# Funding Your Career and College Dreams: Financial Aid & More

Presented for Youth Career & College Excellence Summit

August 8, 2026

# Polling Question

Which best describes you?

A) High school student
B) Parent/Guardian
C) College student
D) Educator/Mentor
E) Other

 

# Introduction

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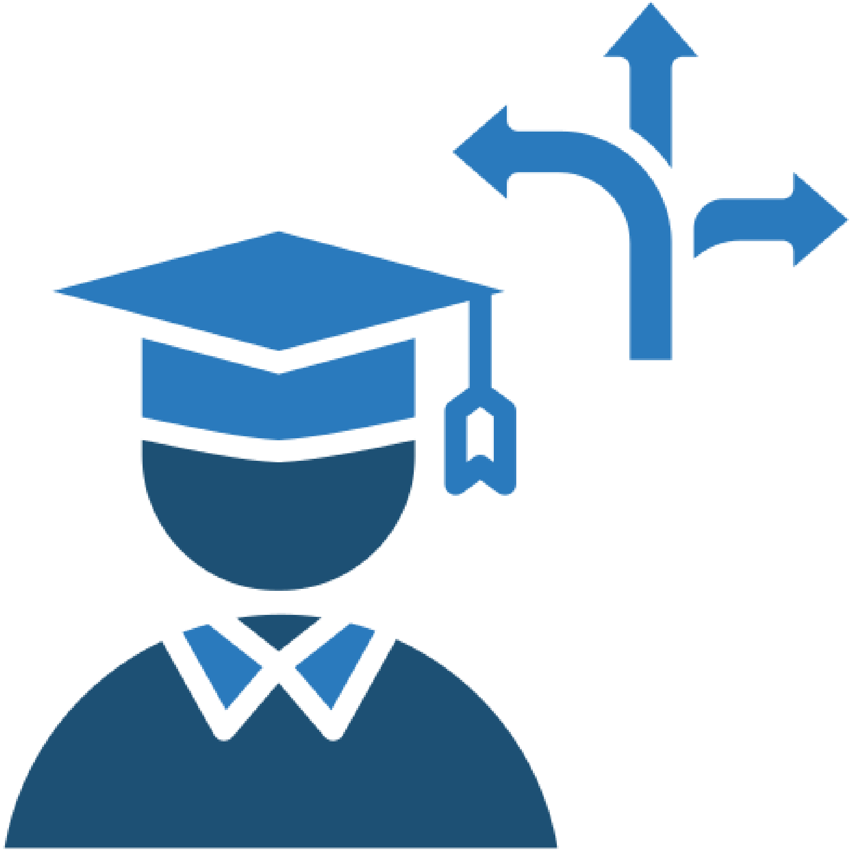
# Back to the Future: What financial decisions will "Future You" thank you for?



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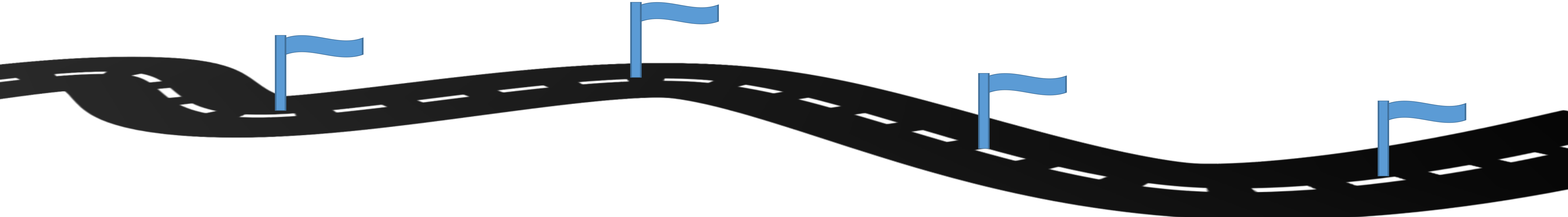
# College Doesn’t Look the Same For Everyone

| Path | Description |
|---|---|
| 🎓 Four-Year College | Bachelor's degree (typically 4 years) |
| 🏫 Community College | Associate degree or transfer to a university |
| 🔧 Trade/Technical School | Hands-on training for skilled careers like welding, HVAC, cosmetology, or automotive technology |
| 💻 Certificate Program | Short-term training in fields like healthcare, IT, or cybersecurity |
| ⚙️ Apprenticeship | Earn a paycheck while learning a skilled trade |
| Military | Education benefits plus career training |
| 💼 Employer-Sponsored Education | Some employers help pay for college or certifications |



# Polling Question

What path are you most interested in after high school?

A) Four-year college
B) Community College
C) Trade/Technical school
D) Apprenticeship
E) I’m still deciding

# Polling Question

What is your biggest question about paying for your education or training?

A) Understanding financial aid

B) Completing the FAFSA

C) Avoiding debt

D) Finding scholarships

E) Comparing financial aid offers and college costs

# How Do People Pay for College / What is Financial Aid?

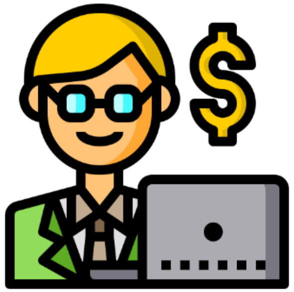
- Any money a student receives to help pay postsecondary or college expenses, from a source other than their family.

# Types of Financial Aid

**Gift Aid**

Scholarship & Grants

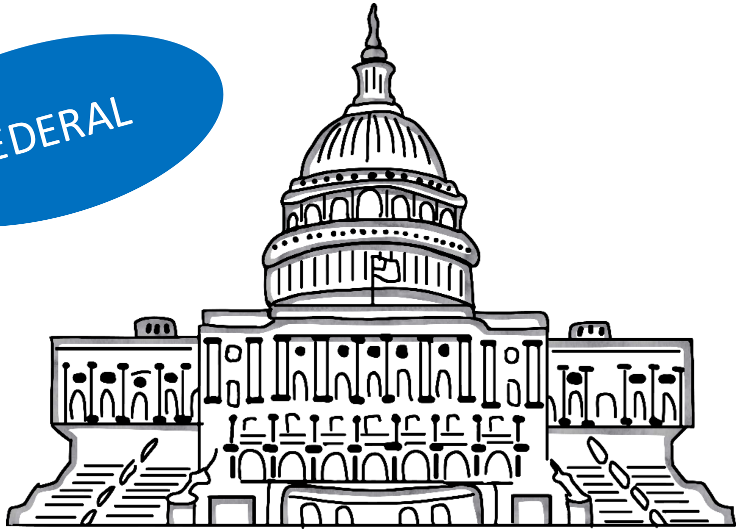
**Self-Help**

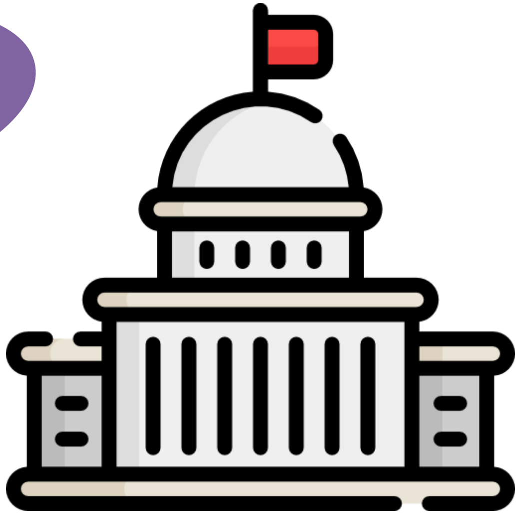
Loans & Employment

# Where Does the Money Come From / Sources of Financial Aid

FEDERAL



STATE



INSTITUTIONS


PRIVATE ENTITIES

# Polling Question

Where do you think most students receive financial aid?

A) Federal Government
B) Colleges & Institutions
C) State Government
D) Private Entities

# What Does College Actually Cost / Cost of Attendance (COA)?

- Tuition and fees
- Housing and food (living expenses)
- Books, course materials, supplies, and equipment
- Transportation
- Miscellaneous personal expenses

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# What Is Student Aid Index (SAI)?

**Number resulting from the evaluation of a student's (and family's) approximate financial resources for a student's postsecondary education**

**Student contribution**

**Parent contribution**

(for dependent students)

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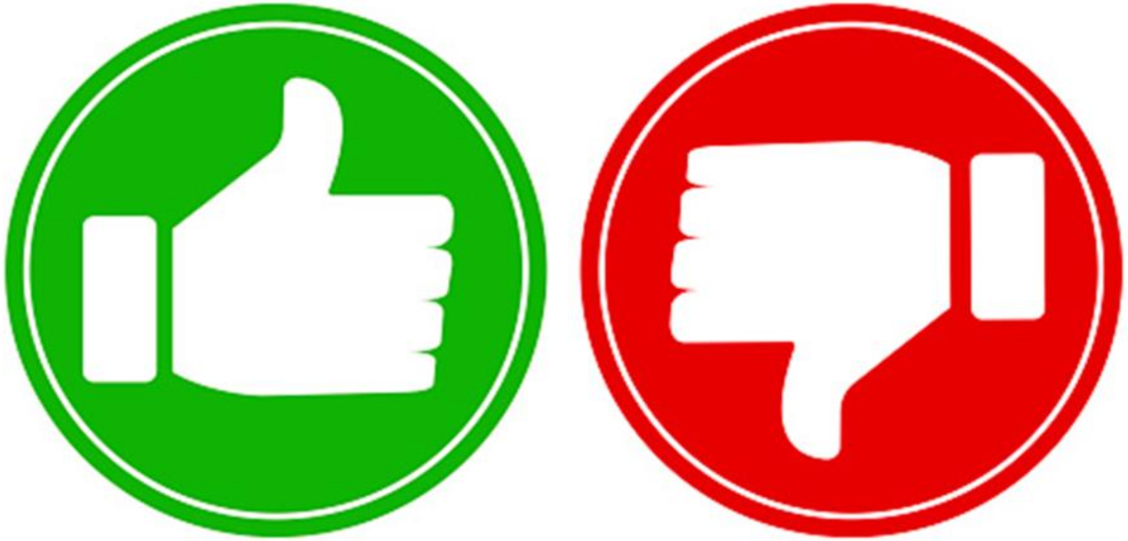
# Reality Check

My SAI tells me what I have to pay?



# What Is Financial Need?

Cost of attendance (COA)

– Student aid index (SAI)

= Financial need



# How Do You Apply for Financial Aid

## 2026–27 FAFSA® Form Now Available!

Use the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form to apply for financial aid for college, career school, or graduate school.

**Start a 2026–27 FAFSA® Form**

Start New Form

Edit a 2026–27 FAFSA® Form

Edit Existing Forms

Accept an Invitation for a 2026–27 FAFSA® Form

Accept an Invitation

Need the 2025–26 FAFSA® Form?

Start New Form | Edit Existing Forms or Accept an Invitation

# Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- **Submit as early as possible**
- **For the 2027-28 academic year, the FAFSA will be available by October 1, 2026**
- Colleges may set FAFSA priority dates

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# Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)

- Collects demographic and financial information
  - Information used to calculate the student aid index (SAI)
- Complete it every year
- Student and parents need FSA ID
- List the colleges you are considering
- Check your email for next steps

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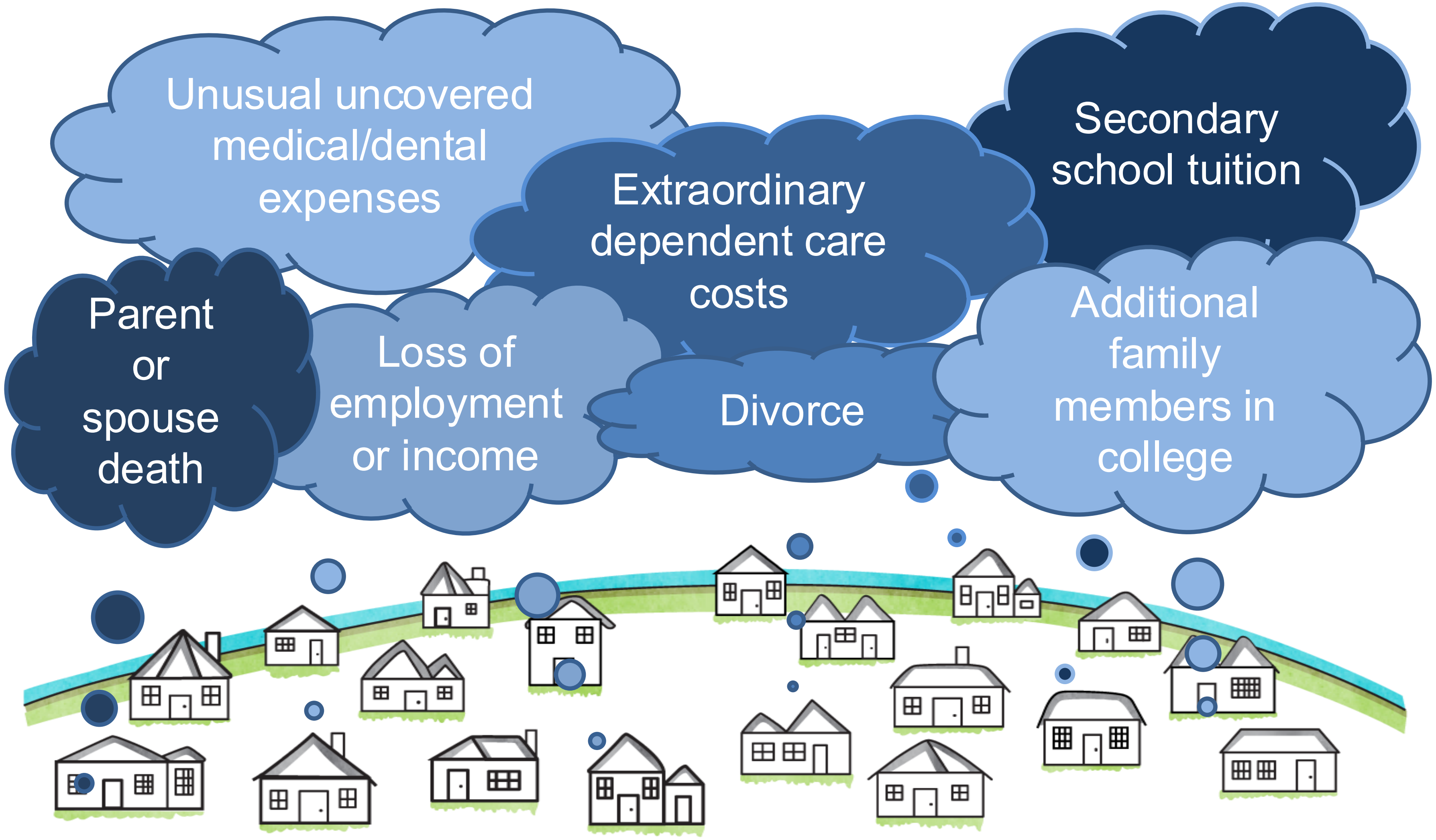
# When Life Happens/ Special Circumstances

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# Federal Student Aid Estimator

- Early estimation regarding SAI and possible Title IV aid available
- Requires demographic, income, and asset information

https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator

# Which superpower would you want?

1. Flight

2. Invisibility

3. Strength


4. Telekinesis

5. Speed

# Making Smart Financial Decisions

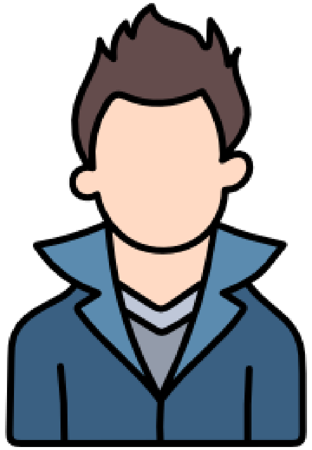
# Financial Aid Offers

U.S. Department of Education, Electronic Announcement, 10/28/21 – *Issuing Financial Aid Offers – What Institutions Should Include and Avoid*

- Avoid calling your financial aid offer an “award” or “letter”
- **Always include the cost of attendance**
- Break down the cost of attendance in ways the student understands the costs
- **List grants and scholarship aid, loans, and Federal Work-Study separately**
- **Explain and calculate the estimated net cost for students**
- Separate out other options for repaying the net cost
- **Describe critical next steps**

# Jacob – first generation college student



COA — SAI — OFA = Remaining Need

**OCU**

COA = 32,800

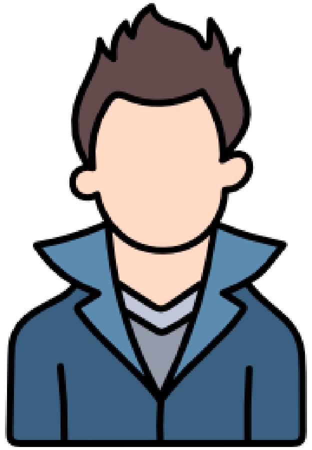
SAI = -1,500

OFA = ?



# Jacob – first generation college student



## BRHC

COA = 63,400

SAI = -1,500

OFA = ?

COA — SAI — OFA = Remaining Need

## SCCC

COA = 10,000

SAI = -1,500

OFA = ?

COA — SAI — OFA = Remaining Need

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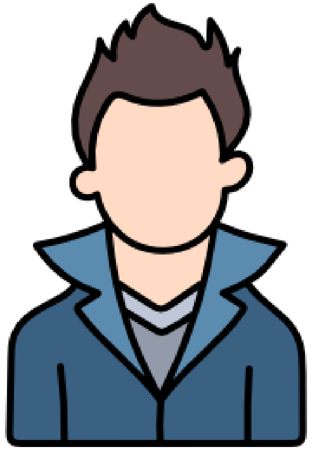
# Jacob- Old Commonwealth University, Aid Offer



COA = 32,800

SAI = -1,500

OFA = $23,395

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| State Grant | $3,500 |
| Federal Pell Grant | $7,395 |
| FSEOG | $2,000 |
| Federal Work-Study | $5,000 |
| Direct Subsidized Loan | $3,500 |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | $2,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$23,395** |

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# Jacob – Blue Ridge Heritage College Aid Offer

COA = $63,400 SAI = -1,500 OFA = $43,895

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| Institutional Endowed Scholarships | $25,000 |
| Federal Pell Grant | $ 7,395 |
| FSEOG | $ 4,000 |
| Federal Work-Study | $ 2,000 |
| Direct Subsidized Loan | $ 3,500 |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | $ 2,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$43,895** |

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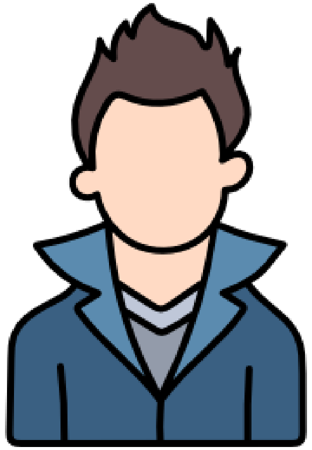
# Jacob- Seven Cities Community College Aid Offer



COA = $10,000 SAI = -1,500 OFA = $10,000

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| State Grant | $ 1,000 |
| Federal Pell Grant | $7,395 |
| FSEOG | $1,000 |
| Institutional Grant | $ 605 |
| **TOTAL** | **$10,000** |

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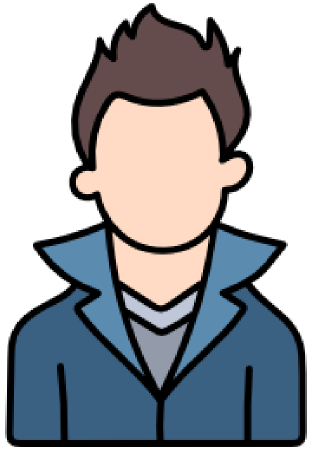
# Jacob – Remaining Need?



| | COA | — SAI | — OFA | = Remaining Need |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **OCU** | 32,800 | -1,500 (0) | 23,395 | **$9,405** |
| **BRHC** | 63,400 | -1,500 (0) | 43,895 | **$19,505** |
| **SCCC** | 10,000 | -1,500 (0) | 10,000 | **$0** |

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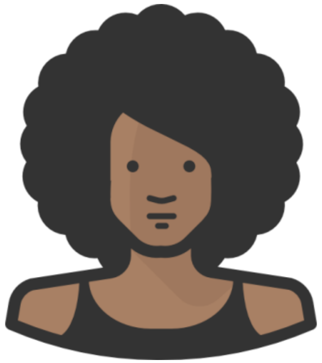
# Janine



COA — SAI — OFA = Remaining Need

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OCU** | COA = 32,800 | SAI = 18,500 | OFA = ? |
| **BRHC** | COA = 63,400 | SAI = 18,500 | OFA = ? |
| **SCCC** | COA = 10,000 | SAI = 18,500 | OFA = ? |

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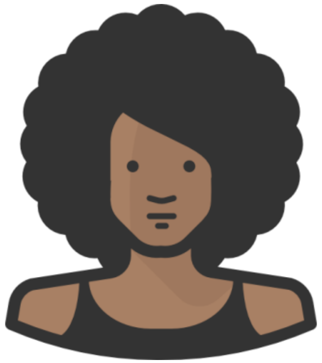
# Janine- Old Commonwealth University, Aid Offer



COA = 32,800

SAI = 18,500

OFA = $13,500

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| State Merit Grant | $3,000 |
| OCU Academic Excellence Scholarship | $2,500 |
| Total Gift Aid: $5,500 | |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | $5,500 |
| Federal Work-study | $2,500 |
| **TOTAL** | **$13,500** |

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# Janine – Blue Ridge Heritage College Aid Offer

COA = $63,400　SAI = 18,500　OFA = $38,000

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| BRHC Presidential Scholarship | $22,000 |
| BRHC Academic Achievement Grant | $ 8,000 |
| Total Gift Aid: $30,000 | |
| Federal Work-Study | $ 2,500 |
| Direct Subsidized Loan | $ 3,500 |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | $ 2,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$38,000** |

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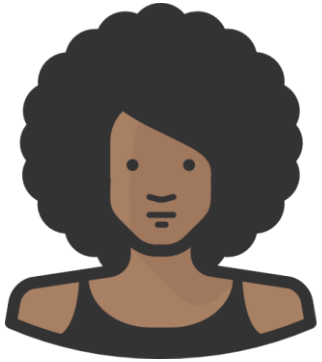
# Janine- Seven Cities Community College Aid Offer



COA = $10,000

SAI = 18,500

OFA = 5,500

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | $5,500 |
| **TOTAL** | **$5,500** |

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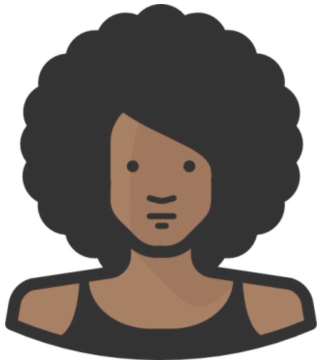
# Janine



COA — SAI — OFA = Remaining Need

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **OCU** | $32,800 | 18,500 | $13,500 | **$19,300** |
| **BRHC** | $63,400 | 18,500 | $38,000 | **$25,400** |
| **SCCC** | $10,000 | 18,500 | $5,500 | **$4,500** |

# Gregory

COA — SAI — OFA = Remaining Need

| |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|
| **OCU** | COA = 32,800 | SAI = 6,200 | OFA = ? |
| **BRHC** | COA = 63,400 | SAI = 6,200 | OFA = ? |
| **SCCC** | COA = 10,000 | SAI = 6,200 | OFA = ? |

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# Gregory- Old Commonwealth University, Aid Offer

COA = 32,800

SAI = 6,200

OFA = $10,695

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| Federal Pell Grant | $1,195 |
| OCU Access Grant | $1,150 |
| State Grant | $2,500 |
| **Total Gift Aid: $5,195** | |
| Direct Subsidized Loan | $3,500 |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | $2,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$10,695** |

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# Gregory – Blue Ridge Heritage College Aid Offer

COA = $63,400 SAI = 6,200 OFA = $37,195

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| BRHC Access Grant | $18,000 |
| BRHC Academic Scholarship | $ 10,000 |
| Federal Pell Grant | $ 1,195 |
| Federal Work-Study | $ 2,500 |
| Direct Subsidized Loan | $ 3,500 |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | $ 2,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$37,195** |

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# Gregory- Seven Cities Community College Aid Offer

COA = $10,000 SAI = 6,200 OFA = $3,195

| Financial Aid Type | Amount |
|---|---|
| Federal Pell Grant | $1,195 |
| SCCC Institutional Grant | $2,000 |
| | |
| **TOTAL** | **$3,195** |



 

# Gregory

COA — SAI — OFA = Remaining Need

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **OCU** | $32,800 | 6,200 | $10,695 | **$15,905** |
| **BRHC** | $63,400 | 6,200 | $37,195 | **$20,005** |
| **SCCC** | $10,000 | 6,200 | $3,195 | **$605** |

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# COMPARE the 2 students

| Financial Aid Type | Jacob | Gregory |
|---|---|---|
| COA | $32,800 | $63,400 |
| SAI | -1,500 | 6,200 |
| FINANCIAL NEED | **$32,800** | **$57,200** |
| Institutional Grants | | |
| Federal Pell Grant | | |
| FSEOG | | |
| Federal Work-Study | | |
| Direct Subsidized Loan | | |
| Direct Unsubsidized Loan | | |
| **TOTAL** | **$** | **$** |

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# COMPARE the offers- Jacob

| Financial Aid Type | OCU | BRHC | SCCC |
|---|---|---|---|
| COA | $32,800 | $63,400 | 10,000 |
| SAI | -1,500 | -1,500 | -1,500 |
| FINANCIAL NEED | **$32,800** | **$63,400** | **$10,000** |
| Grants/Scholarships | $12,895 | $36,395 | $10,000 |
| Employment | $5,000 | $2,000 | 0 |
| Loans | $5,500 | $5,500 | 0 |
| **TOTAL OFA** | **$23,395** | **$37,195** | **$10,000** |
| Remaining Eligibility (COA – OFA) | $9,405 | $26,205 | 0 |
| **NET COST** (COA – Grants/Scholarships) | **$19,905** | **$27,005** | **$0** |

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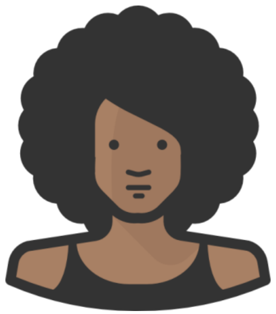
# COMPARE the offers- Janine



| Financial Aid Type | OCU | BRHC | SCCC |
|---|---|---|---|
| COA | $32,800 | $63,400 | 10,000 |
| SAI | 18,500 | 18,500 | 18,500 |
| FINANCIAL NEED | **$14,300** | **$44,900** | **0** |
| Grants/Scholarships | $5,500 | $30,000 | 0 |
| Employment | $2,500 | $2,500 | 0 |
| Loans | $5,500 | $5,500 | $5,500 |
| **TOTAL OFA** | **$13,500** | **$38,000** | **$5,500** |
| Remaining Eligibility (COA – OFA) | $19,300 | $25,400 | $4,500 |
| **NET COST** (COA – Grants/Scholarships) | **$27,300** | **$33,400** | **$10,000** |

# COMPARE the offers- Gregory

| Financial Aid Type | OCU | BRHC | SCCC |
|---|---|---|---|
| COA | $32,800 | $63,400 | 10,000 |
| SAI | 6,200 | 6,200 | 6,200 |
| FINANCIAL NEED | **$26,600** | **$57,200** | **3,800** |
| Grants/Scholarships | $5,195 | $29,195 | $3,195 |
| Employment | 0 | $2,500 | 0 |
| Loans | $5,500 | $5,500 | 0 |
| **TOTAL OFA** | **$10,695** | **$37,195** | **$3,195** |
| Remaining Eligibility (COA – OFA) | $22,105 | $26,205 | 6,805 |
| **NET COST** (COA – Grants/Scholarships) | **$27,605** | **$34,205** | **$6,805** |

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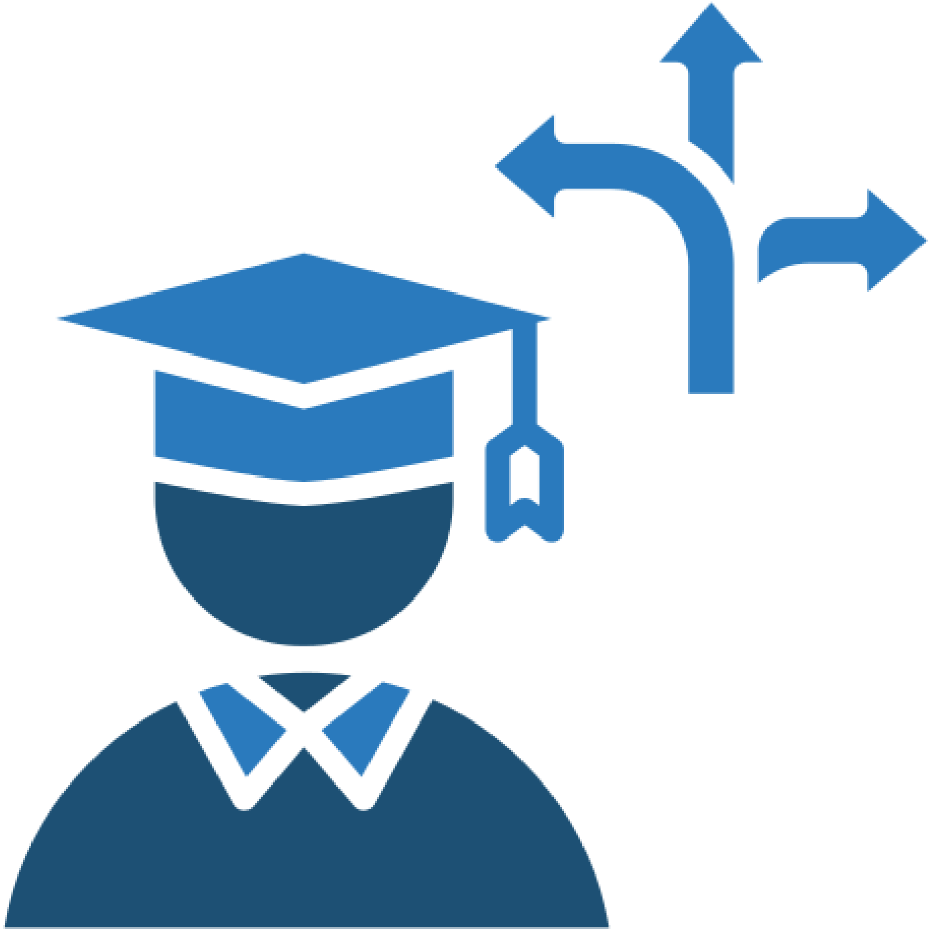
# Ways to Lower Your Costs

- 🏠 Live at home
- 🎓 Community college transfer
- 📚 Earn college credit in high school
- 💼 Employer tuition assistance
- ⚙ Apprenticeships
- ⏰ Graduate on time
- 💰 Borrow only what you need



# Questions

# How are you feeling?

1. Happy

2. Nervous

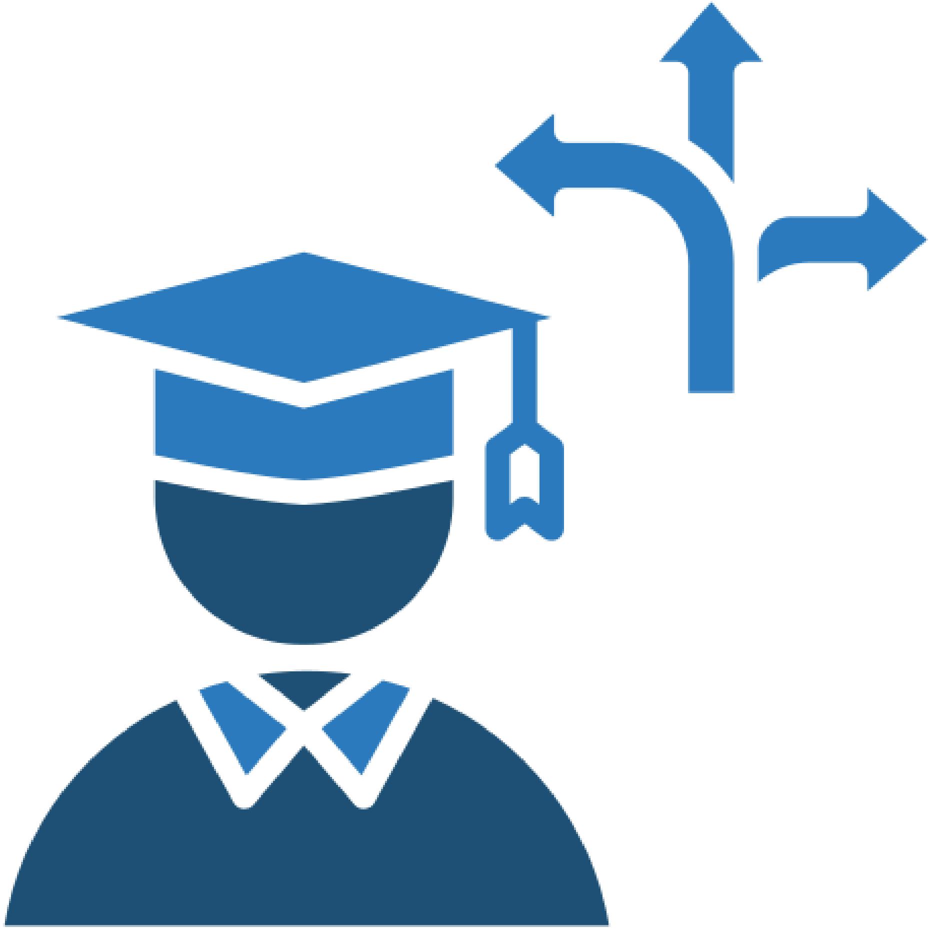
3. Motivated

4. Sleepy

5. Hungry

# Key Takeaways

- There are many paths to a successful career.
- College costs are often much lower than the sticker price.
- Complete the FAFSA, even if you think you won't qualify.
- Don't choose a college until you understand the financial aid offer.



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