Financing Your Future!

ALAMO
COLLEGES
DISTRICT

★ Welcome to Financing Your Future! ★

We are happy you decided to join us at the Alamo Colleges District, the second largest community college district in the state of Texas and one of the BEST in the nation! This module goes into detail about how to pay for your college.

We will cover the following main sections:

$ What are ways to pay for college?

$ How do I apply for financial aid?

$ How do I check my financial aid status?

$ How do I keep my financial aid?

Alamo Colleges District Financial Aid

College for All Texans

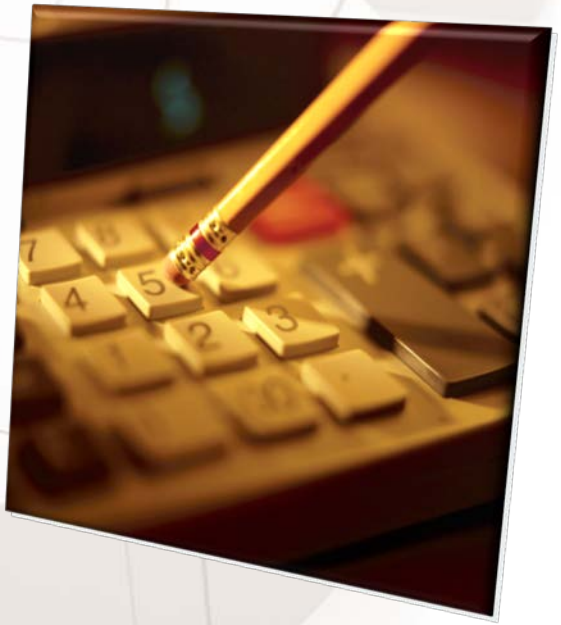
Checking Financial Aid in ACES

What Are the Ways to Pay for College?

There are numerous ways to pay for college. Some are eligibility based, while others, such as the installment plan, are available to the majority of students.

- Ways to pay for college:

  $ Out of Pocket
  $ Waivers & Exemptions
  $ Financial Aid
    - Grants
    - Loans
    - Work Study
  $ Scholarships



Paying Out of Pocket

- You always have the option of paying out of pocket for college using cash, check, credit card, or by setting up the installment plan.

- Cash payment is available through each of the Alamo Colleges District Business (Bursar)offices. Check, credit card and installment plan payments are available online through ACES.

- How do I pay with a credit card or check? For more information, click here.

- If you are paying with a check, here are some guidelines to keep in mind, click here.

Waivers and Exemptions

- Financial assistance is not limited to financial need. Some financial aid programs are based on your field of study or major, military service, disability, or place of employment. The College for All Texans website is a great resource for learning about the many types of financial aid available.

- If you will be using a waiver or exemption to pay for college, please know the following:

  - $ You are responsible for applying for their waiver and/or exemption and ensuring that it has been applied towards your tuition and fees for the current semester.

  - $ You are responsible for payment of tuition and fees not covered by the waiver or exemption, and are subject to late payment penalties and late registration charges if tuition and fees are not paid.

Here are some community resources for eligible students:

- **Job Training Programs**
  Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
  Click Here

- **Students with Disabilities**
  Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
  Click Here
  - **For Students Who are Blind**
    Click Here
  - **For Students Who are Deaf**
    Click Here

- **Students in Foster Care**
  Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
  Click Here

- **Military Service**
  Alamo Colleges District Military Information
  Click Here

- **Texas Veterans Commission**
  Click Here

- ***Note:*** ***Third-party payments are accepted at the Bursar's office***

Veteran Benefits

Are you a veteran or a dependent of one? Then you may be eligible for assistance with college expenses through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Veterans Affairs Educational Benefits

- Click here to visit the VA website for information regarding eligibility and educational benefits.

- For more information, or clarification on the VA Benefits process, click here to access *College for All Texans Military and Their Families* site, click here to visit the Alamo Colleges District VA Hazlewood site, or seek information at your unique Alamo College VA office website below:

- Northeast Lakeview College
- Northwest Vista College
- Palo Alto College
- St. Philip's College
- San Antonio College

What is Federal Student Aid?

- Financial aid is federal student assistance from the U.S. Department of Education and is the largest source of aid in America, providing over $150 billion in grants, work-study, and federal loans for students attending colleges or universities.

- Financial aid comes in three basic types:

  - $ Grants
  - $ Loans
  - $ Work-study

- Any or all of these may be combined in a financial aid package to help pay for educational expenses.

How to Apply

In order to see if you qualify for financial aid, you must fill out an online application called FAFSA...the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*.

"Hooray FAFSA"

Click on video to watch!

$$ FAFSA – (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) $$

- **FAFSA is the first step to apply for federal aid such as grants, loans, and work-study. The information you provide will help determine if you are eligible for an award. The college you list on your FAFSA will in turn use the information to determine your award or eligibility for other state aid programs.**

- **It is highly recommended you complete a FAFSA as early as possible. Many student aid opportunities require a FAFSA to be on file for the student. The FAFSA is available and must be completed every year beginning October 1.**

Grants

What are grants?

- A grant is a form of financial aid **based on the need** of the student, which **does not have to be repaid*.** Federal Pell Grants are the most common, but there are state and other federal grants students are automatically considered for based on your FAFSA information.

- For Federal Pell Grants, a student's need is calculated by the U.S. Department of Education and is shown to the student as their *EFC* (expected family contribution) number.

- Pell Grant funds are awarded once per semester (fall, spring, and summer). Summer awards require a separate summer aid application through the financial aid offices.

- Note: The Title IV Consolidation Appropriation Act of 2012 limits the amount of Federal Pell Grant **eligibility to six years** for all recipients. For more information, click here.

For more information on Federal Pell Grants, click here.

*Students who withdraw from courses may be required to repay.

Loans

Loans are different from Grants in that the student is required to pay back any money borrowed. ***A Federal Direct Loan*** **is available to students who are eligible and demonstrate unmet financial need.**

To be eligible for a Direct Student Loan you must:

- **Complete a FAFSA application**
- **Be enrolled in at least 6 college credit hours**
- **Be pursuing an Associate's Degree, Certificate, or Transfer Program**
- **Be making satisfactory academic progress (SAP)**
  - **A 2.0 Grade Point Average or above**
  - **A 67% completion rate between hours attempted & hours you have actually completed**
  - **No more than 99 attempted hours of college level courses**

Loans

- Normal processing time for Direct Loan applications is about 6 weeks. Please plan for out of pocket payment if processing will not be completed by payment deadlines.

- Borrowing funds is serious business and should be considered carefully. Students who do not pay their loans back will fall into *default*. Students falling into default become ineligible to receive future federal and some state aid until the default status is cleared.

- To find a complete list of steps needed to apply for a Student Direct Loan visit the Financial Aid office at your Alamo College, or click here to visit the Student Financial Aid webpage.

Federal Work-Study

The Federal Work-Study Program is a financial need-based program that provides funds earned through part-time employment.

How do I know if I qualify for the Federal Work Study program?

- **To qualify students must have completed a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).**
- **You will see Federal Work Study as part of your award in ACES. If you do not, you may still be eligible. Please contact your college's Financial Aid Office.**

What are the benefits of working under the Federal Work Study Program?

- **Students who work under the Federal Work Study program are better able to find a job on campus and design a schedule that compliments their class schedule and study needs.**

- **For more information, please click here.**

Scholarships

Another type of financial funding available for Alamo Colleges District students is scholarships!

Alamo Colleges Foundation

- The Alamo Colleges Foundation provides scholarships to help Alamo College students along their educational journey. To learn more about the Alamo Colleges Foundation Scholarship, click here

- The Alamo Colleges Foundation application requires students to write three (3) essays. Each of these essays should be no longer than two-hundred and fifty (250) words and are required to complete the application. *It is recommended that you visit the scholarship website to view the essay questions and writing tips.*

- *For more information on:*
  Eligibility & Applying for Alamo College Scholarships, click here
  List of Scholarships, click here
  Frequently Asked Questions, click here

- Every Chance, Every Texan Scholarships click here

External Scholarships - Each of the colleges of the Alamo Colleges District also has information about external scholarships:

Northeast Lakeview College	Northwest Vista College
Palo Alto College	St. Philip's College
San Antonio College	

Is My Scholarship Too Good To Be True?

- As long as you work directly with your college financial aid office, the federal or state government and reputable organizations, you need not worry if your offer of funds is legitimate.

- Unfortunately, scholarship and other financial aid scams do exist. The Federal Trade Commission provides Consumer Information on Scholarship and Financial Aid Scams

- Check out the Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid to help you be aware of and identify these scams.

  - Common Scholarship Scams
  - Protecting Yourself from Scholarship Scams
  - Evaluating Scholarship Matching Services
  - Evaluating Financial Aid Consultants
  - How to Report Scams
  - Consumer Education Materials
  - How to Investigate Suspicious Offers
  - The College Scholarship Fraud Prevention Act of 2000

SCAM ALERTS

what to know and do about scams in the news

Important Deadlines

- Each year, Alamo Colleges District proudly provides more than $100 million in financial aid to make a college education accessible to everyone.
- In fact, we award more financial aid than any other community colleges in the state of Texas!

We encourage you to apply for financial aid AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE!

Priority Guarantee Dates and Deadlines

- Click here to view additional financial aid deadline information.
- *Cafe College* also offers assistance in applying for financial aid, in addition to other helpful resources.

How Do I Check My Financial Aid Status?

Avoid the line…go online!

- **By using the START HERE tab in ACES, Alamo Colleges District students can monitor the status of their financial aid application and processing and award details.**

- **In addition, the ACES MyPage tab includes Financial Aid Requirements and Financial Aid Award boxes that can help admitted students check:**
  - $ **Satisfactory Academic Progress**
  - $ **Award Summary**
  - $ **Account Summary**
  - $ **Unsatisfied Requirements**
  - $ **Missing Documents**

How Do I Keep My Financial Aid?

- If you are awarded financial aid, it is **extremely important** for you to understand your responsibilities in keeping your financial award.
- Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is a federal requirement students must meet to receive both federal and state financial aid.
- A student who is meeting SAP will have:
  - A 2.0 Grade Point Average or above
  - A 67% completion rate between hours attempted & hours you have actually completed
  - No more than 99 attempted hours of college level courses
- **Please keep in mind, your SAP will determine whether or not you are eligible to receive financial aid.**
- For more details, click here

Questions?

The Alamo Colleges District Student Financial Aid website can help you!

Finding the right financial aid for your educational expenses can involve many pieces! The Alamo College's District Student Financial Aid web site can link you to the federal application, directions for completing your FAFSA, frequently asked questions and other aid resources.

Avoid the line…go online!