CSS Financial Aid Profile™

CSS Profile 101 for IECA Members
Agenda

CSS Profile

• What
• Why
• How
• When
• Common mistakes
• And what else do you want to know?
What... 

...is the CSS Profile?

- A financial aid application used to determine the family’s financial need for **institutional financial aid**
- Used by about 400 colleges, universities, and scholarship programs
- A supplemental aid application to the FAFSA for most students
  - FAFSA is **always** required for federal student aid
  - CSS Profile required only if the institution requires it
- May be the primary application for international students
  - Supports international students applying for institutional aid at some colleges in the US
  - Allows international applicants to report in home currency, which is converted to US dollars for institutions
Why colleges require the CSS Profile

• Colleges require families file the CSS Profile to
  • Understand the family’s true financial need
  • See a larger picture of the student’s family

• Colleges use the CSS Profile to ensure that institutional financial aid is awarded
  • To the students who truly need it
  • In a fair and equitable manner

• Colleges can also use the CSS Profile to separately collect information from each of the student’s parents if the parents are no longer together
Why…

…does the student need to complete the CSS Profile?

Why Students Should Complete the CSS Profile

• To make certain that the student applies for all of the aid that an institution might award
• First, check each of the student’s college’s website for application requirements

• If required, complete the application online at cssprofile.org

• Students, and in most cases their parents, will need to provide information

Find out if the student’s college(s) require the CSS Profile:

https://profile.collegeboard.org/profile/ppi/participatingInstitutions.aspx
How...

...does the student complete the CSS Profile

- Log in with a College Board account
  - Many students already have a College Board account
  - Parents can create their own, if necessary

- Select the proper application year!
  - High school seniors who will graduate in June 2019 apply for financial aid for 2019-20
  - Same rule as for the FAFSA
Fee Waivers and the CSS Profile

• Fee waiver eligibility is determined automatically
  • SAT fee waiver = CSS Profile
  • CSS Profile does a fee waiver calculation
    • Family of 4 – no more than $45,500 in total income
    • Amount changes for different family sizes
    • Based on 2017 National School Lunch Program Reduced Price Income Guidelines

• Fee waivers cover all colleges selected

• Breaking news! –Fee waivers automatically awarded to applicants living in Hurricane Florence FEMA Designated Areas of the Carolinas
Costs of the CSS Profile

- Cost for the CSS Profile
  - $25 for application and first college selected
  - $16 for each additional college selected
CSS Profile for the Noncustodial Parent

- Cost is $25 regardless of the number of school reports sent
  - Schools are selected by the student on the application the student completed with the custodial parent
  - Noncustodial parent cannot select or alter student’s college list

- Fee waivers are available
  - Calculated based on the information provided on the noncustodial parent’s information
  - Emergency fee waiver eligibility determined
2 CSS Profiles? Really?

Yes. Well, maybe.

• Applies to students whose parents are still alive and who are not together
  • Divorced or separated and not living together
  • Never married and not living together

• Only if required by the student’s college or colleges
2 CSS Profiles? Really?

CSS Profile Waiver for the Noncustodial Parent

- Common waiver form available on cssprofile.org
  - May not be accepted by every college
  - Check each college’s website

- Decisions about the second CSS Profile requirement are made by the colleges

CSS Profile Waiver Request for the Noncustodial Parent

- Your noncustodial parent is required to complete a CSS Profile™ application. If you have no contact with your noncustodial parent, you may request to waive this requirement from each college that is requesting the CSS Profile Application from your noncustodial parent. See below process for next steps.

- Submission of this request does not guarantee that a waiver will be approved.

- Each college will make its own decision and communicate that decision to you. Each college reserves the right to request additional information regarding your waiver request.

- You are encouraged to check the website(s) of your college(s) to ensure that you are meeting your financial aid application requirements.

- Be aware that not every college will accept this waiver request. Colleges may require their own form as well as additional documentation; if so, you must follow the college’s instructions for submitting a CSS Profile waiver request for the noncustodial parent.

Types of waiver requests that may be considered:

- Documented abuse situations involving you and your noncustodial parent.
- Legal orders that limit the noncustodial parent’s contact with you.
- No contact or support ever received from the noncustodial parent.
Completing the CSS Profile

Be a successful aid applicant!
Getting Started

Get it right from the beginning!

- The student’s name
  - Enter as listed on the student’s legal documents
    - Social Security Card
    - Alien Registration Card
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number (if the student has one)
  - Must match the number entered on the student’s FAFSA
  - Critical to matching your file correctly at your institution
Confirm Demographics

A chance to check it all again

- New for 2019-20

- Applicant is asked to confirm accuracy of critical student information
Student Status

Questions are asked about the student – not the student’s parents

• These questions are critical to setting the application correctly

• Not getting these questions right can seriously delay the student’s application

• Common mistake is for parents to answer these questions for themselves and not for the student
Student Status

Questions are asked about the student – not the student’s parents

- Many students will answer no to all of these questions
- But let’s look at what happens if the student answer yes to this last question
Student Status

Questions are asked about the student – not the student’s parents

- These are the same questions on the FAFSA

- Answers here should be the same as the student report on the FAFSA

- If student is or can be certified as homeless or at risk of being homeless based on one of these questions, the student will be treated as an independent student
Report the student’s parents

All of them!

- All parents are reported
  - Biological parents
  - Current stepparents
  - Current parental partners
  - Current legal guardians
- Up to four parents can be reported
- Reporting Parents on the CSS Profile tutorial
  - https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/getting-started-your-css-profile-application
Report the student’s parents

All of them!

- Example 1: DeeCee’s mother is deceased
  - Father reported
  - Stepmother reported
  - Mother reported and marked as deceased
Report the student’s parents

All of them!

- Example 2: DeeCee’s parents are divorced and both have remarried
  - Father reported
  - Stepmother reported
  - Mother reported
  - Stepfather reported
Report the student’s parents

Which parent(s) does the student live with?

- Only asked if the student’s biological or adoptive parents are not together
  - Divorced
  - Separated
  - Never married and not living together
- Important to properly report the parents
  - The student lived with the most
  - Or who provide the most support
- If in doubt, report the FAFSA parent(s) here
Report the student’s parents

Which country do the parents live in?

• Report the country your parents are living in now
• Don’t report
  • Country of birth
  • Country of citizenship
Selecting the colleges

Make certain to select the correct college

• High school seniors should never select a graduate school!
  • Law School
  • Medical School
  • Business School

• Make certain the college selected accepts the CSS Profile from undergraduate applicants

• Selecting the wrong college can delay the student’s application
The student and the parents

- Students and parents provide information
- Parents provide more
- But it is all important!

Reporting income and assets

- Income from the student’s and the parents’ tax returns
  - Questions will match the type of tax return filed
  - Non-tax filers will not see tax form questions
- Untaxed income
- Assets
  - Values and debts
  - All assets reported
- Parents are asked about dependent family members
- Details about businesses, farms, and other real estate collected
Special Circumstances

Important opportunity for family to tell its story

• List is provided as a guide
  • Other is on the list for a situation that isn’t
• Free-form box accepts up to 2,000 characters to explain financial issues
• Encourages the financial aid office to communicate with the applicant
• Encourage students not to be afraid to tell their story
• Encourage students not to be embarrassed
When....

...should the CSS Profile be filed?

- Almost every college will have a different deadline date
- Different dates for
  - Early decision
  - Early action
  - Regular decision

- No later than the first deadline of the colleges in the student’s college list
- Recommend treating a deadline like College’s deadline date
  - 5 days
  = Student’s deadline
Common mistakes

Students and parents make

• It is a student application – with parent information
• Parents have to remember that it isn’t about them

1. Applying for the wrong academic year

2. Entering important information incorrectly
   a) Not reporting the student’s name as shown on legal documents
   b) Not reporting the student’s Social Security Number when one is available or entering it incorrectly

3. Entering the student’s date of birth incorrectly
   a) Parent entering a sibling’s date of birth
   b) Parent entering their own date of birth

4. Answering questions about the student’s status incorrectly
   a) Reporting the student has dependents
   b) Reporting the student is married or is a veteran
   c) Reporting the student is a ward of the court
Common mistakes

Students and parents make

5. Reporting parent information in student questions or vice versa

6. Not properly reporting the student’s parents
   a) Parents, current stepparents or partners
   b) Living and deceased

7. Selecting a graduate school instead of the undergraduate college/university

8. The family not telling the financial aid office their story in the Special Circumstances section

9. When parents are no longer together, both parents reporting that the student lives with them, or neither reporting that the student lives with them
Resources

• PowerPoints available for download and use

• Branded, but not copyrighted

https://counselors.collegeboard.org/resources?program=221&topic=All&type=186
And what else do you want to know?

It is your turn now

Thank you!

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