurs when someone uses your personal information without your permission to commit fraud or other crimes. As with any crime, you cannot completely control whether you will become a victim. But according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency, you can minimize your risk by managing your personal information cautiously. You can help to protect your own identity by monitoring your own credit history report. A free copy of your credit report can be obtained from all three credit agencies one time per year by accessing the [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) website.