

# Steps in Applying for Financial Aid

- **Complete the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1 of your senior year.** You will need a copy of the most recent year tax return to help in completing the FAFSA. For example, if you plan to enroll in college during the Fall 2000 semester, you will need a copy of the 2001 tax return when completing the FAFSA.
- **Request a financial aid packet from the college or university you plan to attend.** If you are not sure which one you will attend, request packets from your top choices. Some, but not all, schools require an institutional financial aid application. This application is used to determine which financial aid programs you are interested in, such as Grants, Loans, or College Work-Study. In some cases it may also act as a scholarship application.
- **Reply in a timely manner** to any request from the financial aid office for information or additional forms to complete your application.
- **If you apply for scholarships, make sure you have contacted people who may serve as references on your behalf.** Let them know the importance of completing any reference forms in a timely manner, and also provide any deadline dates so they are aware of time restraints.
- **Follow up on you financial aid application** with the financial aid office to make sure all items needed have been received.
- **After you receive your award letter,** review the aid offers and follow up with any additional items that may be needed for you to accept or decline the awards.