



The Early FAFSA @NEIU

What Students and Families Need to Know

Applying for financial aid is one of the most misunderstood—yet important—parts of the college admission process. With changes coming to the **2018-2019 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**, it's doubly important to understand the steps you must take to secure funds for college. Starting this fall:

- Students will be able to apply using the **2018-2019 FAFSA** beginning Oct. 1—a full three months earlier than previously allowed and
- Applicants will use prior-prior year (PPY) tax information when reporting personal and family income. This would be **2016 income** information
- The IRS Data Retrieval – pulled in March, 2017 – will be available only for 2016 income information. To protect students and families' data from the IRS will be masked in the FAFSA as well as in electronic acknowledgements. Students and families will not be able to change any data from the IRS.

Completing the FAFSA along with applications for institutional and private scholarships is essential for securing the least amount of loan debt for college. In addition to federal grants and loans, the FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for the Illinois Monetary Award Program or MAP grant and other need-based assistance.

NEXT STEPS

1. Print the Confirmation Page once the FAFSA is submitted. Review the Student Aid Report or SAR once the FAFSA is processed and sent via email.
2. Using your NEIUport login, complete an online scholarship application using AcademicWorks at <https://neiu.academicworks.com/>.
3. Check profile settings for at least three FREE online scholarship searches. Recommended are: FASTWeb, MyScholly and Scholarship Owl.
4. Apply for at least six private scholarships from places where you spend monies (e.g. entertainment venues, social media, restaurants, cellphone providers, retailers).
5. Check your NEIUport account for updates in the Financial Aid Requirements and Financial Aid Awards channels. Sign up for direct deposit using the Registration Tools channel.
6. Price books for the upcoming semester at Follett bookstore – remember Follett will match Barnes & Noble and Amazon with 'in store credit' (gift card)