



Managing Education & Training Costs

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation Spring 2026

Communication is a to Success

I wonder how they'll get loans to pay for all of this?

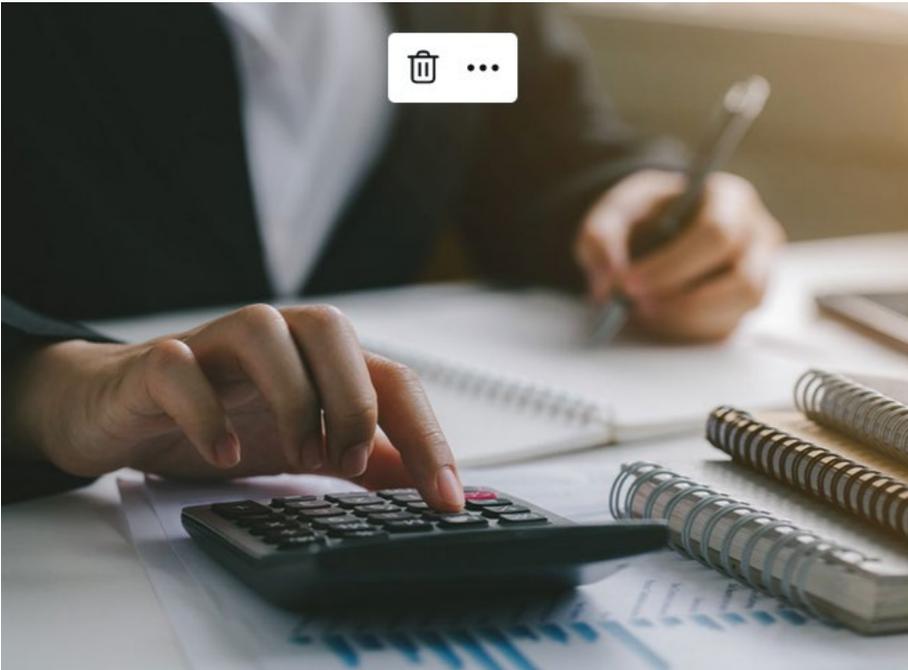
They can manage the details and let me know what they need.

I have no idea what to do. I sure hope they do.

Advertised college price

	One year	All years
Selective, private college	\$89,000	\$356,000
University of VT	\$37,000	\$148,000
Vermont State University	\$33,300	\$133,200
Community College of VT	\$14,200	\$28,400 (2 years)
Vermont trade school	\$35,000	\$35,000 (6 months)

Net price



(minus) —

Cost of attendance
Gift aid you receive

(grants & scholarships)

(equals) =

What you need to pay

Average net price

	Cost —1 yr full-time	Average Net price
Selective, private college	\$89,000	\$22,900
University of VT	\$37,000	\$22,000
Vermont State University	\$33,300	\$21,300
Community College of VT	\$14,200	\$10,100
Vermont trade school	\$35,000	\$24,300

College Scorecard



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
College Scorecard

[Home](#)

[About the Data](#)

[Search](#)

[Compare:](#)



FIND THE RIGHT FIT.

Search and compare colleges: their fields of study, costs, admissions, results, and more.

SEARCH SCHOOLS

SEARCH FIELDS OF STUDY

SHOW ME OPTIONS

[CUSTOM SEARCH](#)

Your role

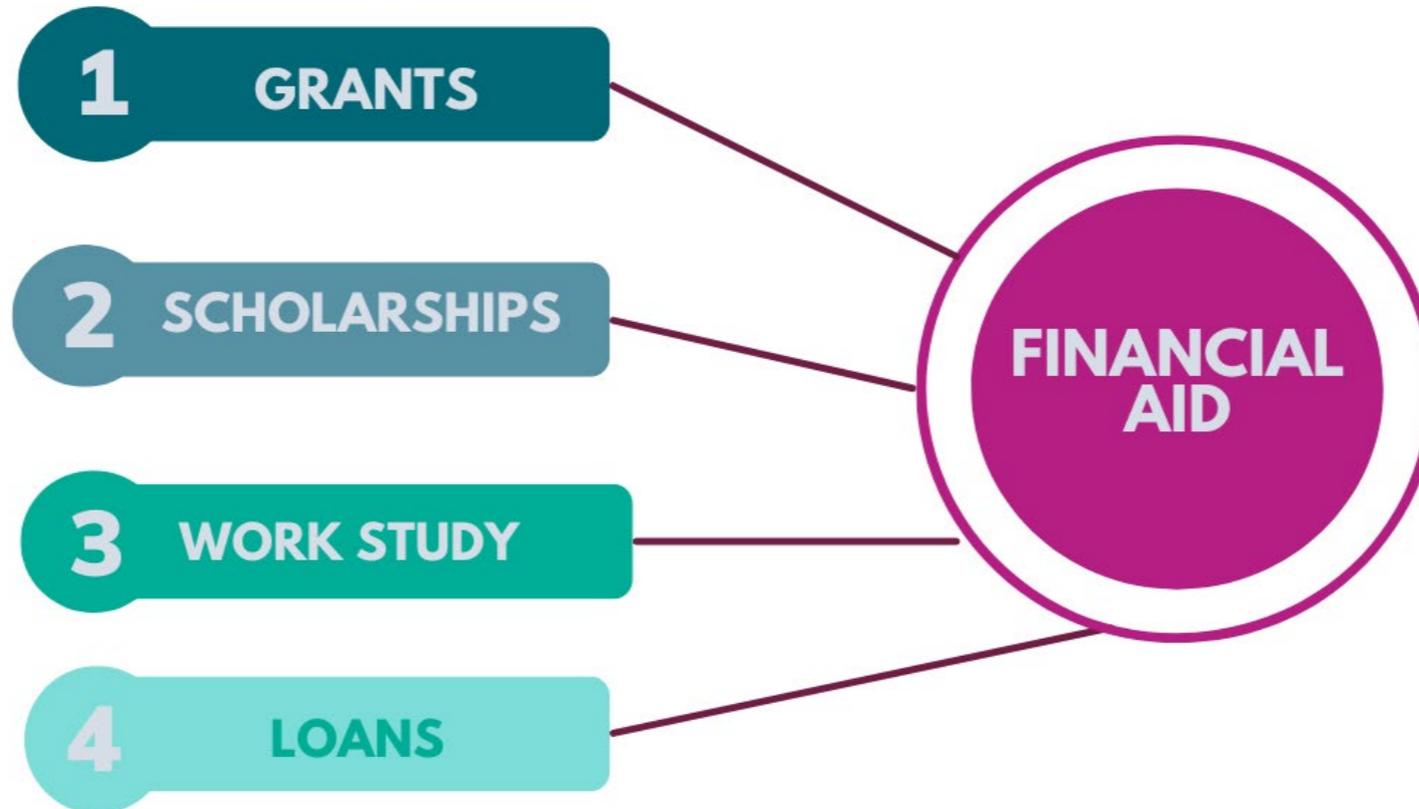


The family has the primary responsibility to pay for education beyond high school.

Need-based financial aid is meant to *assist* families with paying for education and training beyond high school.

- Parents
- Students

Types of financial aid



Financial applications to submit

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Vermont grant application
- College financial aid forms
 - CSS Profile
- Scholarship applications
 - Career-focused funding application
- Loan applications



How & when to apply — Federal and State Aid

Applications open each Fall

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- Required for federal aid, some institutional aid and Vermont Grant

Vermont Grant application

- Required to determine Vermont Grant eligibility
- Vermont Grants are portable – can be used in- and out-of-state

Generally, **October 1** is the *first* date federal and state applications are available for the following fall's financial aid

- First date available – NOT the deadline
- Deadlines set by colleges/universities/trade schools



How & when to apply — Institutional Financial Aid

Applications open each Fall

College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile

- Only some institutions require this form
- CSS maintains a list of institutions that require the form
- Deadlines can be found on colleges' websites
 - Earlier deadlines for Early Action/Early Decision applicants
- Requires more information than FAFSA.

Individual School applications for aid

- Check postsecondary schools' financial aid websites for additional required forms and deadlines
- Are there additional applications for institutional scholarships?
 - Are institutional scholarships automatically considered as part of admissions process?



What about the Trades?

Vermont Advancement Grant

- Need-based grant for learners pursuing
 - short-term training
 - classes without being enrolled in a degree program
 - programs not eligible for Federal Student Aid
- To improve employability or to complete prerequisite courses for admission to a degree program
- Application available on MyVSAC
- Available in **May 2027** for 2027-2028 academic year for classes beginning after July 1, 2027

Vermont Trades Interest-Free and Forgivable Loan

- Expands opportunities for workforce education, training, and development – open to current and non-Vermont residents
- Need-based program
 - short-term training
 - Industry-recognized training and certification program
 - High-demand sector in Vermont
 - Loan is forgiven if recipient works in the high-demand sector in Vermont for one year after program completion
- Application available on MyVSAC
- Funding not guaranteed, first-come, first-served
- Use 2027-2028 VSAC Unified Scholarship Application, available in October 2026 for classes beginning after July 1, 2027

Maximizing financial aid



- Do well in school.
- Challenge yourself.
- Increase school and community involvement.
- Communicate special circumstances to financial aid offices and VSAC.
- Research scholarships.
- Apply/Compete for scholarships.

Ways to reduce costs

- Look farther (in state, other states, Canada) where Vermont students aren't commonly attending.
- Consider earning college credits while still attending high school/tech center.
- NEBHE Tuition Break
- Consider free tuition opportunities based on family income (802 Opportunity, Freedom & Unity)
- Consider attending local and commuting.
- Consider service.
- Check out Vermont Transfer Guarantee.
- Look into employer-funded tuition benefits/scholarships



Ways to pay

Past income

- Savings
- College savings plan

Present income

- Payment plans
- Tax credits
- Scholarships

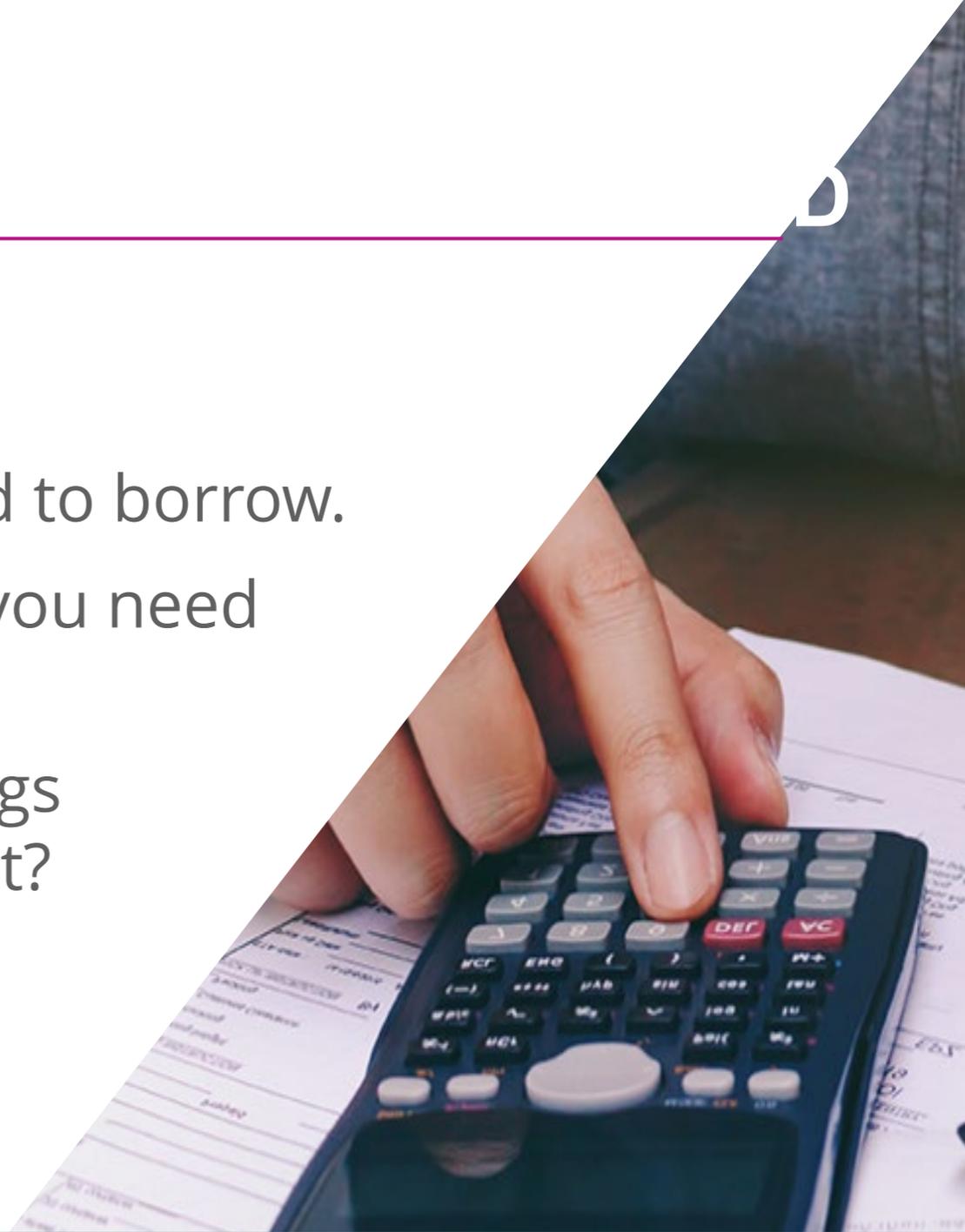
Future income

- Parent PLUS loan
- Additional student loans
- Private loans
- Other borrowing options
- Workforce Development/Career-focused funding

Ways to pay

Savings

- The more you save, the less you need to borrow.
- What can you add to savings before you need to borrow for college?
- How much can students add to savings through gifts or summer employment?



Ways to pay

Federal loans for Dependent students

	Annual eligibility	Cumulative borrowed
Freshman year	\$5,500	\$5,500
By sophomore year	\$6,500	\$12,000
By junior year	\$7,500	\$19,500
By senior year	\$7,500	\$27,000

Student loan options

Federal or non-federal	Available from	Loan type	Interest rate 2025–2026	Accept or compare?
Federal	Your college	Direct loans for students	6.39%*	Accept these first.
Non-federal	VSAC	VT Advantage Student —fixed rate	5.26%–9.07% APR	Compare these loans.
Non-federal	Nonprofit organizations, banks, credit unions, other private lenders	Alternate loans (often called private loans)	Varies by lender (variable and fixed).	Compare these loans.

** Each year on July 1, the U.S. Department of Education sets a new rate.*

Parent loan options

Federal or non-federal	Available from	Loan type	Interest rate 2025-2026	Accept or compare?
Federal	Your college	PLUS loan for parents	8.94%*	Compare these loans.
Non-federal	VSAC	VT Advantage Parent — fixed rate	5.26%–9.48% APR	Compare these loans.
Non-federal	Nonprofit organizations, banks, credit unions, other private lenders	Alternate loans (often called private loans)	Varies by lender (variable and fixed).	Compare these loans.

**Each year on July 1, the U.S. Department of Education sets a new rate.*

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, there are maximum limits on Federal PLUS borrowing by parents

Non-Federal loans – Things to Consider

Student borrowers will almost always be required to have a co-signer

A co-signer:

- Is equally liable for the debt
- Is expected to make payments if the student borrower does not pay
- Is billed monthly, along with the borrower
- Is reported to the national credit bureaus monthly, along with the borrower
- Must sign all paperwork, along with the borrower

Research the best rate and repayment plan for your needs, considering:

- Interest rates
- Fees
- Repayment options
- Borrower benefits
 - ✓ An interest rate reduction for auto-pay
 - ✓ Temporary suspension of payments if having difficulty paying
 - ✓ Co-signer release after a certain number of payments
- Where your loan is serviced
- Timeline to apply and the disbursement schedule of funds

Resources/calculators

Federal Student Aid Estimator

- SAI Calculator
- Federal Aid estimates

FAFSA Parent Wizard

- Which parent information on the FAFSA

Student Loan Calculator

- What does repayment look like?

Compare
financial aid
awards with the
Award Advisor™
App



Next steps for junior and senior year


PLANNING FOR COLLEGE & TRAINING



Junior Year Planning Checklist

For Students & Parents

September

- Review your courses and grades with a school counselor** to be sure you're on track for graduation and college admissions/career training requirements. Are you taking challenging math and science, plus a foreign language?
 - Talk about work-based learning and job shadow opportunities.
 - Consider taking a dual enrollment course in the spring or enrolling in early college senior year.
- Register for the October PSAT.** Top scorers of this SAT prep test may qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Find free practice quizzes and videos at kaptest.com/study/psat
- Research and attend college fairs.** Visit the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) website at nacacfairs.org to find out how you can attend college fairs, online or in person. For college fairs in New England, visit the New England Association of College Admission Counseling (NEACAC) site at neacac.org

October

- Take the PSAT this month or whenever your school is offering it**, even if you already took it last year (only junior-year scores are used for the National Merit Scholarship competition). Visit kaptest.com/study/psat for free practice quizzes and videos.
- Explore your interests & careers.**
 - myfuturevt.org — explore careers in Vermont, learn about statewide education and training programs, and find resources and support for your career search
 - mynextmove.org — find tasks, skills, salaries, and more for 900+ careers, browse different industries that employ different types of workers, and use the O*NET Interest Profiler for career ideas based on your interests
 - bls.gov/oooh — find info on hundreds of different careers and occupations
- Begin to research colleges & identify schools** or training programs you may want to consider.

November

- Check in.** How is the year going so far? If you need help with study strategies, test-taking skills, or organization, talk to your teachers now so you won't fall behind.

TOLL FREE 800-642-3177

ONLINE vsac.org

EMAIL info@vsac.org

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PLANNING FOR COLLEGE OR TRAINING



Senior Year Planning Checklist

For Students & Parents

August

- Research colleges & identify schools** or training programs you may want to consider. At vsac.org/compareprograms, download VSAC's comparison chart to start building a wish list of schools.
- Explore college costs** at collegenavigator.gov once you've started your college list. Find info on tuition and fees, housing, admission, graduation rates, campus safety, and more.
- Get a head start on your college admissions essay.** At commonapp.org, find essay prompts for the Common Application; and for essay-writing tips, visit vsac.org/essay.

September

- Meet with your school counselor** to talk about your college options.
 - Review college admissions and financial aid applications.
 - Develop a résumé and talk about doing a job shadow.
- Register for standardized tests** (SAT, ACT), if required, at collegeboard.org and act.org.
- Attend college fairs & career fairs.** The NEACAC (New England Association of College Admission Counseling) college fairs are this month. At neacac.org you'll find a schedule so you can plan to attend the site closest to you.
- Work on the Common Application** at commonapp.org. Add schools to your "My Colleges" list and review the supplements to identify additional info you may need to send.
- Ask for recommendation letters.** For suggestions, visit vsac.org/recommendations.
- Create a file folder** for each college you're applying to. Look at websites for virtual tours and chats.
- Prepare for financial aid and FAFSA.** Financial aid is money that a student receives to help pay for college or career training, including grants and scholarships (that don't have to be paid back), work-study, and loans. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used by colleges, universities, and VSAC to provide financial aid. Learn about it at vsac.org/fafsa-first.
 - Gather documents to apply; for a list, visit fafsa.ed.gov/help/before003.htm.
 - Create FSA IDs at fsaid.ed.gov. The student and one parent will each need their own ID to sign the FAFSA electronically.
 - Print out our checklist at vsac.org/finaidchecklist to keep you on track through the entire financial aid application process.
- Know your deadlines for admissions and financial aid.** At college websites:
 - check whether you need to submit the CSS Profile or other financial aid applications.
 - identify financial aid application deadlines.

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- **Explore resources**, such as VSAC's junior and senior year checklists for combined admissions and financial aid timelines.
- **Begin family conversations** about plans for after high school – maybe include other important family members, mentors, school counselors when considering career interests and education paths.
 - What education and training is required and available to pursue career goals?
 - How long does it take to earn the credential or degree and what does that cost?
 - What family resources are available and what can the family – parent(s) and student – afford?

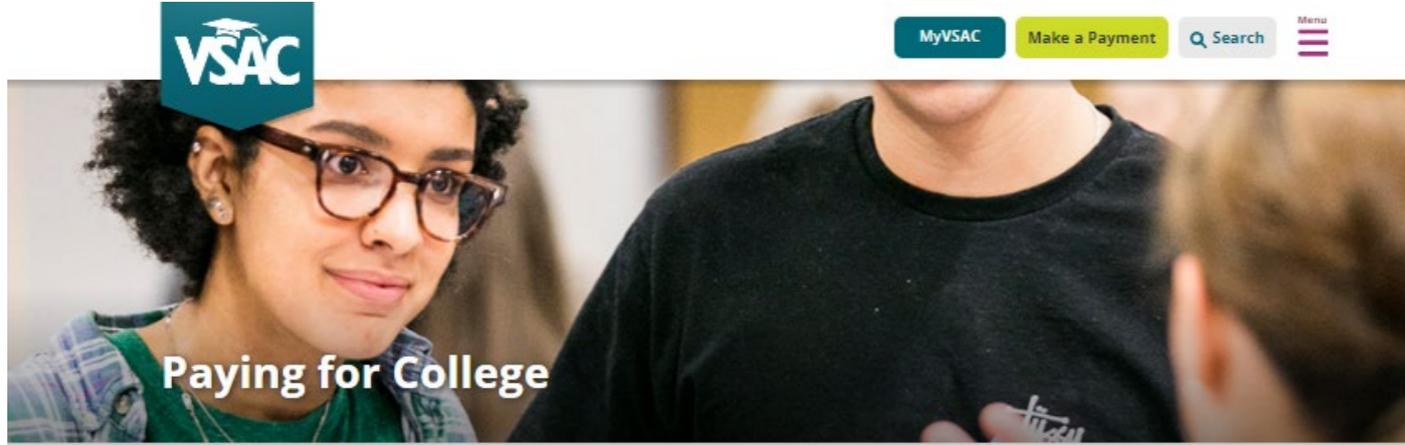
Communication = Success

**Did Grandma say she started a 529 plan?
I need to ask how much is available so we can use that in our planning.**

I can create a spreadsheet to keep track of applications, deadlines, and passwords.

Check out this Net Price Calculator – this school looks affordable.

vsac.org/pay-resources



Financial Aid & College Costs

The financial aid process can feel overwhelming at times. Between choosing colleges, planning on covering college costs, and what feels like endless paperwork, VSAC's resources have supported Vermont families planning for college and training for over 50 years. We provide access to grants, scholarships, and FAFSA tips, so that paying for college becomes more manageable.

- Learn about financial aid and college costs by viewing our [online Financial Aid & Managing College Costs event](#).

Stay on track with planning and paying for college or training.

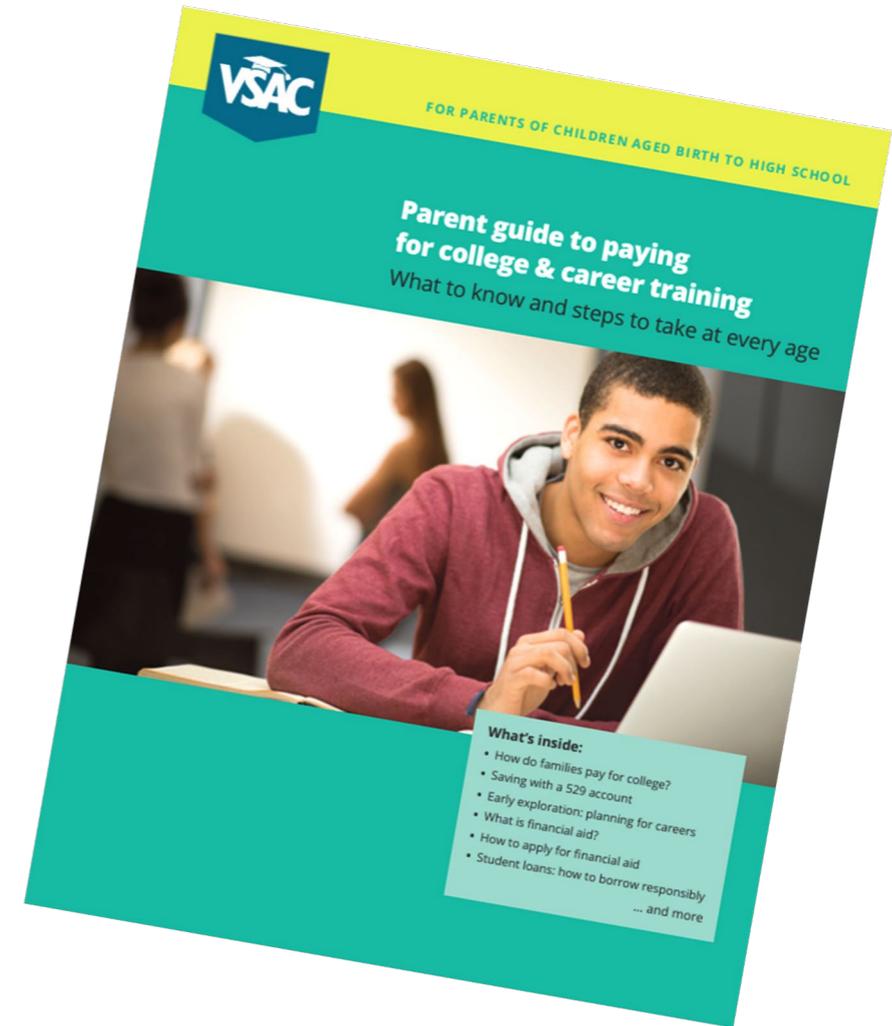
- [Junior year month-by-month checklist](#) ↓
- [Senior year month-by-month checklist](#) ↓

Need help with your FAFSA application, Vermont grant application, or other financial aid forms? Call our toll-free helpline at 833-802-8722 (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-4:30 pm).

VSAC RESOURCES

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Details and online applications for FAFSA and CSS Profile®](#)



VSAC's education loan guide

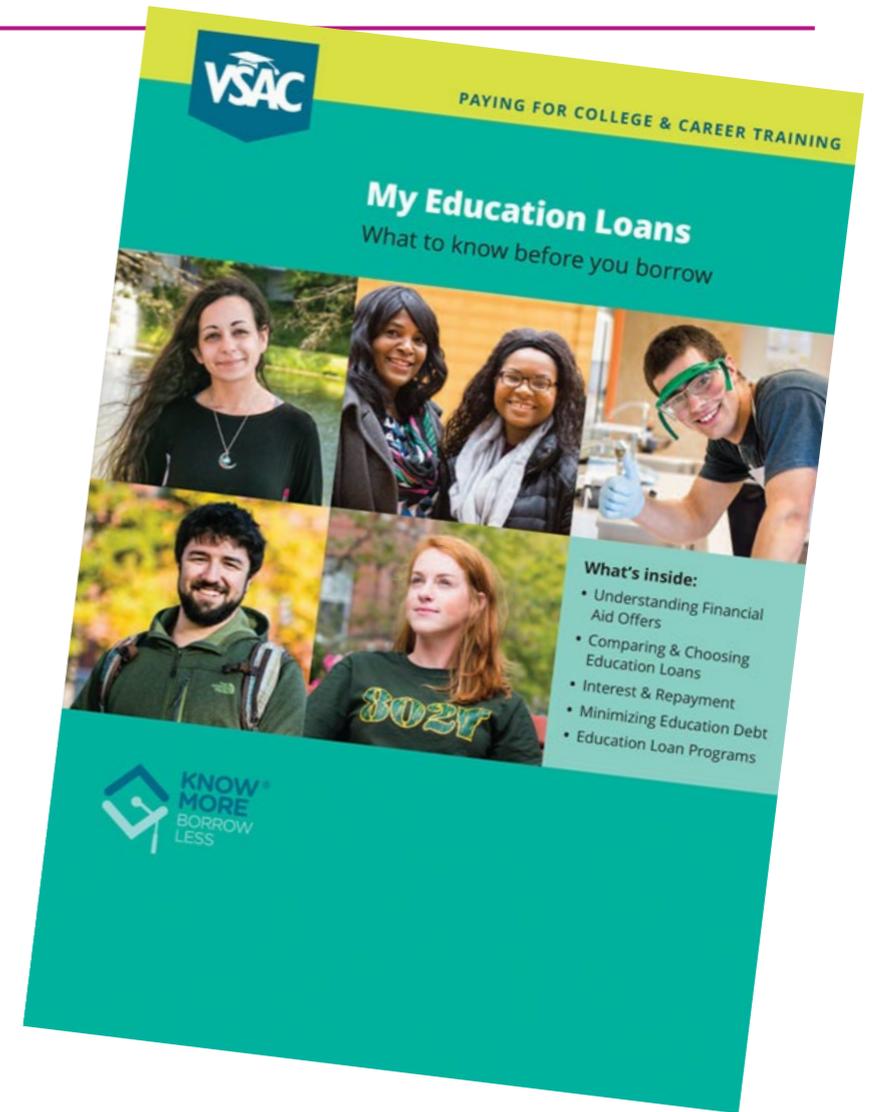
With expanded section on ways to minimize education debt

Available at

vsac.org/pay-resources

or order a printed copy by e-mailing

publications@vsac.org



Financial aid forms help – for when you are ready

Phone:

- FAFSA: 800-4FEDAID (800-433-3243) – evening hours available
- FAFSA and VT grant: 833-802-8722 - 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Online and in-person:

- FAFSA — chat/chatbot assistance while filling out application
- VSAC –
 - Resource Center offering Virtual and In-Person FAFSA Help – check vsac.org/events for details beginning in late September.
 - And/or email ResourceCenter@vsac.org to request an appointment.



Follow VSAC for more great info, events, resources, and information.



THANK YOU!