



# **Weill Cornell Medicine**

2021-22

Financial Aid Handbook

**MD Students**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Weill Cornell Medicine Financial Aid Handbook is available to assist students and their families to understand the policies, procedures, and programs of the Medical College's financial aid program. All information in this handbook is subject to revision. Information contained herein supersedes that previously published and is subject to change.

### Office of Financial Aid Contact Information:

Address: 1300 York Ave. C-114 New York, NY

Phone: 646-962-3479

Email: [finaid@med.cornell.edu](mailto:finaid@med.cornell.edu)

Website: <https://studentservices.weill.cornell.edu/financial-aid>

### Office of Financial Aid Staff:

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## **FINANCIAL AID DISCLOSURE POLICY**

All information about individual student financial aid is strictly confidential and can only be used for the purpose of determining and administering the student's financial aid.

Persons with legitimate audit responsibilities are permitted access to individual folders. Whenever possible, the selection of folders is random.

All non-identifiable data on individual students is available to persons with legitimate interests. Non-identifiable summary data on student financial aid is available to all connected with student aid, university and governmental administrators, fund raisers, potential donors, etc.

All information concerning an individual student's aid released to a third party by the Office of Financial Aid is done with prior written consent of the student.

## **FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY**

Financial status is not a factor in the admission of students at the Medical College. The Office of Financial Aid will make every effort in assisting students in financing their medical education, as well as managing their student debt. **Eligibility for financial aid is reevaluated each year.** This will take into account changing family and financial circumstances. The fair administration of the financial aid program requires that students, parents, and spouses provide all financial information as fully and accurately as possible, and notify the Office of Financial Aid promptly of any significant changes in their financial circumstances during the year. Full reporting and updating for current circumstances are important requirements of the program that are taken seriously by the school.

International students are not eligible for federal or institutional aid.

## **DACA STUDENT POLICY**

MD students who hold DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival) status granted by the federal government will be considered domestic students by Weill Cornell Medicine for purposes of financial aid, and thus are eligible for need-based financial aid like any U.S. citizen or permanent resident. DACA students, like any other student applying for need-based institutional funding, are expected to provide all requested documents for verification of income and assets.

Federal and state financial aid (including grants, loans, and federal work-study) are not available for DACA students due to Department of Education regulations on Title IV aid eligibility. Weill Cornell's standard, need-based financial aid package includes only a grant/scholarship. DACA students are not eligible to request a federal loan for elective borrowing purposes, but are expected to make up any funding differences through their family contribution or through private loans.

A student who is undocumented (without DACA status) will be considered an international student for purposes of financial aid and will not be eligible to apply for need-based institutional funding.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students are expected to uphold certain responsibilities for their part in making sure that the Office of Financial Aid has all the documents and/or information required to make a decision on a student's eligibility for financial aid. This includes the following:

- Students are to complete all application forms, additional documentation, corrections, and/or new information, and submit them on time.
- Students are to respond to any request for information from the Office of Financial Aid in a timely manner so as to not delay the processing of their aid. A hold may be placed on a student account due to non-responsiveness.
- Students are to read, understand, and keep copies of all forms that they are asked to sign.
- Students are responsible for knowing when they might be expected to return all or part of their financial aid award in case of changes to status affecting eligibility, such as withdrawing, taking a leave of absence, and/or changes in family/income circumstances.
- Students are responsible for honoring all agreements that they sign.

## APPLICATION DUE DATE

Financial aid is a rolling process. We aim to provide an award letter within 7-10 business days of receiving all requested documents. In order to meet this expectation, we require that the completed financial aid application and all requested documents be received by the Office of Financial Aid by the following dates:

1st year (incoming) students – March 19<sup>th</sup>

Returning students - May 15<sup>th</sup>

## HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Depending on the aid that you are applying for, these are the forms you are required to complete:

### For Federal Loans Only

Students must complete the **2021-22 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. Weill Cornell Medicine collects data only on the student and spouse, not on parents, on this form. The federal school code for the Medical College is **G04762**.

### For Institutional Need-Based Aid

- Students must complete the **2021-22 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. Weill Cornell Medicine collects data only on the student and spouse, not on parents, on this form. The federal school code for the Medical College is **G04762**.
- Students must complete a **2021-22 CSS Profile application**. This is a requirement for both students and parents. If parents are separated or divorced, each parent must complete a separate CSS Profile. The school code for the CSS Profile application is **2279**. *Note: If a student is age 40 or older at the time of application, the CSS Profile application for the parents is not required.*
- An **Aid Type Request Form** will also be required. This form allows students to initially self-select the aid type they would like to be considered for, as well as to collect other necessary information. The online form is available on the [Financial Aid Website](#).

Links to the FAFSA and CSS applications can be found below:

FAFSA – <https://fafsa.gov/>

CSS Profile - <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>

## **STUDENT CONTRIBUTION**

We review a student's income and assets as part of the need analysis. A minimum contribution of \$1,000 from earnings is expected of 1st year students. Verification of siblings in school is required and will be done in the fall of each school year.

## **PARENT CONTRIBUTION**

Financial information from parents is required of all students who wish to be considered for institutional need based aid. This parent information is required of all students, regardless of marital status or length of time a student has been self-supporting. WCM will allow the waiver of parent information for students age 40 and above. The parent contribution takes into consideration parental income and assets, age of household members, number of dependents, taxes, retirement needs, and medical expenses.

## **WAIVER OF PARENT INFORMATION**

A parent's information may be waived in certain rare and extreme cases. WCM has a Parent Waiver Application that a student may complete and submit for consideration by the Financial Aid Committee. This application must be complete in order to be considered. The requirements include a letter from the student, a letter from a family member, and a letter from a third party. See Parent Waiver Form for additional guidance. All letters must provide sufficient documentation of the situation between the student and parent they wish to waive. Failure to provide all requested parental information will result in an incomplete application and no financial aid will be awarded. Please contact the Office of Financial Aid for assistance with this process.

## **SPOUSE OR DOMESTIC PARTNER (DP)**

In addition to parents, we require financial data from a spouse and/or domestic partner. A Domestic Partnership is a legal relationship permitted under certain state laws. We will recognize any domestic partnership status, based on the law of the student's home state.

A student with a spouse or domestic partner who is a full-time student is treated as a single student in terms of budget and resources. If the spouse or domestic partner is not a student, a contribution may be expected from his/her income and assets, after a comprehensive review of household financial information.

## **SIBLING ENROLLMENT**

Siblings are taken into account as part of the need analysis process, and have an impact on a student's demonstrated financial need. Siblings may be included in the student's need-based financial aid application if they meet the following criteria:

1. Sibling is enrolled Full-time in a degree program
2. Sibling is age 26 or younger
3. Sibling is claimed on parents' 2019 federal tax return
4. Sibling enrollment must be verified by Sept 30, 2021 by submitting the Sibling Enrollment Verification Form that has been completed by their institution's Registrar. Any students who fail to turn in the Sibling Enrollment Form by the deadline will have their financial aid adjusted to exclude the sibling

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

The required document required for financial aid will vary depending on student circumstances. They may include many or all of the following:

1. Student 2019 federal income tax return or non-filer form (if not required to file)
2. Parents' 2019 federal income tax return or non-filer form (if not required to file)  
*If parents do not live in the United States, a foreign tax return is required. A translation of the documentation must accompany the return if it is not in English.*
3. Spouse or Domestic Partner's 2019 federal income tax return (if filed separately) or non-filer form (if not required to file)
4. Sibling college enrollment verification form (if applicable; sibling must be at full time status, as defined by their institution's Registrar)

## **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

The Office of Financial Aid may require additional documents in their review of financial aid need. The student will be notified promptly if these additional documents are required. Financial aid cannot be awarded or disbursed if these documents are not received.

## **AWARDING OF FINANCIAL AID**

### General Guidelines for Need-Based Awards:

An applicant must be a United States citizen, a naturalized citizen of the United States, permanent resident, or an eligible non-citizen. The application for financial aid is not a factor in the decision for acceptance to Weill Cornell Medicine. When accepted, financial aid is awarded only on the basis of demonstrated need. **Need** is determined by an analysis of income and assets of students and their families.



Students and their parents bear the primary responsibility for financing the student's medical education. The college does not recognize any student as "independent" for institutional funds until the age of 40. However, as of July, 1993 all medical students are considered "independent" for federal loan programs.

Financial need is determined based on the formula:



To continue to be eligible for aid, students must be in good academic standing and making Satisfactory Academic Progress according to the Guidelines for Promotion and Graduation of the Medical College, printed annually in the Student Handbook.

Once a financial aid application has been reviewed, the Student Contribution (SC) and Parental Contribution (PC) are derived from the information provided on both the FAFSA and CSS Profile. This combination of contribution figures determine the total Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for the applicant. For need-based financial aid, the student's EFC (includes parent(s) and spouse/domestic partner) and their annual cost of attendance are used to determine unmet need and eligibility for the Weill Cornell Institutional Grant/Scholarship.

Weill Cornell Medicine meets 100% of each student's unmet need with institutional funding.

## STUDENT LOANS

Students who are ineligible for or who do not apply for need-based aid may be eligible for Federal Direct loans or private loans. Students may also borrow a loan to replace their family contribution. Students cannot borrow in excess of their annual cost of attendance budget. Further details on loans can be found on our website [here](#).

## FEDERAL DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED STUDENT LOANS

The amount of the Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan varies depending on the year in school. If a student has a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan, interest will be accruing during the in-school period. Payments are not required while a student is actively progressing towards his/her degree. However, any unpaid interest will be added to the principal balance during repayment. The interest rate for the loan will be set on July 1<sup>st</sup> of every year by the Department of Education.

## **GRADUATE PLUS LOANS**

Graduate and Professional degree students are also eligible to borrow under the Direct PLUS Loan Program up to their cost of attendance minus other estimated financial assistance.

Unlike the Direct Unsubsidized loan program, this loan is based on the borrower's credit history and therefore requires a hard credit check. As with the Direct Unsubsidized loan, interest will be accruing during the in-school period. Payments are not required while a student is actively progressing towards his/her degree. However, any unpaid interest will be added to the principal balance during repayment. The interest rate for the loan will be set on July 1<sup>st</sup> of every year by the Department of Education.

## **FEDERAL LOAN FEES**

The Direct Unsubsidized and Direct PLUS Loans each have an origination fee, which is deducted proportionately from each loan disbursement. The amount of aid disbursed to a student's account will be net of the origination fee. The individual origination fees for each loan will be set on October 1<sup>st</sup> of every year by the Department of Education.

## **ALTERNATIVE LOANS**

Alternative student loans are administered by independent entities and are not affiliated with Weill Cornell Medicine. They can offer various terms for repayment, interest rates, and loan limits. The terms of these loans can vary from lender to lender. The process is initiated by the student, and in most cases the lender requests certification to verify that the student is enrolled and the loan amount does not exceed the cost of attendance. These funds are disbursed directly to the school on the student's behalf.

## **PRIMARY CARE LOAN**

The Federal Health Professions reauthorization of 1992 developed a linkage between financial aid programs and the career choices of medical students. The Primary Care Loan is awarded only to students planning to enter training and practice in the primary care fields of family practice, general internal medicine, and general pediatrics. Failure to pursue primary care training and practice will result in a penalty imposed by the federal government. Students with a strong interest in primary care may consider a Primary Care Loan in fourth year if they meet other eligibility criteria. The Office of Financial Aid will offer this option to students set to pursue Primary Care after a residency match.

## **INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Medical College's institutional grant may be comprised of one or several scholarships, and are awarded to students who demonstrate need. These scholarships are applied to a student's award package to meet 100% of the calculated need.

## **OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS**

Students who receive outside scholarships will have their loans (if any) reduced by the amount of the scholarship in order to reduce student debt. In the case of need-based aid recipients, these outside resources can also replace all or part of a student's family contribution. A student's total financial aid, including outside scholarships, cannot exceed the annual cost of attendance. We encourage all students to seek additional scholarship opportunities. Please visit the [Office of Financial Aid website](#) for a list of scholarship resources.

## **STUDENT COST OF ATTENDANCE**

The cost of attendance reflects the student's average cost of attending Weill Cornell Medicine. It should represent a modest, but adequate, standard of living. The standard budget includes the average cost of rent for on-campus housing. The budget assumes that single students are living in Olin Hall in the first year and shared Medical College apartments thereafter. The student budget includes both direct and indirect costs associated with enrollment in the Medical College.

## **DIRECT COSTS**

Direct costs consist of the following types of expenses:

- Tuition
- Mandatory fees
- Weill Cornell Medicine student health insurance & other voluntary insurance (e.g. Dental & Vision)
- On-campus rent

## **INDIRECT COSTS**

Indirect costs consist of the following types of expenses:

- Books & Equipment
- Supplies
- Food & Personal
- Off-campus rent

## **BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS\***

Upon certain circumstances, the Office of Financial Aid can adjust a student's budget with adequate documentation. Budget adjustments must meet requirements set forth by Federal Title IV regulations issued via the Department of Education. **All budget increases must be pre-approved by the Office of Financial Aid.** Students are expected to choose low-cost options for items like transportation and lodging when applicable. Examples of changes to standard budgets may include, but are not limited to:

- Child care – the cost of child care for students with dependent children  
*(Subject to annual maximum in accordance with the Weill Cornell childcare partner at Bright Horizons and parents' employment and student status. Students who have included a spouse in their household for financial aid purposes will be assumed as sharing this expense 50%/50% with their spouse- check with our office for details)*
- Medical expenses that are not covered by insurance or any other source
- Residency interview expenses - application, travel and lodging expenses
- One-time computer or laptop purchase (up to \$2,000)
- Away Rotations - select travel and lodging expenses incurred
- Off-campus housing - monthly rent and utilities up to a \$2,000/month maximum (combined)

**\* Please note - These must be pre-approved by the Office of Financial Aid in order to be included in a student's budget.**

## **OFFER LETTERS & ACCEPTANCE OF FINANCIAL AID**

Students receive notice of financial aid in the form of an Offer Letter via email. All students are required to send back a signed copy of their Offer Letter to the Office of Financial Aid as proof of their acceptance or to note any adjustments they would like to make to their financial aid award, including declination.

## **APPEALS PROCESS**

Students may submit an appeal of their need-based financial aid based on extenuating circumstances. The Appeal Application Request form can be found on LEARN, and must be submitted with all required documentation. All appeals are confidential and considered on a case-by-case basis. Appeals are reviewed and adjudicated by the Financial Aid Appeals Committee

Students are required to reapply for financial aid on an annual basis, thus results of an appeal are applied to the corresponding academic year only. Appeals may be submitted from August 1 to October 31 only. All information and documentation pertaining to the appeal must be submitted within this period of time. Changes in family circumstances that occur after that time period will be considered in the following year's financial aid application, which is open in early spring for continuing students. Students will be notified of the status of their request once all information pertaining to the appeal has been received and reviewed by the Office of Financial Aid, and after the Appeal period has concluded and all appeals have been reviewed. The Office of Financial Aid has the right to deny any appeal based on available institutional funding or based on the circumstances as documented in the appeal.

## **OVER-AWARDS**

A financial aid over-award is defined as financial aid awarded to a student that exceeds the cost of attendance. If a potential or actual over-award is discovered, we are required to adjust or return the excess of funds. Aid that may need adjusting to prevent an over-award will be done in the following order, from first to last: 1- Federal loan and/or Private loan, 2- Institutional Grant/Scholarship.

## **DISBURSEMENT OF FINANCIAL AID**

Grants/Scholarships and loans (school, federal, and private/alternative) are typically disbursed in two disbursements. Fifty percent is disbursed in the Fall semester, and the other fifty percent is disbursed during the Spring semester.

## **CREDIT BALANCES & REFUND CHECKS**

A credit balance occurs whenever financial aid funds credited to a student's account exceed the student's billed charges. The Student Accounting Office issues all refunds via Nelnet, a third party company. Students will receive an email notifying them that they have a refund available. By signing up for direct deposit, refunds are delivered to the student's bank account. If a student does not elect to receive a refund by direct deposit, a refund check will be mailed to the student's local address, and is typically received within 7-10 business days from the time the refund check is mailed.

## **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

In order to be eligible for financial assistance at the Medical College, a student must be in good academic standing and making satisfactory progress according to the guidelines for graduation and promotion of the Medical College, printed annually in the Student Handbook.

## **UNSATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS & FINANCIAL AID REVIEW**

Satisfactory Academic Progress is reviewed for each student receiving financial aid from the institution at the end of every payment term. If a student exhibits unsatisfactory academic performance as determined by the Committee on Promotion and Graduation, s/he receives notification in writing from the Dean of Academic Affairs, which includes a Financial Aid warning for the subsequent payment term. If a student fails to make satisfactory progress after a warning period, then s/he is placed on probation and is ineligible for subsequent financial aid payments. Under this circumstance, a student may be offered an individual academic plan in accordance with the committee's criteria to reestablish satisfactory progress, and is permitted to receive financial aid for an additional payment term. Failure after warning and probation period may be grounds for academic dismissal.

## **REFUND POLICY & WITHDRAWALS**

If a student takes a leave of absence or withdraws from the Medical College, tuition and financial aid received may be refunded/adjusted based on a prorated formula for the number of days in attendance. The Office of Financial Aid must follow Federal and Institutional Rules and Regulations. In doing so, the office must perform a Return to Title IV calculation and/or Institutional Fund Return Calculation, which can result in the student owing a balance to the school.

## **WORK STUDY**

The Medical College has a work study program which is financially sustained by federal and institutional funds, as well as an accord with a student's sponsor/employer. Funding is earmarked for medical students during the summer months between their first and second academic years. Work study funds are not available for students at any other point in the MD curriculum.

The Medical College offers opportunities for students to work with faculty in a variety of laboratory and clinical projects. Each student is responsible for securing their individual projects, as well as for confirming that their sponsor/employer will contribute to their earnings. Students are encouraged to work with the Office of [Medical Student Research](#) during this process.

## **LOAN EXIT COUNSELING, DEBT MANAGEMENT AND LOAN REPAYMENT**

The Office of Financial Aid is committed to educating all student borrowers on matters of student loan debt during their time at WCM and prior to graduation. Through extensive communication initiatives such as group information sessions and individualized one-on-one appointments, the Office of Financial Aid plays a significant role in providing essential debt management tools and resources to current students and alumni.

There are several repayment plans for Federal Direct Student Loans. Borrowers can choose a plan to fit their financial circumstances and can change plans without penalty at any time if their financial circumstances change. If, because of exceptional circumstances, a student cannot repay his/her loans using one of the repayment plans, the student should reach out to his/her Loan Servicer to see what options might be available.

Students receive detailed information about repayment options at Exit Counseling and from their loan servicer, so they can select the plan that is the best fit for them. Borrowers will be told what their monthly repayment amounts would be under each plan. Once a plan is selected, the loan servicer will send a repayment schedule for all Direct Loans, listing the plan selected, what the monthly payment will be, and when payments will be due.

Changes in physician income and career opportunities make it essential that students borrow at a manageable level. For many medical students and their families, the prospect of considerable debt is alarming. Excessive debt may have serious consequences in terms of financial planning for the future.

It is essential that students learn the terms of potential loans and be prepared to budget during medical school and residency in order to meet their obligations. The ability to repay is affected by the interest

rate, the number of years of repayment, and the methods by which these payments are structured. For borrowers with existing (prior to 2019-20) Medical College loans, payment for these loans may be deferred during postgraduate training. We caution students to live within the standard budget and to avoid high interest loan programs whenever possible in their borrowing process.

## **LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

These programs are offered after residency:

- National Health Service Corps and Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Programs offer \$25,000 - \$35,000 loan repayment for Primary Care service in underserved areas after residency for a minimum of two years, in addition to salary. Provides allowance to pay for additional income tax.
- Many states and the Armed Services have introduced loan repayment programs. These should be investigated in the last year of training.
- National Institutes of Health - Loan repayment for researchers at the NIH, up to \$35,000 annually for a two-year commitment.
- Check [www.aamc.org/stloan](http://www.aamc.org/stloan) for other loan repayment & forgiveness programs.

## **KEY FINANCIAL AID WEBSITES:**

Federal Student Aid Loans - <https://studentaid.gov/>

National Student Loan Data Base System (NSLDS) - <https://studentaid.gov/>

Heartland ECSI (for existing Medical College loans)- <http://borrower.ecsi.net/>

FIRST: Financial Information, Resources, Services, and Tools (AAMC) - <https://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid/>

MedLoans™ Organizer and Calculator (MLOC) - <https://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid/article/medloans-organizer-and-calculator-mloc/>

Online resource on financial aid process, loan consolidation, loan forgiveness, repayments & debt - <https://www.debt.org/students/>

## **CREDIT REPORTS**

Credit is an increasingly important part of medical student financial life. Private lenders are looking at the prior credit record of new borrowers and will not approve those with unsatisfactory ratings. We recommend you check on your credit status. You can request a copy of your credit report online or by phone from one of the three national credit bureaus below:

- Experian: 1-888-397-3742, [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)
- Trans Union (TU): 1-800-916-8800, [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

- Equifax: 1-800-685-1111, [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

You are entitled to a free copy of your credit report if you have been denied credit within the past 60 days. In addition, under the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 (FACT Act) all students are entitled to a free credit report annually from each of the three credit agencies ([www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)).