

Appealing Your Financial Aid Decision

Getting your financial aid package can be disappointing--many students get less than they thought they would, or less than they wanted. Here are a few strategies to use when appealing your financial aid package.

1. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Do NOT use the word “negotiate” when discussing financial matters. Say words like “reconsider,” “appeal,” “take another look at circumstances,” etc.

2. FOLLOW PROTOCOL

Find out who the specific person assigned to your financial aid is, and make an appointment to call them or meet with them. Many schools require you to fill out additional forms when you ask for a reconsideration. Get these forms and fill them out completely.

3. REGARDING NEED-BASED AID, BE SPECIFIC!

If you are requesting more need-based aid, be specific about why you need more aid:

- Maybe one of your parents or guardians just changed jobs or lost their job
- Maybe a parent or guardian has gotten a one-time bonus that will not happen again
- Maybe your family is moving or has just completed a costly move
- Maybe you have multiple siblings in college
- Maybe your parents/guardians are paying for daycare for other siblings
- Maybe one of your parents/guardians commutes several hours or works in a different state
- Maybe your family had to pay for a medical procedure that was not covered by insurance

4. REGARDING MERIT-BASED AID, BE SPECIFIC!

If you are requesting more merit-based aid, be specific about why you believe you deserve it:

- Send in mid-year transcripts to show how your grades have improved
- Send in copies of AP/SAT subject test score reports to show your talents
- Send in copies of awards that you have received since applying (e.g. chess, sports, quizzing, robotics, leadership, etc.)

5. PLAY YOUR SCHOOLS AGAINST EACH OTHER

If you received MORE aid at a school that you are LESS excited about, consider writing to your top school and attaching the letter as leverage.

6. SEND PROOF OF EVERYTHING

If you have documentation of the special circumstances you described in your letter, make sure to send copies.