



# Applying for Financial Aid at College of the Desert

Applying for financial aid may seem complicated, but the Financial Aid Office at College of the Desert (COD) is here to assist you. Please use this easy guide to help you understand the steps involved and what you need to do to apply for assistance.

## Step 1: Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

In order to apply for the various types of federal financial aid offered at COD, you must have a valid Social Security number and be either a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen and:

- you (and your parents, or spouse, if applicable) need to complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**
- students must submit the FAFSA via the Internet by using FAFSA on the Web at: [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)
- be sure to list the six-digit Title IV school code for College of the Desert - **001182** - on your FAFSA

## Step 2: Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)

After you have submitted your FAFSA:

- you will receive an acknowledgement by e-mail or via regular mail if you did not provide an e-mail address
- check to make sure that all of the information you listed is correct - pay close attention to all written comments to determine if you need to correct any of the data that you originally submitted
- if corrections need to be made to the information you submitted on your original FAFSA, be sure to inform the Financial Aid Office – most corrections can be submitted electronically on your behalf by COD

**Note:** Students, who are not high school graduates and do not have a G.E.D. or its equivalent, must either pass an Ability-to-Benefit (ATB) exam at COD or complete and pass a specified number of degree applicable college units for financial aid eligibility. For more information regarding the ATB exam or the acceptance of units, please call the Financial Aid Office directly at (760) 773-2532.

## Step 3: Financial Aid File Completion and Verification

After the Financial Aid Office has reviewed the information you submitted on your FAFSA:

- if your information was cleared by the Federal Financial Aid Processor, no additional forms will be requested by the Financial Aid Office
- students selected for **verification** will be mailed a Missing Information Letter that will list all of the initial information you need to submit to the Financial Aid Office along with a request for specific documents to “verify” some of the information you listed on your FAFSA (such as federal tax returns, verification of other income information, number in household or number in college)
- some students may have to submit proof of Selective Service Registration or Eligible Non-Citizen Status to the Financial Aid Office
- **ALL forms should be completed in black ink and in print** (not script)
- after you have completed the required forms and have gathered together all of the requested additional documentation, you should return this information to the Financial Aid Office **as soon as possible** – you may either mail the documents or hand deliver these forms to the Financial Aid Office
- after all of your information is received and reviewed by the Financial Aid Office, you may be mailed a second Missing Information Letter, if additional information is still needed or you will be mailed either an estimated award letter or a letter explaining your ineligibility for aid.
  - Students whose FAFSA information was **rejected** by the Federal Processing Center will receive a letter informing them that they need to contact the Financial Aid Office immediately in order to correct and re-submit their data and information.
  - Your file will not be considered complete until ALL requested documents have been submitted to the Financial Aid Office.

## Step 4: Financial Aid Award Notification Letter

After the Financial Aid Office has received and reviewed your paperwork and made any necessary corrections, if you are eligible to receive financial aid, you will be mailed a:

- “Financial Aid Award Notification Letter” which will provide you with your estimated financial aid award package.
- The financial aid award amounts listed in the Financial Aid Award Notification Letter are based on **full-time enrollment of 12 units or more** for both the fall and spring semesters. Award amounts will be adjusted according to the student’s actual enrollment status.

## Step 5: Check Disbursement

If your financial aid file is completed PRIOR to the first day of the semester and you have received your financial aid award letter, your check(s) will be mailed to you within approximately two weeks from the first day of the semester. If your financial aid file becomes complete AFTER the first day of the semester, your check(s) will be mailed to you approximately two weeks after you have received your Financial Aid Award Notification Letter.

## Financial Aid Information continued...

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### For CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS ONLY:

In addition to the FAFSA, all students that are California residents should also apply for the following two financial assistance programs:

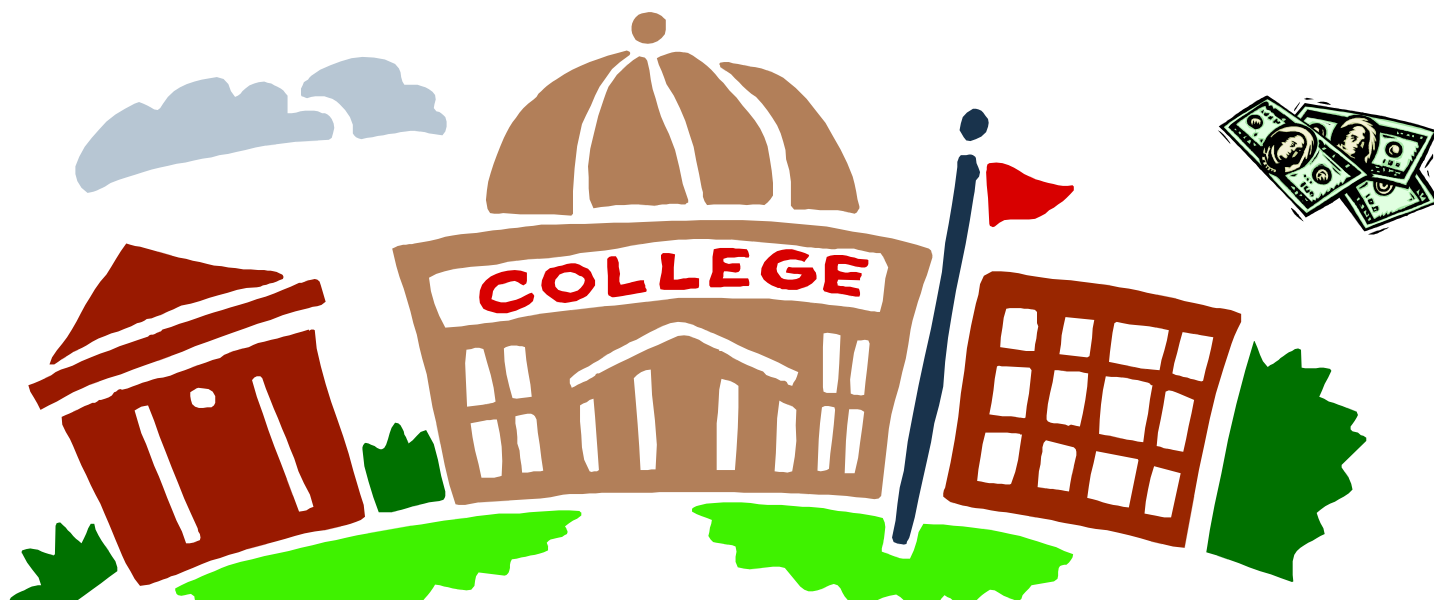
#### BOARD OF GOVERNORS ENROLLMENT FEE WAIVER (BOG)

In addition to completing the FAFSA, **if you are a California resident**, be sure to complete and submit a **Board of Governors Enrollment Fee Waiver Application (BOG)** to determine if you are eligible to have your enrollment fees waived. Eligibility is based on specific income criteria. This form is available on the Financial Aid Office's website at [www.collegeofthedesert.edu/financialaid](http://www.collegeofthedesert.edu/financialaid)

If deemed eligible, the BOG Enrollment Fee Waiver is granted for the Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring terms of each year. Students must re-apply for a BOG Fee Waiver every year to be considered for the waiver beginning the following summer.

#### CAL GRANT PROGRAM

**Between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 2<sup>nd</sup> of each year**, if you are a California resident attending a California college or university you want to apply for a Cal Grant. In order to do so, you must complete and submit a **FAFSA and a Cal Grant Grade Point Average (GPA) Verification Form**. **Both forms must be postmarked and submitted by March 2<sup>nd</sup> of that year**. If you have never attended college, the **Cal Grant GPA Verification Form** needs to be completed by the high school you most recently attended. For students planning to attend a community college, at present time, there is an alternate deadline date of September 2<sup>nd</sup> of each year. However, the continuation of the second deadline date is contingent upon the funds being available from the state of California.



**If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please call the College of the Desert Financial Aid Office at (760) 773-2532 [SPEAKFA].**