Financial aid checklist
for students and parents

Use this checklist as a personal record and as a reminder of the steps to take to obtain financial aid. Check off each step as you complete it.

For you and your parents

If you are in doubt as to whether or not to apply for aid, apply!

Do not wait for college acceptance letters before filing for aid.

Filing online is much faster than by mail, and the website has prompts that help you avoid mistakes. You and your parents will both need a PIN, or electronic password, before completing the form — available at www.pin.ed.gov. It's a good idea to get your PIN in advance of the time, although PINs can still be obtained during the FAFSA sign-up process.

- ☐ **If you are applying to colleges that require PROFILE, file that form as early as possible** — as soon as you can estimate your and your parents' income tax information, keeping in mind your college's deadline. If you are applying under an early decision plan, complete your PROFILE in late November or early December.

- ☐ **Complete income tax forms as soon as possible** in order to provide accurate data on financial aid forms. Some colleges have early February deadlines.

- ☐ **Make a list of the financial aid priority dates and deadlines** at the colleges to which you are applying. Ask each college if it requires supplemental forms, and obtain them as needed.

- ☐ **Apply for federal and state funds** by answering the appropriate questions on the FAFSA.

- ☐ **Check for scholarships** for which you might be eligible:
    - ☐ Each college/postsecondary institution (your best source)
    - ☐ Those posted in the counseling office
    - ☐ Local and state scholarships

For more college planning tools and guidance, visit BigFuture.org.