

ישיבת תומכי תמימים ליובאוויטש
RABBINICAL COLLEGE
of AMERICA



FINANCIAL AID HANDBOOK
2024-2025

Rabbinical College of America utilizes the services of Higher Education Solutions, a financial aid consulting firm with many years of experience in the field. The institution offers a variety of federal and state financial aid programs to its students. Higher Education Solutions oversees the administration of the programs.

Any student who has difficulty meeting his educational costs at Rabbinical College of America may contact Rabbi Sruly Goldberg at the financial aid office. The office is open during regular business hours and can provide information about the available financial aid options.

These options may include a “financial aid package” comprised of grants, scholarships and work-study programs. This package consists of the amount of federal and state aid and any scholarships that are offered to an eligible student by the institution to help pay for his education. The institution may also offer a deferred payment plan, which allows the student to spread out the cost of tuition over a period of time.

Federal and State grants are need based, and do not need to be repaid. Similar to grants, institutional scholarships are need based and do not need to be repaid. The Federal Work-Study Program funds part-time employment for eligible students. These programs are explained in detail below.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

In order to qualify for federal financial aid programs, a student must:

- demonstrate financial need for need-based federal student aid programs;
- be a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen;
- have a valid Social Security number (with the exception of students from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau);
- be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student in an eligible degree or certificate program;
- maintain satisfactory academic progress in college or career school;
- provide consent and approval to have his federal tax information transferred directly into his 2024–25 *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) form, if applying for aid for July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025;
- sign the certification statement on the FAFSA form stating that he is not in default on a federal student loan, does not owe money on a federal student grant, and will only use federal student aid for educational purposes; and
- show he is qualified to obtain a college or career school education by:

- ❖ having a high school diploma or a recognized equivalent such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate;
- ❖ completing a high school education in a homeschool setting approved under state law (or—if state law does not require a homeschooled student to obtain a completion credential—completing a high school education in a homeschool setting that qualifies as an exemption from compulsory attendance requirements under state law); or
- ❖ enrolling in an eligible career pathway program and meeting one of the "ability-to-benefit" alternatives.

APPLYING FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

To apply for financial aid, a prospective student should complete a FAFSA form, which is available at the financial aid office. The completed application should then be mailed to the designated address. Alternatively, the student can submit the application through FAFSA on the Web at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>.

In addition to the FAFSA form, the student may be required to supply additional documentation, such as a Verification Worksheet, W2 forms, and/or Tax Returns/IRS Tax Transcripts, to verify the information reported on the FAFSA.

Awards are made for one academic year at a time and are not automatically renewable. Students must reapply each year before the application deadline, as noted below.

FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID NEED

Eligibility for Title IV federal programs is based on a process called need analysis. Need analysis is the process of assessing the amount of assistance a student will require to supplement the resources expected to be available from the student and his parents, if applicable.

The student's need is calculated based on the formulas developed by the Department of Education. Need is determined by subtracting the contributions expected from the student and his parents, if applicable, from the total cost of attendance (COA). The total financial aid awarded to a student usually cannot exceed the student's need.

To calculate need, a determination is first made as to whether the student is dependent or independent of his parents, as determined by the answers to specific questions on the FAFSA.

The student is advised to read the FAFSA instructions carefully before answering any questions, and to consult with the institution's financial aid staff if needed.

Once dependency is determined, the student's contribution is assessed. For an independent student, the student's contribution is based on his (and his spouse's) income as reported on his tax return, and assets, as applicable. Certain allowances are allocated against his income, such as income protection allowance (IPA), which is a living allowance based on family size, taxes paid and other relevant factors.

For a dependent student, his contribution is based on his income, as reported on his tax return, and assets, as applicable. Certain allowances such as an IPA and other relevant factors, as previously described, are allocated against his income. A parental contribution is also assessed, based on his parents' income, as reported on their tax return, and their assets, as applicable. Allowances are allocated against his parents' income, as detailed above

The parental contribution, where applicable, is added to the student contribution, to yield the Student Aid Index (SAI).

The student's budget or cost of education is calculated based on the COA plus a standard allowance for living expenses, which depends on whether the student lives on campus, with his parents, or has other arrangements. The SAI is then subtracted from the student's total budget. The result is known as the student's "need".

Under certain circumstances, based on poverty guidelines, the student may automatically be eligible for a maximum or minimum Pell grant (max or min Pell).

Professional Judgment

In addition to the financial aid "need" process described above, there are additional circumstances that may be considered under a process known as professional judgment (PJ). There are two categories of PJ, special circumstances and unusual circumstances.

To initiate a PJ request for special circumstances, the student and/or his parent must submit documentation of these circumstances to the financial aid office. Among other changes that could impact the student's ability to pay for college, special circumstances might include a change in employment status, income or assets, medical expenses not covered by insurance, or severe disability of the student or other member of his household. These expenses can be taken into account by the financial aid staff to adjust the data elements in the COA or in the SAI

calculation. This process can be initiated at the parent's or student's request after the student's initial eligibility has been determined, and verification has been completed, if applicable.

The category of unusual circumstances refers to conditions that justify a financial aid administrator (FAA) adjusting a student's dependency status based on a unique situation, more commonly referred to as a dependency override. Examples of unusual circumstances could include human trafficking, refugee or asylee status, parental abandonment or incarceration. If a student indicates they have unusual circumstances, the FAFSA Processing System (FPS) will consider the student to be provisionally independent and will allow them to fill out the FAFSA form as an independent student. The student will then submit any supporting documentation to the financial aid office for review. The FAA will assess the documentation and determine if the student's circumstances make him eligible for a dependency override.

A student may have both a special circumstance and an unusual circumstance. Financial aid administrators may make adjustments that are appropriate to each student's situation with appropriate documentation.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

For the 2024-25 award year, a student is independent if, at any time on or after July 1, 2023, the student was determined to be an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or is self-supporting and at risk of being homeless. A student may self-report his independence due to homelessness by indicating on the FAFSA form that they have a determination from one of the following entities:

- a local educational agency homeless liaison (or designee), as designated by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii));
- the director (or designee) of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving individuals who are experiencing homelessness;
- the director (or designee) of a Federal TRIO program or a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate program (GEAR UP) grant; or
- an FAA at another institution who documented the student's circumstance in the same or a prior award year.

If a student indicates on his FAFSA he is unaccompanied and homeless, or at risk of being homeless (without a designation from a specified entity), the FPS will allow him to complete the form without parent information. The institution's FAA will review the student's circumstances

and make a case-by-case determination of homeless youth status based upon a written statement from or a documented interview with the student.

If a student is determined to be independent due to his unaccompanied homeless youth status, the institution will presume him to be independent for each subsequent award year at the same institution, unless the student informs the school that his circumstances have changed, or the school has conflicting information.

FEDERAL APPLICATION DEADLINE

While FAFSA applications may be submitted until June 30, 2025, students may be required to submit their application earlier, as the application must be processed, and a valid SAI received while the student is still enrolled. Students are urged to submit their applications as early as possible. Late submissions may delay the processing of a student's application. More important, the funds for some programs are limited and will be distributed with priority given to those students who submit their application in a timely fashion.

Only in specific situations may a student update or be required to update certain types of information that he has entered on his application, such as dependency status and household size. Any such changes should be discussed with the financial aid office.

FEDERAL AID PROGRAMS

Federal Pell Grant Program

The Federal Pell Grant Program provides grants to undergraduate students. These grants do not have to be repaid. This program is an "entitlement" which means that each eligible student who attends an eligible institution and applies on time may receive a Federal Pell Grant. The maximum grant for a fully eligible student is \$7395 per award year, which is 100% of the scheduled award. The amount that each student is eligible for is based on the SAI, which is generated by a federally mandated formula, as explained above.

Financial aid disbursements in the Federal Pell Grant Program are scheduled at the beginning of each semester, provided that all paperwork has been submitted and is complete. A student generally receives half of his scheduled award during the first semester and the other half during the second semester.

With the availability of Year-Round Pell, students can receive Federal Pell Grant funds for up to 150% of their Pell Grant Scheduled Award for an award year. An eligible student may receive a Federal Pell Grant for the summer semester, even if he received 100% of his scheduled Federal Pell Grant award during the fall and spring semesters.

Students whose paperwork is completed during the second or third semester may be paid retroactively for previous semesters in the same academic year.

The amount of Federal Pell Grant funds a student may receive over his lifetime is limited by federal law to 600%. If a student's lifetime eligibility used (LEU) equals 600%, the student can no longer receive Pell Grant funding.

Payments from the Federal Pell Program will either be made by credit to the student's tuition account or by direct disbursement to the student. Students will be informed in writing of the expected amount of these payments. Students may inspect their tuition records during regular business hours at the business office.

The Campus-Based Programs

The Campus-Based Programs are a group of programs funded under Title IV. The campus-based programs in which the institution participates are:

FSEOG - Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants

FWS - Federal Work Study

In these programs, fixed sums are allocated to each school based on various factors, including its size. The institution analyzes the need of all eligible financial aid applicants whose paperwork is completed in a timely manner and determines an equitable distribution of the funds available through the packaging process. Students who apply after the initial packaging deadlines, (as posted in the school), may be too late to receive any funds from these programs.

The Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant is a campus-based grant program available to undergraduate students. Awards, when available, can range from \$100 to \$4,000 per award year.

Financial aid disbursements in the FSEOG Program are scheduled at the beginning of each semester, provided that all paperwork has been submitted and is complete. A student generally receives one half of his scheduled award during the first semester and the other half during the

second semester. Students who complete their paperwork during the second semester may be paid retroactively for the first semester. However, students should keep in mind the strong likelihood that there may be limited FSEOG funds available by that time. FSEOG must be packaged and disbursed while the student is enrolled. Payments from the FSEOG program will be made by credit to the student's tuition account.

Generally, the funds are matched 25% non-federal funds to 75% federal funds. However, if in a particular academic year, the institution is granted a waiver of the nonfederal share requirement, the institution may choose not to provide the nonfederal match. Students will be informed of the expected amounts of these payments in writing and may inspect their tuition records during regular hours at the business office.

The Federal Work Study Program is an employment program. Funds are allocated to schools as part of the campus-based programs as explained above. Eligible students are offered part-time employment, which must take place outside of school hours. The financial aid office, in consultation with the faculty, determines if a student is eligible for employment, based on his ability to fulfill his academic responsibilities with the added burden of employment. Employment is also contingent on student qualifications for the positions available.

Disbursements from the FWS program are structured as monthly payroll payments. These payments are distributed over the course of the student's work schedule and are paid directly to the student. Students who wish to use their FWS wages to cover their educational expenses may request an authorization form from the financial aid office.

Typically, FWS funds are matched 25% nonfederal to 75% federal funds. As with FSEOG funds, if the institution is granted a waiver of the nonfederal share requirement in a particular academic year, the institution may choose not to provide the nonfederal match.

FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS

The Federal Direct Loan program offers loans to students, which must be paid back with interest, to help cover their education related expenses. There are two categories of direct loans - subsidized, where the government pays the interest that accrues while the student is in school and unsubsidized - where the student is responsible for the interest that accrues while he is in school. Loans are only given to students who demonstrate willingness to repay. Direct PLUS loans are unsubsidized direct loans which are given to the parents of an eligible student who would like to help pay for the student's expenses in this manner.

Although the school is eligible to participate in the federal loan programs, the school discourages students and parents from taking out loans. The institution encourages its students to apply for the federal, state, and institutional financial aid grant programs before considering the option of student loans and makes every effort to assist students with their direct educational needs. Students who are considering taking out loans should contact the financial aid office for a detailed list of eligibility requirements, available loan amounts, and sample repayment schedules.

NEW JERSEY TUITION AID GRANT (TAG)

The TAG Program provides eligible New Jersey residents attending in-state postsecondary institutions with grants to help them pay for tuition.

Eligibility Requirements

Students must:

- have a high school diploma or recognized equivalent;
- demonstrate financial need;
- be citizens, eligible non-citizens or eligible to file the NJ Alternative Financial Aid Application;
- be a resident of New Jersey for at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to enrollment;
- maintain satisfactory academic progress; and
- be a full-time undergraduate student enrolled in an approved degree or certificate program.

The New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application allows New Jersey Dreamers enrolled in eligible New Jersey colleges and universities to apply for state financial aid.

New applicants for the TAG Program must submit their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by September 15, 2024, to be considered for fall and spring awards. New applicants who apply by February 15, 2025, will be considered for spring awards only. Renewal applications for TAG for fall and spring awards must be submitted by June 1, 2024. Renewal applicants who apply by February 15, 2025, will be considered for spring awards only.

Payments from the TAG Program will be made by credit to the student's tuition account. Generally, one half of the TAG grant is paid at the beginning of each semester (fall and spring).

Students may be eligible to receive Summer TAG while enrolled in at least six credit hours during the summer term, provided that they received a TAG award in the immediately prior fall and/or spring term, and their summer courses are in the same undergraduate program at the same institution at which the student enrolled during the preceding academic year.

Please note that the TAG grant is subject to availability of funds from the state, which is decided on a year-by-year basis and may not be known until after the start of the academic year. Additional information regarding the TAG Program is available from the financial aid office.

Students may inspect their tuition records at the business office during regular business hours.

INSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Institutional scholarships may be available to students who have exhausted all other avenues of assistance and are still unable to pay their direct educational charges.

Students and their parents, if applicable, are expected to contribute towards the student's education, based upon their ability to pay, as determined by formulas explained above. Students who apply for other types of financial aid will automatically be considered for institutional scholarships. Students who do not apply for other financial aid programs may contact the financial aid office to apply for institutional scholarships.