



2021-2022
FINANCIAL AID
INFORMATION
GUIDE



PROGRAMS ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID

900+ clock hours:

Cosmetology Academy (Year 1)
Dental Assisting
Medical Assisting
Medical Billing & Coding



765 clock hours:

Police Academy

700 clock hours:

Early Child Care Education/Child Development Associate

600 clock hours:

Automotive Service Technician
Cosmetology Academy (Year 2)
Heating, Ventilating, Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration (HVAC/R)
Precision/CNC Machining Technology
Welding



Note: Although Cardiographic Technician and Phlebotomy are not eligible for Federal Aid, they are eligible for assistance through the Ohio Means Jobs Workforce Training & Opportunity Act, funding from the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation/Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, and Scholarships. Please see page 6-7 for more information. Each entity listed determines whether an individual is eligible for funding assistance through their organization.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Financial Aid Coordinator/Veterans School Certifying Official:

Allison Smith

Phone: 440-891-7668

Email: asmith@polaris.edu

Polaris Financial Aid Website: <https://www.polaris.edu/financial-aid>





FINANCIAL AID TERMINOLOGY

Federal Student Aid (FSA)

Financial aid from the U.S. Department of Education to help you pay for education expenses at an eligible college or career school. Grants and loans are types of [federal student aid](#). You must complete the [FAFSA form](#) to apply for this aid.

FSA ID

An FSA ID is a username and password that gives you access to FSA's online systems and can serve as your legal signature. Only create an FSA ID using your own personal information and for your own exclusive use. You are not authorized to create an FSA ID on behalf of someone else, including a family member. Create an FSA ID account at studentaid.gov.

FAFSA

To apply for federal student aid, such as Federal Pell grants and Federal Direct loans, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) need to be completed. Completing and submitting the FAFSA is free and gives students access to pay for Polaris Career Center programs. The FAFSA information is used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Students can complete the FAFSA at studentaid.gov.

Federal Pell Grant

A federal [grant](#) for undergraduate students with [financial need](#). Grants and scholarships are often called "gift aid" because they are free money—financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid. This is aid that does not need to be repaid.

- The maximum Federal Pell grant award a student may receive based on an EFC=0:
 - *Some students may not qualify for a Pell grant and some may receive less than the maximum amount.
 - *Amounts are subject to change and are typically finalized in late May of 2021

\$6,495 for a 900 and 946 clock-hour program

\$5,521 for a 765 clock-hour program

\$5,052 for a 700 clock-hour program

\$4,330 for a 600 clock-hour program



Federal Direct Subsidized Loan

A loan based on [financial need](#) for which the federal government generally pays the [interest](#) that accrues while the borrower is in an in-school, grace, or [deferment](#) status. The Federal Direct loan **must** be repaid to the Federal government. The U.S. Department of Education assigns a servicing agency to manage the student's loan repayments. The student will receive communication from this agency after the student's loan has been disbursed. The U.S. Department of Education will charge a small percentage to disburse the loan (**currently, 1.057% but subject to change**), therefore, the loan amount applied to the student's account at Polaris will be less than the actual amount borrowed by the student.

Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan

A loan for which the borrower is fully responsible for paying the [interest](#) regardless of the loan status. Interest on unsubsidized loans accrues from the date of [disbursement](#) and continues throughout the life of the loan.

Federal Direct Loan Limits

For a 900 clock hour program, a student may be eligible for a maximum of:

\$3,500 in subsidized Federal Direct Loans (dependent and independent students);

\$5,500 in unsubsidized Federal Direct Loans (dependent students);

\$9,500 in unsubsidized Federal Direct Loans (independent students)

Awards will be prorated accordingly for programs consisting of less than 900 hours.

For more information about Federal Pell grants and Federal Direct Loans, visit <https://studentaid.gov>.

Entrance Counseling

The Federal Government requires loan borrowers to complete entrance counseling (choose option for undergraduate subsidized and unsubsidized loans) to ensure that they understand the responsibilities and obligations they are assuming. This is completed online and typically takes 20-30 minutes to complete. It can be completed at www.studentaid.gov under "Complete Aid Process". You will need your FSA ID and password.

Master Promissory Note

The Master Promissory Note (MPN) is a legal document in which you promise to repay your loan(s) and any accrued interest and fees to the U.S. Department of Education. It also explains the terms and conditions of your loan(s). It can be completed at www.studentaid.gov under "Complete Aid Process" (choose option for undergraduate subsidized and unsubsidized loans). You will need your FSA ID and password.

Verification

The U.S Department of Education selects certain FAFSA's for a process called verification. Should you be selected, the financial aid counselor will ask you to supply copies of documentation, such as federal income tax returns, W-2 statements and 1099 forms, to verify the data that was submitted on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You will be notified via email approximately one week after completing your FAFSA if you are selected and what items we need to verify.

Polaris Payment Plan

Monthly payment plan through Polaris Career Center. This is a payment plan, not a loan. Once any financial aid has been applied (if utilizing financial aid), the remaining balance will be broken down into equal monthly payments, beginning with the month in which the student enrolls and ending a month before the last day of the class. There are no fees or interest associated with the monthly payment plan through Polaris Career Center.

Scholarships

Awards given by outside organizations, which each have their own separate applications. Generally, the organization sends the scholarship funds directly to the school, and we then credit your account with the funds. We feature some scholarships on our website. Many scholarships have deadlines of April or May for the Fall Term and October or November for the Spring Term. To search for scholarships, visit <https://www.polaris.edu/adult-education/scholarship-opportunities>.

HOW TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL AID

Step 1: Collect items that will help in completing the FAFSA application, for example: 2019 FEDERAL tax returns (IRS 1040), checking and savings account balances, social security benefit statements, value of investments, child support documentation, etc. Students may need to include their parents' financial information on the application. The Financial Aid Office may ask you to provide supporting documentation after you have filed your FAFSA.

Step 2: Apply for an FSA ID account at studentaid.gov if you do not already have one. If parental information is required on the FAFSA, a parent must also apply for an FSA ID account. The FSA ID is very important! You will need this continually throughout the financial aid process so please memorize or keep your FSA ID username and password in a safe place.

Student FSA ID _____ Password _____
Parent FSA ID _____ Password _____

Step 3: Complete the [2021-2022 FAFSA](#) (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) on-line at studentaid.gov. As the name implies, it is FREE! You will need to add the Polaris Career Center school code to your FAFSA so the U.S. Department of Education will send us your information. The school code is: **016745**. We encourage the use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to import your tax information. The student will receive an email to the email address provided on the FAFSA from the U.S. Department of Education when the FAFSA has been processed successfully. **Please see the end of this guide for a tip sheet for completing the FAFSA.**

Step 4: Within 7 days, the student will receive an additional email with the student's SAR (Student Aid Report). The SAR is the result of your processed FAFSA. Your SAR report can be reviewed by logging onto www.fafsa.gov as a returning user. Please read your SAR when it arrives; it will let you know if there were any issues encountered while processing your FAFSA.

Step 5: The Federal Pell Grant is not designed to cover the entire cost of tuition. If you are interested in student loans to help cover the out-of-pocket costs, you must complete and submit the **Entrance Counseling AND a Master Promissory Note (MPN)** at www.studentaid.gov. Entrance counseling consists of important information and answers relevant questions regarding student loans. The MPN is a note that you sign agreeing to repay the student loans borrowed and provide two references to contact in the future should your loan servicer not be able to get in touch with you. A student must first accept the financial aid offer in writing and enroll in a program before the Federal Direct Student Loan is active.

Step 6: After receiving the SAR report and completing the Entrance Counseling and MPN (if taking out a Federal Direct Loan), **the student is responsible for** contacting the **Financial Aid Coordinator, Allison Smith, at 440-891-7668, asmith@polaris.edu** All financial aid awards *must* be confirmed with the Financial Aid office before registration can be initiated.



VETERAN'S BENEFIT INFORMATION

VA education benefits help Veterans, service members, and their qualified family members with needs like paying college tuition, finding the right school or training program, and getting career counseling. Learn how to apply for and manage the education and training benefits you've earned.

STEP 1: Before we can determine your eligibility for Veteran's education benefits, we need an up-to-date copy of your Certificate of Eligibility (COE). You can order this online at <https://www.va.gov/education/eligibility/>. Once you receive it, email or screenshot it to Allison Smith at asmith@polaris.edu or bring it to the Adult Education Office at Polaris. Allison will follow up with you regarding your available benefits.

If you have previously attended another school and have used your benefits, you will need to submit a VA Form 22-1995 "Request for Change of Program or Place of Training" to the Regional Processing Office. You can order this online at: <https://www.va.gov/education/change-gi-bill-benefits/>.

STEP 2: VA education benefits may not cover book and supply charges up front. If you wish to apply for a Pell grant, please follow the instructions on page 3. You do not need to complete step 5 if you are not interested in a loan.

VA Programs

Chapter 30	Montgomery GI Bill® Active Duty Educational Assistance
Chapter 31	Vocational Rehabilitation
Chapter 32	Veterans' Education Assistance Program
Chapter 33	Post 9/11
Chapter 35	Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance
Chapter 1607	Montgomery GI Bill® Selected Reserve Educational Assistance Program

Chapter 33 pays the tuition cost to the school directly. All other chapters pay the tuition cost to the Veteran directly. Students need to arrange for either self-pay with a monthly payment plan or utilize federal financial aid for all out of pocket costs to the student.

For more information, please visit www.va.gov/education.

Veteran's School Certifying Official

Allison Smith
440-891-7668
asmith@polaris.edu



OHIO MEANS JOBS FUNDING

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act through Ohio Means Jobs provides funding for unemployed, underemployed, and dislocated workers. Please visit the Ohio Means Jobs website for more information: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/WIOA/index.stm>

Cuyahoga County Ohio Means Jobs Main Office:

1910 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
(216) 777-8200
(216) 777-8210 Fax

Open Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm

**may be different due to COVID-please call first*



There are several convenient branch locations throughout Cuyahoga County, including libraries and recreation centers. For a list of all locations, please visit:

<https://www.omjcc.us/en-US/Locations.aspx>

Lorain County Ohio Means Jobs Main Office:

42495 North Ridge Road
Elyria, OH 44035
(440) 324-5244

Open Monday-Friday from 8am-4:30pm

**may be different due to COVID-please call first*



Medina County Ohio Means Jobs Main Office:

72 Public Square, 1st Floor
Medina, OH 44256
(330) 723-9675

Open Monday-Friday from 8am-4:30pm

**may be different due to COVID-please call first*



OTHER SOURCES OF AID

Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA)

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Act offers funding to certain individuals whose company has closed its facilities, displacing the employees. Learn more at the Department of Job & Family Services website:

http://jfs.ohio.gov/ouc/tradeadjustassist_faq.stm

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation/Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

BVR/OOD provides individuals with disabilities services and supports necessary to help them attain and maintain employment. If you have a disability you may be eligible for training assistance. Contact your local office for further information. Learn more at the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities website:

<http://www.ood.ohio.gov/Core-Services/BVR/Regional-Offices>



Scholarships

While Polaris itself does not offer any scholarships, many outside agencies do. We highly encourage you to apply for as many scholarships as you can, as it is money that does not have to be repaid, thus reducing or possibly eliminating any student debt. Many of our students receive scholarships. To see a listing of some scholarship sources, you can simply use the search bar on our main website www.polaris.edu or visit the scholarships page at <https://www.polaris.edu/adult-education/scholarship-opportunities>.

REGISTRATION INFO

Job & Career Training students must register in-person at the Polaris Career Center Adult Education Office, located inside the side entrance to the building. After your financial aid is confirmed by the Financial Aid Office, you may make an appointment to register by calling Kathryn at 440-891-7653.

Registration for Fall programs will begin in May 2021.

Appointments are recommended, but we do accept walk-ins. Walk-in hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30am-3:30pm and Fridays, 8:30am-3:00pm. Evening appointments are available by request.

The following documents are required for registration:

- High school diploma/official transcript from an accredited high school recognized by the United States Department of Education, a GED certificate, or its equivalent. If the student's diploma is from a foreign country, the student must have the diploma translated into English by an authorized, certifying official at an official translation service to determine if it is equivalent to a U.S. diploma.
- A valid, U.S. Government Issued Photo ID.
- First payment, if financial aid does not cover all of the program cost.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My current student loan is in default. Can I still get a Pell grant?

A: No, if you are in default, you are not eligible to receive any Title IV aid. You may, however, be able to receive aid in the future if you bring yourself back into good standing with your loan servicer. Contact your servicer for details.

Q: I don't make much money. Will the Pell grant cover the entire cost of my program?

A: No. The Pell grant is designed to assist you with the cost of your educational goals. You will need to cover part of the cost on your own through a monthly payment plan, a student loan, or a third-party funding source such as Ohio Means Jobs or scholarships.

Q: I do not have very good credit. Will this stop me from getting a student loan?

A: No, Federal Direct loans are not credit based, but it is important to know that if you borrow a student loan that you will be required to pay it back after you graduate or leave the program. If you do not make your required student loan payments as scheduled, this will negatively affect your credit report and inhibit your ability to get any future loans you apply for.

Q: Does having a child automatically make me an Independent Student?

A: Not necessarily. The qualifying question is "Do you provide more than 50% support for your child?" For instance, if you have little or no income, and you and your child are living with your parents who are providing most of your needs, then you are not considered an independent student.

Q: I am on my own, support myself and my parents do not claim me on their taxes. Why do I have to provide my parents' information?

A: Dependency status is determined by the questions you answer on the FAFSA. If the FAFSA determines you are a dependent student, then you must provide your parents' information. Generally, if you are under 24 years of age and not married, supporting a dependent, or a veteran, you are considered a dependent student. The U.S. Department of Education's philosophy is that families are primarily responsible for financing the education of their children under 24 years of age.

Q: I am currently attending another school. Can my aid transfer to your school?

A: No, any current loans would need to be cancelled when you leave the other school and you will have to apply for new loans. You may not be able to receive the full loan amount or full Pell amounts if you are overlapping academic years between schools.

Q: I hear a lot of people complaining about loads of debt after going to college. Should I be afraid to take out a student loan?

A: While whether or not you take out a student loan is a personal choice, you should know that Polaris Career Center only offers Federal Direct loans, which are provided by the U.S. Department of Education. The maximum loan amount per program is \$9500. We do not offer private loans, which are often the source of the high debt some students carry after leaving college.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)



Review this sheet before you complete the FAFSA. It will lessen the chances of you having to log back in and revise and resubmit your application, thus saving time and frustration. The FAFSA should be completed at the following website: studentaid.gov.

- These questions apply to the STUDENT applying for aid:

Student Demographics

Your Name: Be sure to use the name listed on your social security card-if you are recently married but have not received a new social security card yet, either use the name on your current card or wait and complete the FAFSA after you receive your new card.

What will your grade-level be when you begin the school year? There are only two options you should check for this question: Never attended college/1st year undergraduate or Attended college before/1st year undergraduate. If this is your first time attending post-secondary education, choose never attended. If you've attended post-secondary education before, check attended.

What degree or certificate will you be working on when you begin the school year? There is only one acceptable answer for this question-certificate or diploma (occupational, technical, or education program of less than two years).

Are you interested in being considered for work-study? Polaris does not offer work-study, so it doesn't really matter how you answer this question for Polaris Career Center.

School Selection

Federal School Code-Enter 016745 into the box on the right-hand side of the page. Polaris Career Center will pop up in a separate box. Check the box next to Polaris Career Center, then click add. Then, click next.

Dependency Determination

Do you have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you, now through June 30, 2022? Having children is not an automatic qualifier for answering yes to this question.

Do you have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you, now through June 30, 2022? Having children is not an automatic qualifier for answering yes to this question.

Only answer Yes if your children truly receive more than 50% of their support from you, meaning you are their primary source of financial support.

Are you pregnant (or is your spouse pregnant) and due by June 30th 2022? You can check Yes to this question provided the child will be receiving more than half of their support from you prior to June 30th 2022.

Do you have dependents other than your children your spouse who will receive more than half of their support from you, from now through June 30, 2022? Significant others, boyfriends, girlfriends, parents, etc. only count if you are providing more than 50% of that person's financial support.

Household Size? This doesn't necessarily mean how many people are living in your house. This number should include you, the student, and anyone who you provide more than 50% of support to, even if these individuals do not reside with you. Click on the box and then see the "helpful hints" box on the right of the screen which will tell you exactly who to count in your household.

Parent Demographics

This section only applies if FAFSA has categorized you as a dependent student

Please note that dependency category on the FAFSA has nothing to do with how you are claimed on anyone's tax return or whether or not you are actually dependent on your parents or living independently. The government feels that parents should have a responsibility for their child's higher education costs up to a certain age, unless that student meets certain criteria for being excluded from this philosophy.

Be sure to have your parents' 2019 tax return information with you when filling out this part. DO NOT GUESS on their financial information. It will not match up with the system and the financial aid process may be prolonged for you. Your parent's can use their FSA ID to utilize the IRS Data Retrieval Tool and transfer their tax return information directly into the FAFSA.

Note: One of your parents will need to create an FSA ID-go here to do so: <https://fsaid.ed.gov>

How many people are in your parent's household? This doesn't necessarily mean how many people are living in your house. This number should include you, the student, even if you do not live with your parents; your parent(s), your parents' other children that they provide more than 50% of support to, even if these children are not living with them; other people your parents will provide more than 50% of support to. Just click on the Household Size link next to the question and your parent will be guided through this question to ensure accuracy.

Parent Financial Information

This section only applies if FAFSA has categorized you as a dependent student

If presented as an option, we strongly recommend utilizing the IRS Data Retrieval Tool when completing the parent financials section. Once you enter which tax form your parents used and their filing status, it will ask if you would like to link to the IRS. Click the blue link and enter the requested information, and if all goes well it will ask if you would like to transfer your IRS information to the FAFSA. Check the box and link it. You will notice that most of the boxes requiring financials will be automatically filled in for you.

Be sure to read carefully and check the following boxes if applicable: whether anyone in your parent's household are receiving SSI benefits, SNAP benefits (food stamps), free or reduced lunch, TANF, and WIC. If these apply to you or your family, be sure to check the associated box.

Your parent(s) **will be presented a series of questions of which most will not apply to them. Please read them carefully, however, as some of them may apply.** Commonly missed questions are child support paid, child support received, and other untaxed income not reported such as workers' compensation or disability benefits.

You will need to report your parents' total balance of cash, savings, and checking accounts and any investments, including real estate.



Student Financial Information

Be sure to have your 2019 tax return information with you when filling out the financials part. **DO NOT GUESS** on your financial information. It will not match up with the system and the financial aid process will be prolonged for you.

We strongly recommend utilizing the IRS Data Retrieval Tool when completing this section. Once you enter which tax form you used and your filing status, it will ask if you would like to link to the IRS. Click the blue link and enter your address (important: be sure to you use the address listed on your 2017 tax return (if it is different than your current address)), and then click submit. If all goes well it will ask if you would like to transfer your IRS information to the FAFSA. Check the box and click Transfer Now. You will notice that most of the boxes requiring financials will be automatically filled in for you.

You will need to report your total balance of cash, savings, and checking accounts. If you are married, you will need to include your spouse's balance too. **Same for any investments, including real estate.**

You will be presented a series of questions of which most will not apply to you. Please read them carefully, however, as some of them may apply. Commonly missed questions are child support paid, child support received, other untaxed income not reported such as workers' compensation or disability benefits, and money received or paid on your behalf (see below for more information money received on your behalf).

If you are an independent student, you have to show how you are supporting yourself on the FAFSA. For example, if you are living with someone who is not charging you rent, determine what you would be paying in rent each month and multiply that number by 12 to get an annual estimate and enter this amount under **money received or paid on your behalf**. Apply the same principle for food, utilities, etc. and add it all up and enter it in this box. If you are not receiving any support from anyone else, you need not enter any amount for this question.

At the end, check "No" for "Are you a Preparer?", read the fine print, click agree, and click sign. Then, click Submit my FAFSA. You may want to print the confirmation page for your records.