

## Financial Aid Estimator Activity – Instructions

### Objective:

- Introduce students to financial aid concepts, encourage them to explore the FAFSA using the Federal Student Aid Estimator, and familiarize them with potential aid options for college.

### Time:

- Thirty minutes to one hour, depending on the discussion.

### Materials Needed:

- Computers with internet access
- Printed copies of the student worksheet (below)
- Prizes or incentives for participation (optional)

### Activity Steps:

#### 1. Introduction (5 minutes):

- Review the Paying for College Toolkit section “File the FAFSA” ([PPT](#) or [PDF](#) or [Spanish PPT](#) or [PDF](#)) or watch our [File the FAFSA playlist](#) online.
- Discuss key terms such as grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study programs.

#### 2. FAFSA Estimator Demonstration (15 minutes):

- Guide students through accessing the Federal Student Aid Estimator on [studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/](https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/).
- Demonstrate how to navigate the estimator and input hypothetical financial information (income, assets, family size, etc.).
- Show students how the FAFSA Estimator calculates potential federal aid eligibility, including grants and loans. Tell them this is only an estimate of federal aid and it’s missing information about our state aid and scholarship opportunities. Their college aid and scholarship opportunities also aren’t included. Some private scholarships may require an SAI. Encourage them to file the FAFSA their senior year of high school.

#### 3. Worksheet Activity (20 minutes):

- Distribute worksheets and have the students work individually.
- Instruct students to use the FAFSA Estimator to fill out the worksheet based on their own or hypothetical financial information.

## Financial Aid Estimator – Instructions (continued)

### 4. Discussion and Reflection (10 minutes):

- Facilitate a group discussion to share findings and insights from using the FAFSA Estimator.
- Discuss any questions or concerns students may have about the financial aid process or the FAFSA. Please be careful with any delicate questions or concerns. We do not want to make students uncomfortable or spotlight their situations.
- Emphasize the importance of accuracy and honesty when filling out the FAFSA.

### 5. Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Summarize key takeaways from the activity.
- Provide students with resources and next steps for further exploring financial aid options and preparing for the FAFSA application.

### Additional Tips:

- Encourage students to ask questions throughout the activity.
- Highlight the benefits of starting the financial aid process early and being proactive. Some aid or scholarship opportunities are first come, first served. Completing the FAFSA early can also help the student avoid issues with deadlines.
- Consider inviting a financial aid counselor or expert to speak or assist during the activity.



## Financial Aid Estimator – Student Worksheet

**Instructions:** Fill out the Federal Student Aid Estimator based on your and your family's (if applicable) financial information. If you don't know the details, you can approximate or create hypothetical financial information. If the amounts aren't exact, that's okay; the goal is to be as close as possible to an accurate estimate. You can also take this activity home to complete with your parents.

### Steps to Follow:

- Go to the Federal Student Aid Estimator Tool** at [studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/](https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/)
  - You can also search financial aid estimator in Google and find [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).
- Fill out the Estimator:** Estimate monetary amounts as best you can for the best results.
- Record your Results:**
  - What is your TOTAL Estimated Federal Student Aid amount? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the amount of grants? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Loans? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Work-Study? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is your estimated SAI? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What other aid or scholarships could you qualify for that are not listed here? To help you find the answer, see "Other Factors to Consider" on [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) or read the next step on this worksheet.  
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- Remember:**
  - These are just estimates for federal aid from the federal government. This does not include aid you may qualify for from Utah or your college. It also doesn't show the scholarships from state, college, and private vendors.
  - The only way to see all aid opportunities is by completing the FAFSA during your senior year of high school. After completing the FAFSA, the college(s) will send an offer letter detailing the aid opportunities you qualify for later in the school year. If you are accepted into multiple colleges and send your FAFSA to each one, you will receive multiple offer letters. This allows students to compare their options and choose the best fit for their goals and budget.