

Awarding Financial Aid

The Financial Aid Office has developed an institutional packaging philosophy to ensure consistent, equitable, and fair distribution of financial aid funds.

PCCD's policy is to provide the financial aid needed to each applicant to ensure that a degree or program will be completed; to minimize the adverse effects of financial concerns on academic performance; to provide the most advantageous combination of aid funds for which the student qualifies (subject to the availability of funds); and to make maximum use of all financial aid funds available to the institution.

General packaging guidelines are as follows:

- ◆ Determine if there are any outside resources (i.e. scholarship, or State aid)
- ◆ Determine Pell Grant eligibility
- ◆ Determine eligibility for other aid in this order SEOG, work-study.
- ◆ As outside aid is received it will be included in the student award package

Once all records in the student financial aid record is marked complete, the Financial Aid Supervisor, Financial Aid Specialist or authorized Placement Assistant will award aid in the PeopleSoft system.

Financial aid is awarded in the form of a "package" or combination of different types of assistance. Preferential treatment is given to students who have the greatest financial aid eligibility (calculated EFC) and who have a completed their FAFSA application by the first priority date.

PCCD defines an academic year beginning with the fall semester, the second in spring and the third in the summer. Summer semester is considered a trailer for the purposes of Federal student aid. If a student has remaining Pell Grant funds after receiving aid for the traditional academic year, summer aid may be calculated and disbursed. For the calculation of BOGG Fee Waiver eligibility, summer is considered the header for an academic year.

Not all funds awarded to students will be expended because students may not enroll, may withdraw, or may decline a portion of their award.

Awarding Process

Financial aid applications are processed by federal Central Processing Services (CPS). The processor does not award or deny funds. They assist in calculating financial need. Awards are based on the following:

STEP 1: **Completing Verification**

If a student's financial aid application is selected for review by the Financial Aid Office or by CPS, the Financial Aid Office must receive all supporting documentation from applicant (or spouse if married or parent if required). This involves cross-checking information from all documentation (including the application) related to earned income, untaxed income, expenses, assets, liabilities and households size. This process is called "verification".

STEP 2: Assigning Budgets

Financial aid students are assigned a Standard Nine-Month Student Budget which includes average tuition, basic cost of fees, books and supplies, room and board, transportation and personal expenses. Additional expenses related to documented child care expenses, expenses related to disability, expenses related to the purchase or upgrade of a computer, or expenses related to Cooperative Education, or expenses related to academic program costs may be assessed and factored into a student's basic nine-month budget.

- ◆ Note: Students enrolled in less than six units will have only Tuition, fees, books and transportation calculated for Cost of Attendance budget

STEP 3: Calculating Family Contribution

The Financial Aid Office verifies parent and student contribution as calculated by the Federal need analysis formula. This family contribution is the amount which the family may reasonably be expected to contribute toward meeting the student's college expenses. The formula process is called "need analysis". The theory of need analysis is based on the following assumptions:

- ◆ Students have primary responsibility to pay for their education
- ◆ Parents, and or spouse to the extent that they are able, fund for their child or spouse's education.
- ◆ Families should be evaluated in a consistent and equitable manner while recognizing that special circumstances can alter a family's ability to contribute. All students (dependent and independent) are expected to contribute towards their education. The expected contribution (EFC) is determined by a Federal formula calculation which adds together all resources which include:
 - ◆ Earnings from employment;
 - ◆ All other assistance such as Temporary Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TANF or CalWorks),
 - ◆ Social Security and Veteran's Benefits;
 - ◆ A percentage of assets such as savings and investments.
 - ◆ A formulated percentage of basic living and medical expenses.

Step 4: Establishing Financial Need

From the need analysis, PCCD Financial Aid Offices will be able to determine the relative financial strength or ability to pay for your postsecondary educational expenses. Financial need is determined by subtracting the amount of the expected contribution

from the standard budget. The remainder equals financial eligibility or “financial need”.

Outside Resources

Students are encouraged to seek assistance from outside resources. It is required that all outside assistance be reported to the Financial Aid Office. Student aid including outside resources, may not exceed the student's cost of attendance. Therefore, if a student has been awarded funds by the aid office and receives an outside award, an adjustment to the original award letter may be necessary. If an adjustment is necessary, the outside aid will replace self-help aid if possible.