

What is the Expected Family Contribution (EFC)?

The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is a number that determines a student's eligibility for financial aid. The EFC formula uses the financial information that the student (and parent, if a dependent student) provide on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to calculate the EFC. Financial aid administrators (FAAs) subtract your EFC from their [Cost of Attendance \(COA\)](#) to calculate your financial need, which in turn determines the amount of financial aid you are eligible to receive from the following financial aid resources:

- Federal Pell Grants,
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG),
- Subsidized Stafford Loans,
- Unsubsidized Stafford Loans,
- Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS),
- Federal Work-Study (FWS),
- Institutional Financial Aid and Scholarships,
- External Scholarships, and
- Any other financial aid the student may receive.

NOTE: Students are not allowed to receive financial aid that exceeds their cost of attendance.

How Your EFC Impacts Your Aid Package

Your EFC is recalculated every academic year based on the information you provide on your FAFSA. Your EFC is not necessarily what you will wind up paying for college. Your real cost—called your "net price"—includes your EFC, any financial need that your college does not cover, and any financial aid in the form of loans or earnings from work-study.

You will have to cover any unmet financial need from your own resources, repay loans, and work the hours required for federal work-study. The real cost of attending a college includes all the dollars you must spend out of your own pocket to pay for college, either now or later.

Calculating Your EFC: The Federal Methodology

To calculate your EFC, the U.S. Department of Education uses a formula called the Federal Methodology (FM). This formula assesses your and your family's income and assets as reported on your FAFSA. Colleges must use the EFC calculated by the FM when awarding federal and state aid. Most colleges also use the FM to determine your eligibility for "institutional aid," which is aid from the college's own resources, such as alumni endowments.