**Financial Aid Timeline**

**SOPHOMORE YEAR**

* Participate in the IMSA webinar, “*Financial Aid Planning for College*” (September)

**JUNIOR YEAR**

* Participate in the IMSA webinar, “*How to Choose a College You Can Afford*”. (January)
* Attend the spring *Family College Conference* with your student’s CAC to learn more about the Financial Aid process.
* Complete the **Federal Student Aid Estimator** (Spring): [studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/](https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/)
	+ *The Federal Student Aid Estimator calculates an estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and is used by colleges to calculate financial aid.*
* Complete the **Net Price Calculator** for each college your student is researching. You can access the calculator on each college website OR at the Net Price Calculator Center: [collegecost.ed.gov/net-price](https://collegecost.ed.gov/net-price)
	+ *The Net Price Calculator provides a very accurate estimate of what a particular college will cost your family.*
* Continue to research colleges in terms of affordability for your family
* *Attend IMSA’s College Day (April) - ask questions about financial aid*

**SENIOR YEAR**

* Complete the **Net Price Calculator** (see link above) for every college on your student’s “applying to” list.
* Participate in the IMSA webinar, “*Prepare to complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)”* (September)
* Obtain an **FSA ID** for the student and parent at this link: [studentaid.gov/fsa-id/sign-in/landing](https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/sign-in/landing)
* Gather your financial information, such as your tax return and documentation of assets.
* Participate in the IMSA webinar, “*FAFSA completion, line by line*” (October)
* **File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** at [studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa)
* The FAFSA is available **October 1.** We recommend filing the FAFSA by November 1**.**
* **File the CSS Profile** (if required by the college):cssprofile.collegeboard.org
* The CSS Profile is available **October 1.** We recommend filing the CSS Profile by November 1.
* Participate in the IMSA webinars on Scholarships (“*College specific scholarships*” & “*Non-college specific scholarships*”, available on the IMSA website)
* Search and apply for scholarships.
* Review financial aid award letters from each college. Compare awards by using the College Board resource: [bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards)
* Contact the college’s financial aid office if you have questions about an award letter.
* Participate in the IMSA webinar, “*Comparing Financial Aid Packages*” (April)
* Decide which college to attend based on its academic, social, and financial fit!