

Rock Valley College

Financial Aid Handbook

The Financial Aid Office helps students and families find financial resources which give them access to education and training.

ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID MISSION STATEMENT

To assist students and families seeking resources to finance a post-secondary education by administering comprehensive federal, state and institutional aid programs in a student centered environment.

To accomplish this mission we will:

- *Provide quality customer service to students from a knowledgeable and professional staff committed to providing accurate, clear information appropriate to their individual needs.*
- *Provide accessibility and opportunities for students to apply for financial aid via computers, forms, publications and personalized assistance.*
- *Award financial aid in an equitable and consistent manner.*
- *Protect the privacy of students and assure the confidentiality of student records and personal circumstances.*
- *Respect the dignity and diversity of each student.*
- *Evaluate and update our programs regularly to ensure effectiveness.*

Your education is an investment in your future. However, the rising costs of education can sometimes make it difficult for students and their families to afford college tuition and related expenses. The Financial Aid Program at Rock Valley College is committed to helping you identify your options for assistance.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition for college credit courses is charged per semester hour and is determined by residency. The following costs have been established by the Board of Trustees for the 2017-18 academic year. They are subject to change.

Tuition per Semester Hour*

In-district student.....	..\$115
Illinois out-of-district student.....	\$287
Out-of-state student.....	\$500

Fee Schedule for Credit Courses*

Registration fee (nonrefundable).....	\$2/semester
Activity fee.....	\$3/credit hour
Course fee.....	\$1/course
Technology fee.....	\$7/credit hour
International fee.....	\$500/term
Distance learning.....	\$53/course

**Tuition rates and fees are subject to change during the academic year.*

Financial Aid

Although the cost of being a student at Rock Valley College is low compared to most other colleges and universities, any educational expenses can strain your budget. The college participates in federal, state, and local programs in order to offer eligible students several options for financial aid. Prospective students, current students, or parents looking for an estimate of aid that they may be eligible to receive or the costs associated with attending college are urged to visit Rock Valley's Net Price Calculator, located here: <http://apps.rockvalleycollege.edu/NetPriceCalc/npcalc.htm>

Who Is Eligible for Financial Aid?

Financial aid is awarded to eligible students without regard to age, race, religion, sex, ethnic origin, or disability.

To be eligible for federal and state aid, the student must:

- Be a citizen of the United States or a permanent resident (eligible non-citizen);
- Be a resident of the state of Illinois for at least 12 months immediately prior to the academic year for which assistance is requested if they are an independent student. For a dependent student the parent must be an Illinois resident (required for MAP Grant only);
- Have a high school diploma, General Education Development (GED), valid home school credentials, or meet the Ability to Benefit alternative criteria;
- Have financial need, except for some loan programs;
- Be free of default or repayment of any federal or state financial assistance at any institution of higher education;
- Comply with Rock Valley College's Satisfactory Academic Progress policy for continued eligibility (see p. 6);
- Register for the Selective Service if you are male, at least 18 years old, and not currently a member of the U.S. Armed Forces. To receive federal and state financial aid, you may be required to submit proof of registration. For more information you may go to www.sss.gov;
- Have a valid Social Security Number;
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student working toward a degree or certificate in a Financial Aid eligible program;
- Use federal student aid only for educational purposes;
- Not be enrolled simultaneously in elementary or secondary school;
- Have a valid Social Security Number, if required;
- Be registered with the Selective Service, if applicable;
- Not in default on any Title IV loans, or if in default, have made satisfactory repayment arrangements with the loan holder;
- No current outstanding Grant Overpayments;
- Currently maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP);
- Have not obtained loan amounts that exceed annual or aggregate loan limits made under any Title IV loan program;
- Not have been convicted of an offense involving the possession or sale of illegal drugs that occurred while the student was enrolled and receiving Title IV aid.

The amount of aid awarded will be based upon an analysis of the information submitted on the FAFSA. Financial aid programs are designed to supplement student or family resources by bridging the gap between costs and the student's/family's measured ability to pay. The analysis of need includes consideration of income, assets, family size, number of family members in college, and other related factors that affect the individual's/family's financial situation.

APPLICANT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. I affirm to the best of my knowledge that information submitted is complete and correct.
 2. I agree to give documentation of all requested information. Once received and reviewed I will be sent an award letter.
- To check the status of your award(s) go online to: www.rockvalleycollege.edu/onlineservices.

3. I understand that I may not receive financial aid from two schools at the same time.
4. I will inform the Financial Aid Office of changes in any information submitted for financial aid.
5. I understand that Rock Valley College has the responsibility to cancel all financial aid if conflicting information or errors are verified.
6. Financial aid is not automatically renewable and must be applied for each academic year.
7. Students applying for other forms of financial assistance must first apply for the Pell Grant.
8. I am required to make satisfactory progress in the course of study in which I am enrolled, according to the Rock Valley College Academic Progress Policy.
9. I understand that the number of credits I enroll in affects the amount of aid I am eligible to receive.
10. I understand that financial aid is subject to change and may be revised if estimated dollars are not received from the Department of Education or ISAC, if errors have been made in the calculation of the awards, if the student enrolls in or drops below 12 credits for federal aid or 15 credits for state aid (full-time enrollment) per term, or if the funding levels of these programs change. The award letter is based on full-time enrollment.
11. I must read my rights and responsibilities concerning financial aid found in the current Education Department Student Guide or by going on-line to <https://studentaid.ed.gov>.
12. I am aware that the deadline for the Illinois MAP Grant is the date ISAC forecasts that funds are used up.
13. I affirm that to the best of my knowledge I do not owe repayment on a Pell Grant or Supplemental Educational Opportunities Grant (SEOG) previously received for study at any post-secondary educational institution.
14. I am not in default on a Federal Family Educational Loan, a Federal Direct Stafford Loan, or a Federal Perkins Loan.
15. I affirm that I will be enrolled in either a curriculum leading to a degree/certificate, or transfer program applicable to a baccalaureate degree.
16. I understand that only courses registered for, prior to the census date, will count toward Title IV eligibility.
17. I authorize Rock Valley College to credit and apply Financial Aid to my account unless I notify the Financial Aid Office in writing.
18. I understand that all financial obligations I incur at RVC for the 2017-2018 academic year will be deducted from my financial aid awards. In addition, up to \$200 for previous years unpaid obligations will be deducted unless I notify the Financial Aid Office in writing.
19. I understand that all financial aid is awarded based upon availability of funds.
20. I understand that I am responsible for charges incurred even if grants/loans do not come through.
21. I understand that I must report any private scholarships and/or employer reimbursements that I receive to the Financial Aid Office.
22. I understand it is my responsibility to drop courses that I will not attend prior to the last day for a tuition refund.
23. I certify that I will use Federal Student Financial Aid only to pay for my educational costs.
24. Know what financial aid is available, including information on all federal, state, local, and institutional financial aid programs.
25. Expect fair and equitable treatment from the Financial Aid Office staff.
26. Know the interest rate and the amount you must repay on your student loan(s). Know when repayment begins and the length of time you have to repay it within; and what cancellation or deferment provisions apply.
27. Request reconsideration of your financial aid package.
28. Know how satisfactory academic progress is measured and how you can reestablish eligibility for Federal Financial Aid if you fail to meet the standard.
29. I understand that not all classes or majors are eligible for financial aid, including student loans.
30. I understand that at any time enrollment drops below 6 credit hours, the Federal Student Loan can be canceled as well as any remaining disbursements. The student will be responsible for any remaining balance.

For additional information go to www.rockvalleycollege.edu.

In compliance with federal regulations, the RVC Financial Aid Office reserves the right to request additional information to clarify conflicting application data. Photocopies of information requested will not be returned.

When to Apply for Financial Aid

At times applying for financial aid can seem overwhelming but we would like to make it as simple as possible for you. We are available to help you with the process. We strongly recommend you start the process as early as possible after January 1, as the whole process may take up to three to four months.

For priority consideration you must submit your FAFSA to the Department of Education's central processing center and return all requested paperwork to the Financial Aid Office before:

- March 15 if you plan to begin in summer
- May 1 if you plan to begin in fall
- October 15 if you plan to begin in spring

If the above information has not been received by the financial aid office by these dates, you may need to make arrangements for payment of your tuition/fees with the Accounts Receivable Office prior to the payment due date. For information on a monthly payment plan, please go online to www.rockvalleycollege.edu/payment. If you are found to be eligible for financial assistance after you have paid, you may be reimbursed. You must reapply for student aid every year. Also, if you change schools, your aid does not transfer. Check with your new school to find out what steps you must take to continue receiving aid.

How to Apply for Financial Aid

1. Obtain a FSA ID by going to <https://fsaid.ed.gov/>. You will need one for yourself and one for one of the parents' whose information will appear on the FAFSA form.
2. Complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on-line at (www.fafsa.gov). List Rock Valley College's school code: 001747 on your application. For assistance, computers are available at the Financial Aid Office to submit FAFSA. The processor will mail or e-mail you a Student Aid Report (SAR) within 3 weeks. Filing via postal mail is possible but may add up to three weeks to processing. To be considered for Financial Aid, you must complete a new FAFSA each year. We recommend completing it each year when the FAFSA Application opens for the new Award Year on October 1st.
3. Complete and submit the "Financial Aid Information Form (Form 1) to the Financial Aid Department. This form is required each year. All Financial Aid forms can be found at: <http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Admission/FinancialAid/Forms-2017-18.cfm>
4. A letter will be mailed to the student requesting additional information needed by Rock Valley College to process your application. Requested documentation can also be found in the student's online services, under Financial Aid.
5. Submit the following to the Admissions Office at RVC:
 - Completed Enrollment Information Form
 - Official grade transcripts must be sent from all previous colleges attended to Rock Valley College's Records Office.
6. Once your file is complete you will receive an award letter outlining what aid you are eligible to receive.

How to use the Financial Aid

After the financial information you have submitted to the federal processor has been reviewed, and your file has been completed at Rock Valley College, awards become usable for tuition and fees. If your financial assistance exceeds the amount of your tuition and fees charged for the semester, you may be eligible to participate in the FA-link program which would allow you to charge your books to your RVC account. For more information please stop by the Financial Aid Office or our website www.rockvalleycollege.edu/FinancialAid. If the combination of grants and loans exceeds all direct costs to the college, a refund check will be issued to you by the Financial Services Office approximately six weeks after classes start. **Please note that whatever funds come to RVC first will be used to pay towards your student bill.**

Verification

Verification Policy

Rock Valley College adheres to all required verification regulations (34 CFR 668.51-61). Staff are provided guidance and routinely trained on new regulations. Financial Aid Assistants are responsible for ensuring accurate and compliant review. Any student may be selected for verification by the federal government or the Financial Aid Office. At Rock Valley College, all students selected for verification are required to submit documentation in order for this process to be completed. The verification process allows the RVC Financial Aid Office to review the information reported on the FAFSA, checking for accuracy against documents you provided.

If you are selected for verification, you must submit an official IRS Tax Return Transcript of your tax return as well as a completed Verification Worksheet (provided by the Financial Aid Office) or use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool through the FAFSA application site. If you are a dependent student, an official IRS Tax Return Transcript of your parents' tax return must also be submitted and your parents must complete and sign the Verification Worksheet. If you are married, you and/or your spouse's official IRS Tax Return Transcript must be submitted and your spouse must also complete the Verification Worksheet. All documents must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office. Additional documents may be needed once a Financial Aid Assistant begins to process your file. If this is the case, you will be notified through your online services. If you are selected for verification, the documents required must be received before an actual financial aid award can be issued.

Conflicting Information and Data

Our procedures ensure that we resolve conflicting data for our applicants as follows:

Applicants Selected for Verification

If we have reason to believe that any information on the application used to calculate the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is inaccurate (or if any supporting documentation is discrepant and inaccurate), we require the applicant to provide adequate documentation to resolve the conflict.

Applicants Not Selected for Verification

Although we do not review ISIRs (FAFSA Transactions) for students who are not selected for verification, we resolve any conflicting information of which we become aware. As required, the Financial Aid Office will review all tax returns provided to the school even if they were not requested. All C Codes on the ISIR will be reviewed and resolved by the Financial Aid Office.

Other Applicant Information Received by the School

We have an adequate internal system to identify conflicting information that we may have, regardless of the source. All personnel in the college are informed to notify the Financial Aid Office if information is presented that may impact a student's eligibility for financial aid. For example, the Foundation who handle scholarships know that they must inform the Financial Aid Office of the student's award.

Other Applicant Information Received by the School

Rock Valley College encourages all students and/or parents to utilize the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, if possible, when completing your FAFSA. Additional information on the IRS Data Retrieval Tool can be found here, under the "Tax Transcript Request Procedures" heading: http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Admission/FinancialAid/ThingstoKnow.cfm?cssearch=84097_1

Professional Judgement and Dependency Overrides

Rock Valley College understands that there may be certain situations that may arise that warrant further consideration above and beyond the typical file or verification review required by the Department of Education. Rock Valley College will review student files on a case by case basis for professional judgement overrides when a student's financial situation has significantly changed or is not accurately reflected by the FAFSA application, or in the event that a student's dependency status should be overridden due to issues not fully identified or captured by the FAFSA application. These requests must be made in person to the Financial Aid Office and will require additional documentation that varies based on the nature and type of review being requested. Prior to requesting a professional judgement review, students must complete the verification process, if selected. Please note that these reviews are final. Regulations regarding professional judgments are documented in the HEA Section 479A subpart a. The guidelines regarding the performance of a dependency override are documented in HEA Section 480 subpart d

item 7 and Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) GEN-03-07. Additional guidance for professional judgment was given in GEN-09-04 and GEN-09-05. Finally, GEN-04-04 gives specific guidance for individuals affected by a natural disaster.

Income Adjustments

In accordance with the aforementioned regulations, institutions may allow a financial aid administrator, with support of adequate documentation and on a case-by-case basis, the authority to make adjustments to the cost of attendance or data value items required to calculate the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to allow for consideration of individual applicant circumstances. Rock Valley College has established the following policy in compliance with these regulations. Because the FAFSA is only intended to capture a family's financial strength at the time of application, it is necessary to have a process by which a financial aid administrator may review a family's circumstances in response to changes that occurred after the filing date but within the academic year. Additionally, individual circumstances may exist by which a dependent student's financial strength should be assessed separately from the financial strength of his/her parent(s).

The following cases of professional judgment represent *some* extenuating circumstances that may be considered for an income adjustment at Rock Valley College:

- Change in or loss of employment resulting in significant decrease in income
- Loss of child support received
- One-time income from IRA, Pensions, Annuities or Retirement
- One-time lump sum governmental grants for natural disasters
- Unusually high medical or dental expenses (except cosmetic, including orthodontic work, plastic surgery, Lasik surgery, etc.) paid in the current year and not covered by insurance
- Other unforeseen circumstances (such as natural disaster) that significantly decreases the income available for post-secondary educational costs.

(Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and other cases may be reviewed if they demonstrate a significant change in income. Please speak to a financial aid representative if you have additional questions)

The following circumstances will not be considered by Rock Valley College for an income adjustment:

- Car payments or car insurance
- Consumer debt (credit cards, mortgages, rent, etc.)
- Chapter 7 or 13 personal bankruptcy
- Home equity, IRA, 403B and 401K loans
- Loss of untaxed income not reported on FAFSA

Documentation

The financial aid administrator reserves the right to request and collect any and all supplemental documentation he/she deems necessary to process an appeal using his/her professional discretion. Documentation *may* include the following documents specified by the type of appeal:

Dependent students: loss of employment

- Last pay stub from previous employer; and
- Unemployment benefit(s) statement; and
- Severance/Separation Agreement; or
- Letter from previous employer verifying termination

Independent students: loss of employment

- Unemployment benefit(s) statement; or
- Letter from U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), and other State agency on behalf of USDOL acknowledging unemployment status

Change in employment (i.e. decrease in hours; reduction in pay due to economic conditions) resulting in significant decrease in income

- Last pay stub from previous employer; and
- Most recent paycheck from current employer; and

- Verification of change in employment

One-time income from IRA, Pensions, Annuities, or Retirement

- Federal Form 1099-R (Distributions from Pensions, Annuities, Retirement, IRAs, etc)

One-time income governmental grants for natural disasters

- Varies

Unusually high medical or dental expenses (excluding cosmetic work) paid in current year and not covered by insurance

- Copies of prescription receipts indicating amount not covered by insurance and amount paid out-of-pocket in the base year; and/or
- Copies of medical bills paid in the base year for doctor's visits, hospital visits, dentist visits, medical tests, medical treatment, etc. indicating amount not covered by insurance and amount paid out-of-pocket in the base year
- Other unforeseen circumstances (such as natural disaster) that significantly decreases the income available for post-secondary educational costs.
- Documentation requested by FA administrator or submitted by family that attests to financial impact of situation

Other documentation as determined by Director

Dependency Override

In order to qualify for a dependency override, a student must be able to demonstrate that he/she does not have a relationship with either biological (or adoptive) parent. In these extreme circumstances a student's dependency may be changed from "dependent" to "independent" if the situation and documentation necessitate such a change. Extenuating circumstances that may warrant consideration by RVC for a dependency override include (but are not limited to):

- Abusive (physically, sexually, verbally and/or mentally) or unsafe (drug or alcohol abuse) home environment
- Parent(s) whereabouts are unknown and parents cannot be located
- Parent abandonment
- Parent(s) is incarcerated and/or institutionalized
- Death of a single parent and other parent's whereabouts are unknown
- Student is no longer considered a youth (age 21 years or younger) and meets the federal definition of homeless
- Family disowns student because the student comes out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender

The following circumstances, singly or in combination, will not be considered by Rock Valley College:

- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency
- Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes
- Parents refusal to contribute to the student's education

Documentation

All dependency override appeals must have a written statement justifying the request for an approval. The student is responsible for writing a brief statement in supporting the request for the appeal's approval as well as documenting any key information relevant to the appeal. If an appeal is submitted multiple years, a statement must be written for each year in which the appeal is approved. A statement from another institution that granted a Dependency Override to a student during a previous term or academic year is not a sufficient statement of approval. Rock Valley College will review all dependency override appeals separate from other institutions' decisions and base its decision only from the documentation submitted to RVC.

Dependency Override documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- Statement from student describing situation, significant dates of abuse/change in living arrangement/death of single parent, and other critical events; and
- Letter from an unbiased professional third party (clergy, school advisor, etc.) or legal documentation (court reports, police reports, etc.) on letterhead that corroborates student's situation and, if possible, dates of abuse/change in living arrangement/ death of single parent and/or other significant events; and
- Letter from third party who knows student (other relative, teacher, etc.) that describes student's situation and, if possible, dates of abuse/change in living arrangement/death of single parent and/or other significant events; and

- Proof of parent incarceration or death (if applicable)

Please note that that the above list represents examples of documentation that may be requested, and depending on the situation several items from the list may be requested.

Documentation for Dependency Overrides Renewals

Once a dependency override has been approved for an academic year, Rock Valley College may, on a case-by-case basis, only require the student to submit another statement describing the student's current situation for the next academic year. This option will be exercised for students if their second and third party documentation is unlikely to change in its validity for the student's situation and the student's current statement of situation does not indicate a change to his/her circumstances from the previous year. It is not the policy of Rock Valley College to select these students for verification, but the advisor reserves the right to do so if he/she feels it necessary. Additionally, if the student has been selected for verification by CPS (the Department of Education) he/she must complete the verification process in addition to submitting a statement for his/her dependency override approval.

Unusual Enrollment History

Beginning with the 2013-14 award year, the Department added an Unusual Enrollment History (UEH) flag that indicates a student has an unusual enrollment history based on the receipt of Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant) funds and now loan funds (2015-16). Such an enrollment history requires a review to determine whether there are valid reasons for the unusual enrollment history. The institution must review the student's enrollment and financial aid records to determine if, during the prior four award year review period, the student received a Pell Grant/Direct Loan at the institution that is performing the review for 2015-16. For 2014-15 and prior only three award years are reviewed.

Based upon academic transcripts it may already possess, or by asking the student to provide academic transcripts or grade reports, the institution must determine, for each of the previously attended institutions, whether academic credit was earned during the award year in which the student received Pell Grant or loan funds. Academic credit is considered to have been earned if the academic records show that the student completed any credit-hours or clock-hours.

Academic Credit Not Earned

If the student did not earn academic credit at a previously attended institution and, if applicable, at the institution performing the review, the institution must obtain documentation from the student explaining why the student failed to earn academic credit. The institution must determine whether the documentation supports (1) the reasons given by the student for the student's failure to earn academic credit; **and** (2) that the student did not enroll only to receive credit balance funds

Justification for an Unusual Enrollment History Notice/C-Code

- Personal reasons; illness, a family emergency, a change in where the student is living, and military obligations.
- Academic reasons; the student might explain that the first enrollment was at an institution that presented unexpected academic challenges, or the academic program did not meet the student's needs, as determined by the student. The institution should, to the extent possible, obtain third party documentation to support the student's claim.

Regaining Aid Eligibility

If a student has been flagged by the Department of Education for Unusual Enrollment they must submit the Enrollment History Form 19 and supporting documentation. If a student has earned college credit (D or better) at each institution for each academic year attended and/or has sufficient justification and documentation as to why they were not successful, their aid will be reestablished.

If aid is denied, a student must successfully complete a minimum of 3 credit hours with a C or better without the use of financial aid. A denial is final and cannot be appealed. Once grades post for the applicable term the student must submit a typed

statement for “UEH Reinstatement” and return the statement to the Director. This statement should include measures the student has and will take to ensure future academic success.

- Pell Grant eligibility and campus-based aid begin with the term in which the student meets the eligibility requirements (following the period of ineligibility)
- Direct Loan eligibility is retroactive to the beginning of the enrollment period

UNDERSTANDING YOUR FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

The Financial Aid Office calculates awards based on full-time enrollment (12 or more credit hours per semester for Federal Aid/15 or more credit hours per semester for State Aid) for the entire Academic Year, which is defined as 32 weeks of enrollment, or the Fall and Spring semesters. Students may enroll less than full-time; however, most awards require at least half-time enrollment of 6 credits per semester. Please note that a student’s enrollment in a program of study abroad approved for credit by Rock Valley College may be considered for enrollment purposes at RVC for the purpose of applying for assistance under some Federal and State Financial Aid programs. Awards are determined by establishing a Cost of Attendance and awarding all State and Federal need based grant and scholarship funding first. Additional funding opportunities such as student loans, private scholarships, and other assistance programs will be awarded based on the student successfully notifying the Financial Aid Department. Please note that you have the right to reject any particular type, or all of your Financial Aid award by submitting your request in writing to the Financial Aid Office.

Cost of Attendance

The Cost of Attendance, or “student budget” represents the amount of money or resources you may need for the academic year based on your projected enrollment. These costs include direct costs, such as tuition and fees, as well as indirect costs including books, supplies, housing, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses. These figures do not represent the total amount owed to the Rock Valley College by you; but rather an estimate of your costs for the academic year. Rock Valley College’s Cost of Attendance can be viewed at the link below, under the “Cost of Attendance” heading.

<http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Admission/FinancialAid/ThingstoKnow.cfm>

Parent Contribution

The parent contribution applies to any dependent student and is the portion of the expected family contribution amount that your parents are expected to contribute toward your educational expenses based upon the information on your financial aid application.

Student Contribution

The student contribution is the portion of the overall “Expected Family Contribution” (given to students at the conclusion of the FAFSA application) that is the amount you are expected to contribute toward your own educational expenses based on the information provided on your financial aid application.

Financial Need

A student’s financial need is defined as the difference between the cost of attendance and the parent/student contribution. This figure determines eligibility, as well as the amount of eligibility, for need based funding. More information on need based funding will be discussed in the remainder of this document.

Cost of Attendance
- Parent Contribution
- Student Contribution
= Financial Need

Once your financial need has been determined, the Financial Aid Office assembles your financial aid “award package”. This package may consist of scholarships, grants and Federal Work Study. Each package is based on your academic level, enrollment level, aid preference, and availability of financial aid resources. Some of the state and federal Financial Aid sources include:

A. **GRANTS** are forms of “gift aid” that are not repaid. Grants are awarded as a result of financial need. Applying for grants is done by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.gov. The most common grants include the following:

1. **FEDERAL PELL GRANT.** This federal need based grant can be used for tuition, fees, and bookstore charges. Eligibility is based on a student’s Expected Family Contribution (obtained by completing a FAFSA) and the student’s enrollment status. There is a lifetime limit for the amount of the Federal Pell Grant a student may receive which is equivalent to 12 full-time semesters.

See the chart below for how enrollment will affect your award.

Enrollment	12+ Hours	9-11 Hrs	6-8 Hrs	1-5 Hrs
Pell Grant Amount	Full Award	3/4 Award	1/2 Award*	1/4 Award*

*If your award is \$1140 per semester or less, contact the Financial Aid Office for details on how your award is affected for less than full time enrollment.

The Rock Valley College credit hour program Academic Year is 32 weeks and is comprised of the Fall and Spring terms (semesters). The Fall and Spring terms are 16 weeks in length and the summer term is 12 weeks in length. Because the school defines full time during the summer term as at least 12 credit hours, we use the Pell Formula 1 for all terms in the award year. Enrollment status is determined by the Census date for the semester (Please see “Course Eligibility” later in this document for additional information on Census Dates). The hours of enrollment at the time of the Census date are the hours used to determine the student’s enrollment status, with the exception of remedial hours over the 30 hour limit, and in the case of a Return to Title IV calculation.

2. **ILLINOIS MONETARY AWARD PROGRAM (MAP) GRANT.** This need based grant can be used for tuition and mandatory fees. Payment for each term is made according to the number of credit hours enrolled, with a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 MAP Paid Credit Hours. Your original award letter will reflect the 15 credit hour amount.

For example, if your maximum award is \$600 and you are enrolled in 12 hours then your actual award would be \$480 (or 12/15 of your maximum award). If you are only enrolled in 8 hours your award is \$320 (or 8/15 of your maximum).

There is a limit to the number of MAP Paid Credit Hours that can be paid while you are classified by your school as a freshman and sophomore. This limit is the equivalent of 75 MAP Paid Credit Hours. If this maximum is reached, you must attain junior status (at a 4 year institution) for your MAP grant eligibility to resume.

You must be enrolled in at least 3 credit hours a semester to receive this grant. Your award letter will reflect your maximum eligibility. MAP Grant funds are restricted and applied only to tuition, standard fees, and registration fees. A per credit hour amount will be applied to your student account, based on your enrollment, up to your maximum eligibility. MAP funds are only available in the Fall and Spring semesters. Contact the Financial Aid Office for further details.

Eligibility is based on multiple criteria including a student’s Family Expected Contribution, the availability of state funding, and the date of FAFSA completion. MAP recipients must have resided in Illinois for at least one year prior to the start of the academic school year. You may be required to submit proof of your Illinois residency before you are awarded an Illinois MAP Grant. For dependent students, your parents must be Illinois residents.

Transfer from another college

If you are transferring from another college and have already reached the 75 MAP paid credit hour limit, you will not be eligible for a MAP award since we cannot classify students higher than a freshman or sophomore.

Hours Enrolled	Percentage of MAP
15+	100%
14	93%
13	87%
12	80%
11	73%
10	67%
9	60%
8	53%
7	47%
6	40%
5	33%
4	27%
3	20%
0-2	0%

If a MAP Grant is not included in your award letter, you are not eligible for this grant for one or more of the reasons listed below:

- You (or your parent, if dependent) are not an Illinois resident;
- You applied after the deadline; or
- You have reached the maximum number of MAP paid credit hours of 75; or the information submitted on your FAFSA application indicates ineligibility.

3. **FEDERAL SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY (SEOG) GRANT.** This is a federal need based grant that is awarded to students with the highest financial need. Funds are limited and available based on a random selection of students that have a completed Financial Aid file, enrolled, are eligible for a Pell Grant, and have a zero Expected Family Contribution. Students with the most need are pooled together and randomly selected for SEOG grants after the last deregistration event for Rock Valley College. RVC awards \$300 a semester with a maximum annual award of \$600, until the funds are depleted.

B. ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

Student employment is provided through two sources:

1. The Federal College Work Study Program (FCWS) is a federally funded program for students who demonstrate financial need.
2. The Rock Valley College Student Employment program is for those students that do not demonstrate financial need.

Both programs have limited funding.

The benefits of working on campus include flexibility in your work schedule, making connections with people at the college, and encouragement and support for your schooling from your supervisor.

All students interested in working on campus must apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), complete their file in the RVC financial aid office, successfully maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, be enrolled in at least 6 or more Financial Aid eligible credits, complete HR and Payroll forms, and pass a background check **prior to starting work**. Both types of employment allow students to work in a variety of campus departments. Students are paid hourly wages and work a maximum of 20 hours per week. For more information including eligibility requirements, resume tips, getting started tips, applications, and current listing of jobs, please go online to <http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/StudentServices/CareerServices/Student-Employment.cfm> or contact the

Student Employment Office for details, (815)921-4163. Both types of employment must follow the same policies and procedures.

c. **STUDENT LOANS**, unlike most grants and work-study, loans are borrowed money that **must be repaid**, with interest. While roughly 10% of RVC students utilize student loans, it is important that all students maximize their Grant and Scholarship eligibility prior to utilizing student loans. There are two types of loans, Private Loans and Federal Loans. Rock Valley College discourages anyone from using Private Loans until they have reviewed and/or exhausted all Federal Aid. Students are encouraged to speak with our Financial Aid Loan Coordinator prior to taking out any loan, especially Private Loans. The Loan Coordinator can provide free loan and financial literacy sessions to assist students in making the most informed decisions possible when borrowing. Please note that while Federal Loans have set standards, rates, terms, repayment options (including loan forgiveness), and conditions, all Private Loans are based on conditions set by the lender and may be different from one lender to the next. Private loans typically have higher interest rates, and usually do not offer deferment, forbearance, or loan forgiveness options (subject to lender discretion).

There are three types of Federal Loans: Subsidized Stafford Loans, Unsubsidized Stafford loans, and Parent PLUS loans. You must have financial need to receive a need based subsidized Stafford Loan. Financial need is not a requirement to obtain an unsubsidized Stafford Loan. The U.S. Department of Education will pay (subsidize) the interest that accrues on subsidized Stafford Loans while the student is enrolled in a qualified degree program, on at least a half-time basis (minimum 6 credit hours). The student is responsible for paying the interest on the unsubsidized loan from the time it is disbursed until the loan is paid in full. You may pay the interest while you are in school or you can allow the interest to accrue (accumulate) and have the interest added to the principal amount of your loan.

To be eligible for a Stafford Loan students must complete a FAFSA application, complete a Master Promissory Note with the Department of Education, complete Entrance Counseling (for first time borrowers), must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours (half-time status), and must demonstrate need for Subsidized Stafford Loans and/or unmet cost. We also request that students complete a loan request form, which can be obtained online or in person. Please note that Rock Valley College does not pre-package Direct Student Loans as part of its awarding criteria.

Interest rates are based on when your student loan funds are disbursed. The interest rate for both subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford loans disbursed after July 1, 2017⁵ and prior to July 1, 2018⁶ is 4.4529% for undergraduate students. Repayment of Stafford Loans begins six months after you cease to be enrolled at any post-secondary school on at least a half-time basis. Standard repayment is spread out over a ten-year period of time however, other repayment options are available.

As a result of legislation enacted in July 2012, eligibility for the Direct Loan interest subsidy will be limited for new borrowers on or after July 1, 2013. The law restricts the period of time for which a borrower may receive subsidized loans to 150% of the published length of the student’s current educational program. Once the student reaches that limit, he or she may borrow only unsubsidized loans, and interest begins to accrue on the student’s balance. Students who do not complete their educational program within the 150% time will lose the subsidy on their subsidized loans.

Maximum Annual Loan Amounts for Direct Subsidized and Direct Unsubsidized Loans*

Borrower’s Academic Level	Maximum Subsidized Eligibility	Additional Unsubsidized Eligibility		Maximum Combined Eligibility	
		Dependent	Independent	Dependent	Independent
1st year undergraduate	\$3,500	\$2,000	\$6,000	\$5,500	\$9,500
2nd year undergraduate	\$4,500	\$2,000	\$6,000	\$6,500	\$10,500

* These are the maximum amounts that you can borrow for a full academic year. For periods of study that are shorter than an academic year, the maximum amounts you can borrow may be less. The Financial Aid Office will determine the specific amount that you are eligible to borrow. You must have completed 33 credit hours or more to be considered a 2nd year undergraduate.

To apply for a Stafford Loan, you must complete the *Student Loan Request Application*, which is available in the RVC Financial Aid Office. Please note that Rock Valley College does not automatically award loans to student, and there is a separate process for requesting a Stafford or private loan. Rock Valley College encourages responsible borrowing, and students have the right to refuse or reduce their loan at any time during the academic year. For information on student loans, including loan disbursement dates, loan code of conduct, and other useful information visit RVC's loan page: <http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Admission/FinancialAid/loans.cfm>

Priority deadline dates to apply for a student loan are:

Fall - August 1st
Spring - December 19th

The above priority deadline dates represent the date students should plan on having their applications submitted AND approved by in order to have student loans or a student loan hold placed on their account by the start of class. The absolute deadline for loan applications at which point the loan will not be processed is **November 16th** for the Fall Term and **April 5th** for the Spring Term.

Parents interested in borrowing through the Direct PLUS Loan Program should contact the Financial Aid Office for eligibility information.

Upon withdrawing, dropping below a half time status (5 or less credits), or transferring to another institution, a student must complete exit loan counseling. Exit counseling will assist students in understanding their loan obligations. Information on this can be found with our Loan Coordinator, in notifications sent to student's RVC email accounts, as well as the following website: <https://studentloans.gov/myDirectLoan/exitCounseling.action?execution=e1s1>

Repayment:

As mentioned earlier, all loans must be repaid regardless of employment or whether or not the student completed their program. This includes Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford loans and PLUS loans. Various programs exist to provide assistance to students that may be struggling to meet their obligations or those in need of additional options. For more information on the various programs that are available to assist students repaying their loans, please meet with our Loan Coordinator for personal assistance or visit <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans>. For information on repayment schedules and estimators specific to your situation please visit:

<https://studentloans.gov/myDirectLoan/mobile/repayment/repaymentEstimator.action>

Loan Default:

To default means you failed to make your payments on your student loan as scheduled according to the terms of your promissory note, the binding legal document you signed at the time you took out your loan. Default occurs when you become 270 days delinquent in making payments on your loan. As of the time of this writing, the official 3-year cohort default rate for Rock Valley College is 16.6%, and the national 3 year default rate is 11.3%. Roughly 10% of RVC students borrow loans, with the median borrowing equating to roughly \$6000 for a typical undergraduate program. *Please note that federal loans will be submitted to the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS), and will be accessible by guaranty agencies, lenders, and schools determined to be authorized users of the data system.

Consequences of default

- Department of Education will require you to immediately repay the entire unpaid amount of your loan.
- Department of Education may sue you, take all or part of your federal and state tax refunds and other federal or state payments, and/or garnish your wages/Social Security so that they are required to send part of your check to pay off your loan.
- Department of Education will require you to pay reasonable collection fees and costs, plus court costs and attorney fees.
- You may be denied a professional license.
- You will lose eligibility for other federal student aid and assistance under most federal benefit programs.
- You will lose eligibility for loan deferments.

- We will report your default to national consumer reporting agencies (credit bureaus).
- Obtaining an apartment, mortgage, car, etc. can be affected.

Staying out of Default

Understand Your Loan and Loan Agreement- Understand the type of aid you are receiving. Loans, unlike most grants, scholarships, or work-study funds, must be repaid.

- Know the type of loan you are receiving. Understand the costs of getting the loan, the interest rate, and the repayment terms for the loan.
- Read Know Before You Owe from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.
- Read your promissory note. It is a legal document. Signing a promissory note means you agree to repay the loan according to the terms of the note. You must repay all the loans you receive, even if you don't complete your education.

Manage Your Borrowing- Borrow only what you need to pay for your college expenses.

- Create a budget to determine how much you really need to borrow. Make a list of your expected monthly expenses and subtract that from your monthly income.
- Complete Financial Awareness Counseling.
- Apply for scholarships! There are 100's of thousands out there and it is free money. It may require a little work, but you don't have to pay those back.

Track Your Loans Online- Find information about all of your federal student loans from the U.S. Department of Education using the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS.ed.gov)

D. SCHOLARSHIPS

Rock Valley College offers a number of scholarships to its students. If you receive a scholarship, you will not be required to repay the funds. Each scholarship has its own criteria and the amount of each award varies.

The Rock Valley College Foundation sponsors a scholarship program that ranges from those which are based on academic ability or geographic region, to those that focus on particular areas of concentration or professional areas of study. Each spring a listing of available RVC Foundation scholarships, along with an application are available online at <http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Foundation/scholarships.cfm> in early April. The scholarship deadline for the 2016-2017 academic year is in May 2016. (Watch for specific deadline).

In addition to the Rock Valley College scholarships, there are a number of additional scholarship resources that students should investigate. For instance, check with your local community groups, churches, and bulletin boards located in various locations on campus, along with internet websites such as:

- Fastwebwww.fastweb.com
- IL Student Assistance Commission.....www.isac.org
- Rockford Public Library.....www.rockfordpubliclibrary.org
- Northern Illinois Community Foundation...www.cfnil.org
- Scholarship America.....www.scholarshipamerica.org

E. Educational Benefits for Veterans, Active Duty Military Personnel, and Qualifying Dependents

Rock Valley College is approved for federal and state veteran education benefits:

1. **Chapter 30 – Montgomery GI Bill:** The Chapter 30 GI Bill provides up to 36 months of education benefits to eligible veterans. Eligibility of benefits last 10 years from the date you were discharged from service. You must have received an honorable discharge. Monthly benefits are paid directly to the veteran. To be eligible for the Chapter 30 GI Bill you must:
 - Have entered active duty after June 30, 1985;
 - Have served the required length of active duty.

- Have an honorable discharge;
 - Have had military pay reduced by \$100 each month for the first 12 months of active duty service;
 - Have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate.
2. **Chapter 31 Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service:** This benefit is available to veterans who have been determined eligible by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to have a service connected disability. Chapter 31 will make payment to the campus for tuition and fees, books and supplies, and a monthly basic allowance for housing. For additional information on this benefit and to fill out VA Form 22-5490, [visit this website](#). Please schedule an appointment with Rock Valley's Veteran's Office for additional information.
 3. **Chapter 33 – Post 9/11 GI Bill:** Individuals who served a minimum of 90 days on active duty after September 10, 2001, are eligible for educational assistance under the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Chapter 33 will pay applicable tuition and fee charges, as well as provide a book stipend and a monthly basic allowance for housing based on E-5 with dependent criteria. The amount of funds released for each category is dependent on the veteran's level of entitlement for Chapter 33. To be eligible for the Chapter 33 GI Bill you must:
 - VA Form 22-1990 by going online www.vets.gov
 4. **Chapter 33 - Transfer of Benefits:** The post-9/11 GI Bill allows service members (officer or enlisted, active duty or selected reserve), on or after August 1, 2009, to transfer unused education benefits to immediate family members (spouse and children). The service member must have at least six years of service, and commit to an additional four years of service in order to transfer benefits to a spouse or child. Because of the potential impact of this benefit on military recruiting and retention, transferability policy is determined by the Department of Defense (DOD) and the military services. Apply now for post 9/11 transfer of entitlement. Family members who have been transferred entitlements, must fill out VA Form 22-1990e. To apply or get got www.vets.gov.
 5. **Fry Scholarship:** This scholarship provides Post 9/11 benefits to children and surviving spouses of service members who died in the line of duty after September 10, 2001. To get more information and/or to apply for this benefits, go to www.vets.gov
 6. **Chapter 35 – Survivor's and Dependent's Educational Assistance:** Chapter 35 provides 45 months of full-time or equivalent educational benefits for the spouse or child(ren) of a veteran who dies or is permanently and totally disabled as a result of a service-connected disability, or a spouse or child of a veteran who has been listed as a POW or MIA for a period of 90 days. The monthly benefit is paid directly to the survivor or dependent. To apply, applicants must complete VA form 22-5490. To apply, go to www.vets.gov and complete a VA Form 22-5490.
 7. **Chapter 1606 – Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve:** Service members of the Selected Reserve can apply for this benefit that provides a monthly basic allowance for housing and 36 months of entitlement. Selected Reserve service branches include Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. To be eligible for this program you must:
 - Have enlisted, re-enlisted, or extended an enlistment in the Selected Reserve or National Guard after June 30, 1985, for a period of at least six years;
 - Have completed your initial period of active duty for training;
 - Have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate;
 - Be satisfactorily participating in the Selected Reserve or National Guard;
 8. **Chapter 1607 –:** REAP provides 36 months of educational benefits to reserve service members who were called to active service in response to war or national emergency, as declared by the President or Congress, and were active for a minimum of 90 days after September 11, 2001. Monthly benefits are paid directly to the veteran. Important- This GI Bill is no longer offered as of November 25, 2015. RVC will continue to process this benefit for students already enrolled in the program and who have been deemed as "still eligible" by the VA until November 25, 2019. To be eligible for the **National Guard Educational Assistance Program**, you must:
 - Have enlisted, re-enlisted, or extended an enlistment in the Selected Reserve or National Guard after June 30, 1985, for a period of at least six years;
 - Have completed your initial period of active duty for training;
 - Have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate;
 - Be satisfactorily participating in the Selected Reserve or National Guard;
 - Chapter 1607 recipients must have been activated after September 11, 2001.

9. **Tuition Assistance (TA):** Tuition Assistance (TA) is a Department of Defense (DoD) program. TA rules will vary between military branches. Service members are able to use a Federal VA Education benefit and Federal Student Aid in combination with TA. You cannot use Federal TA and your Chapter 1606/1607 for the same class. Students using TA benefits must submit their approved, semester-specific TA form to the Program Manager located on the 2nd floor of the student center prior to the start of the semester. Click your branch to find out information about tuition assistance: To find out more about Tuition Assistance, including eligibility requirements specific to your current branch of service, please visit the website associated with your branch below:
- [Army \(to include National Guard and Reserves\)](#)
 - [Navy \(to include Reserves\)](#)
 - [Air force \(to include National Guard and Reserves\)](#)
 - [Marine Corps \(to include Reserves\)](#)
10. **Illinois Veterans Grant (IVG):** This program is available through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). Benefits may only be used at Illinois public colleges or community colleges. This grant pays for tuition, activity fees, service fees, registration fees, and technology fees. It does not pay for lab fees, Internet fees, or books. To be eligible for the **Illinois Veterans Grant**, you must:
- Have served at least one year of active duty;
 - Entered the service from the state of Illinois.
 - Have been a legal resident physically residing in Illinois within six months prior to entering the U.S. Armed Forces;
 - Have physically returned to Illinois within six months of separation from the service and now be living in Illinois;
 - Have an honorable discharge status;
 - Not be in default on any federal student loan;
 - Must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress.
 - Entered the service from the state of Illinois.
 - To Apply:
 - Go to isac.org.
 - Search “Apply for Illinois Veterans Grant”
 - Print the application, fill it out, and mail it to the address on the form along with the member 4 copy of your DD214.
 - You must present your letter of eligibility to the Veterans Services Office at Rock Valley College
 - For more information call (800) 899-4722
11. **Illinois National Guard Grant (ING):** This program is available through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). Benefits may only be used at Illinois public colleges or community colleges. This grant pays for tuition, activity fees, service fees, registration fees, and technology fees. It does not pay for lab fees, Internet fees, or books. To be eligible for the **Illinois National Guard Grant**, you must:
- Be on active duty status and have served at least one year in the Illinois National Guard;
 - Have served at least one year in the Illinois National Guard;
 - Apply every academic year to verify you are still active in the National Guard;
 - Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress
 - Present your letter of eligibility to the RVC Veterans Services Office;
 - Not be in default of any federal student loan;
 - To Apply:
 - Go to isac.org.
 - Search “Apply for Illinois Veterans Grant”
 - Print the application, fill it out, and mail it to the address on the form along with the member 4 copy of your DD214.
 - You must present your letter of eligibility to the Veterans Services Office at Rock Valley College
 - For more information call (800) 899-4722

12. **Illinois MIA/POW Scholarship:** You must present your letter of eligibility to the Veterans Services office at Rock Valley College. To be eligible for the Illinois MIA/POW Scholarship, you must:
- Be a dependent of a service person whose status is or has been that of prisoner of war, missing in action, killed in service or died as a result of service-connected disability, or is 100% permanently disabled from a service-connected disability.
 - Service person must have been a resident of Illinois upon entry to the service.

To apply for Veteran Administration Benefits:

(Chapters 30, 33, 35, 1606 or 1607)

Application forms are available online at www.gibill.va.gov.

To apply for Illinois Veteran Grant and Illinois National Guard Grant

Application forms are available online at www.isac.org.

To apply for Illinois MIA/POW Scholarship

Contact Tracy Kimmel at 217-782-3564 or email tracy.j.kimmel@illinois.gov

Contact Rock Valley College Veteran’s Services at (815) 921-4163 for further information.

Awarding Order

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) awards all eligible Illinois residents with the Monetary Award Grant (MAP). This will be applied to your account first, as the MAP grant is considered a “first payer.” Next, the Federal Pell Grant will be applied to your account, if appropriate. If you are eligible for a Federal Pell Grant, a Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity (FSEOG) may be awarded at this time as well. The next financial aid source awarded would depend on the aid preference you indicated on your FAFSA. If you indicated loans only: You must complete the Loan application, as well as loan process mentioned previously to apply for a loan.

- If you indicated work only: Federal Work Study may be awarded, if eligible, upon the successful placement of a student worker position.
- If you indicated both work and loan: Federal Work Study may be awarded, and you must complete the loan process.

Course Eligibility (Census Dates)

To be considered for Financial Aid Eligibility, students must register for each course prior to the school’s Financial Aid course registration deadline. Please review the Financial Aid course registration deadlines for each term. Any courses not added to a student’s schedule by the term specific dates below, will not count towards Financial Aid eligibility.

Term:	Financial Aid Course Registration Deadline:
Summer 2017 6	6/24/2017
Fall 2017 6	9/23/2017
Spring 2018 7	2/10/2018
Summer 2018 7	6/23/2018

Adjustments to Financial Aid Packages

Rock Valley College reserves the right to adjust your award package without prior notice. Award packages may be increased, decreased, or canceled for reasons that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Failure to respond to the award letter (when applicable) or request for information;
- Outside resources that were not originally taken into account (scholarship);
- Factors making you ineligible for the aid awarded (i.e., non-enrollment, failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress);
- Changes were made in institutional, federal, or state policies and/or regulations since the time of your original award;
- You or the Financial Aid Office made changes on your Student Aid Report (FAFSA);
- Change in course schedule during the semester or failure to begin attendance in registered courses.

Financial Aid Disbursements

Timing:

With the exception of student loans, the first date Rock Valley College disburses financial aid to students' accounts occurs approximately six weeks after classes begin in the term and every Wednesday as needed thereafter. Loans are disbursed approximately 30 days after the start of the term for first time borrowers, and 5 days prior to the start of Saturday classes for non-first time borrowers. Dates are subject to change without notice. See important payment, financial aid, and registration dates.

Rock Valley College must follow federal and state financial aid program regulations. Some regulations and policies have impact on the date when we are permitted to disburse your aid.

Factors that may impact disbursement dates:

- Packaging and Awarding: The financial aid packaging and awarding process must be complete in order for your aid to disburse. We must have received your FAFSA data and any required documentation to complete your financial aid file.
- Enrollment Status: Your enrollment is one of the most important factors in determining your actual financial aid disbursements. You can receive financial aid when you are enrolled in classes at Rock Valley College that count toward your program of study.
 - Any changes in your enrollment can affect the financial aid disbursed. The actual amounts are calculated after your initial enrollment is verified as well as your enrollment status as the time of the Census Date.
 - The award amounts indicated on your Financial Aid Notification are an estimate based on full time enrollment (12 credit hours or more, 15 credit hours for the State of Illinois Monetary Award Program Grant. The actual amount you receive is based on your enrollment, class schedule, and the regulations for the aid program you are awarded. If you are not enrolled as a full-time student at disbursement, your aid awards are adjusted accordingly.
 - A student may retake a course as many times as he/she wants, however, financial aid will only pay for a repeated course once after a course has been successfully completed.
 - As a first-time borrower, the U.S. Department of Education requires that a student complete the first 30 days of their academic program before receiving the first loan disbursement.

Credit Balance Refunds

When financial aid funds are disbursed, these are credited directly to your Rock Valley College account through the Business Office. If you have more than enough financial aid (grants and/or student loans) to cover the cost of your tuition, fees and books the remaining funds will be generated to you as a credit balance refund. You can use these funds to cover some of your living expenses or any other educationally related expenses you may encounter. Refunds are available after your financial aid is disbursed and a credit balance is created on your account. After your aid has been applied to the balance of your account,

remaining funds will be sent to you within 14 days in the form of a refund check. All refund checks are mailed and are typically sent out to students by the 8th week of class if a student is eligible for a refund.

Purchasing Books and Supplies for Pell Eligible Students

The RVC Financial Aid Office works with the RVC Bookstore to operate the “FA-Link” program, that is set up to allow students to purchase books and supplies in the RVC Bookstore with the anticipated difference between a student’s tuition charges and their expected Pell Grant disbursement. PELL eligible students with a completed Financial Aid File and at least \$50 of funding available after tuition charges are applied to the student’s anticipated Pell Grant disbursement will have their remaining overage in \$50 increments applied to their FA-Link account to purchase books and supplies in the RVC bookstore. The initial cap on PELL Overages sent to the FA-Link program is \$900. Please note that students with less than \$50 in PELL overages or those needing more than \$900 can visit the Financial Aid Office and have funding loaded to their FA-Link account, as long as there is funding available to load. In addition to this, if a student feels that an error exists with the amount of funding loaded to their FA-Link account, please visit the Financial Aid Office for additional assistance. Students will not be liable for any funding that is not utilized through the FA-Link program. For more information on the amount of anticipated PELL Grants that may be available for use through the FA-Link program please view the “Financial Aid Refund Calculation Sheet” located at this link:

<http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Admission/FinancialAid/ThingstoKnow.cfm>

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP)

Minimum Standards for ALL Financial Aid Students - This includes all Grants, some scholarships, Loans, ALL Veteran Programs and ALL Work Study Programs

All students receiving financial aid (whether or not they have received financial aid in the past) must make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward the completion of course requirements in an approved certificate or degree program. The Financial Aid Office will consider students to be making satisfactory academic progress if they meet **all** of the following criteria:

1. Completion Rate Requirement

- Students must complete 67% of all attempted credits each fall and spring semester.
- In addition, students must maintain an overall completion rate of 67% of all semesters attended. (See examples at end of policy).
- Attempted credits hours include: classes with a grade of ‘D’ or higher, withdrawn courses, failures and incompletes.
- Remedial and repeated courses are counted toward credit hour completion.
- Audits and proficiency tests and non-credit courses are not included in attempted credits.

2. Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement

Students must maintain a Probation or Satisfactory GPA in order to continue receiving financial aid. Undergraduate **AND** Remedial credits are counted toward hours attempted and GPA.

GPA	0 – 1.49	1.5 – 1.99	2.0 – 4.0
Hours attempted 1-12	Probation	Probation	Satisfactory
Hours attempted 13-24	Unsatisfactory	Probation	Satisfactory
Hours attempted 25 +	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

- **NOTE:** Even if classes are not eligible for financial aid, or you paid for the classes, they are included in financial aid hours attempted and GPA. For example: NAD 101 (Certified Nursing Assistant) classes are not covered by financial aid but are included in financial aid hours attempted and GPA.

3. Maximum Time Frame Requirements

Students may receive financial aid for 150% of the published length of their program at Rock Valley College, even if financial aid was not received for all attempted courses. For example, if a student is attempting an Associates of Arts Degree, the

published length of program is 64 credits. Applying the 150% maximum timeframe rule on this program would limit a student to 96 attempted credits (64 credits X 150% = 96 maximum credits). Please note that this maximum timeframe is specific to the student's chosen program, and in some cases may be more or less than 96 attempted credit hours.

Attempted hours include:

- Any Remedial courses (less than 100 level – i.e.: MTH 093) beyond 30 attempted credits
- Repeated courses
- Withdrawn courses (after the tuition refund period)
- Non-completed courses (incompletes – grade of I)
- Transfer courses accepted for credit at RVC
- Courses with grades of A, B, C, D, F

Consequences

Satisfactory progress is evaluated after grades are posted for the fall and spring semesters. Evaluations will be based on courses completed and attempted at Rock Valley College, as well as credits transferred into RVC.

- Probation – student may continue receiving financial aid, but is in jeopardy of losing their financial aid if improvement is not made.
- Unsatisfactory - student will be denied future financial aid at Rock Valley College until they obtain a satisfactory status by paying for their own classes (or see appeal process below).
 - This does not prohibit a student from attending and paying for classes on their own. Any financial aid the student is eligible to receive will be reinstated once the student is again making satisfactory academic progress and if the student has a completed financial aid file.

Students will be notified via RVC student e-mail if they are on Probation, are Unsatisfactory or if they regain eligibility.

Appeal Process

- Students who have extenuating circumstances, such as, military activation, death of immediate family member or serious medical condition, may submit an appeal. The appeal and supporting documentation must be submitted by the deadline, stated on the appeal form, to be considered.
- Appeal forms are available on the RVC website. Remember that documentation of the circumstance must be submitted before an appeal will be considered. You may submit your appeal form electronically at <http://apps.rockvalleycollege.edu/finaidformsfuture/>. Documentation may be delivered in person, via US mail, e-mail (RVC-FIA@rockvalleycollege.edu) or fax (815-921-4169). Include your name and RVC ID number on all documentation. Please call to confirm your fax was received. Current students will be notified via RVC student e-mail account as to the results of the appeal.

Students should not assume that appeals will be approved. All appeals are considered on a case by case basis and the decision is final. Student is responsible for charges on their RVC student account during the appeal process. If the appeal is approved, the student will be reimbursed up to the amount of aid they are eligible to receive according to the Accounts Receivable refund schedule.

- When an appeal is granted the student MUST maintain a minimum of a 67% completion rate and a minimum 2.0 GPA for the next semester they attend or a renewal appeal (if needed) WILL NOT be considered. Students may also have to follow an academic plan as determined by an academic advisor.
- An appeal must be filed for each semester the minimum progress is not met and the student wishes to be considered for financial aid.
- When an appeal is denied the student must pay for and satisfactorily complete a minimum of 6 credits with a completion rate of at least 67% and a GPA of 2.0 or higher before a subsequent appeal will be considered.
- Students who have an appeal approved may be required to complete an Academic Success Plan. Students will be notified of this requirement if applicable.

Regaining Financial Aid Eligibility if your Appeal is denied

If an appeal is denied, the student will be responsible for making Satisfactory Academic Progress on their own before Financial Aid can be reinstated. This means a student will need to pay for their classes on their own until their GPA is at or above a cumulative 2.0 average and is meeting the 67% minimum completion rate.

Academic Forgiveness/Tuition Appeal/Enrollment Appeal

Academic forgiveness (an undesirable grade is removed from your GPA), tuition appeals (refunds tuition), and enrollment appeals (a grade changed to a withdraw) are granted by the Registrar and do not automatically reinstate your financial aid. Contact the Records Department for more information on Tuition and Enrollment Appeals. If financial aid paid for the semester you are requesting a tuition appeal, a tuition appeal WILL NOT be approved. You must go through the financial aid appeal process as stated above for consideration of continued financial aid.

Examples:

- Student #1 enrolls in 12 credits for a semester, withdraws from a 3 credit class and passes the remaining credits. Student completed 9 credits, $9/12=.75$ (75%), Student is Satisfactory.
- Same as above (75%) completion rate, however the student has attempted a total of 20 (cumulative) hours overall and has a GPA of 1.3, the student is Unsatisfactory based on GPA.

REMINDER: Student must meet ALL criteria; completion rate, maximum timeframe, AND minimum GPA.

- Student #2 enrolls in 12 credits for a semester, withdraws from a 3 credit class, fails a 3 credit class and passes the remaining credits. Student completed 6 credits, $6/12=.5$ (50%), Student is Unsatisfactory.
- Student #3 enrolls for 9 credits for a semester and passes all credits however has a GPA of 1.3. This is the student's first semester, so the attempted credits are 9. Student is on Probation – still eligible for Financial Aid, but must improve to continue receiving financial aid.
- Student #4 has attempted 30 hours and has a GPA of 1.5. The student did not receive financial aid for the 30 attempted hours. Then the student enrolls in 12 credits and passes all credits, but has an overall GPA of 1.75. Student is Unsatisfactory. It doesn't matter if a student received financial aid in the past, all coursework is included in the calculation.
- Student #5 is enrolled in a certificate program with a published length of 40 credit hours. The student has attempted 60 credit hours at Rock Valley. The maximum timeframe for the certificate program is 60 credits (40 credits X 150%), therefore the student would be on Permanent Standards, and would need to appeal their status to have their Financial Aid reinstated.

Check your RVC e-mail

The RVC Financial Aid Office sends many of its letters and notifications to student e-mail accounts. Check your RVC e-mail on a regular basis to make sure you are receiving all your current correspondences.

Repeated Courses

A new federal regulation limits the number of times a student may repeat a course and receive financial aid for that course.

- A student may receive aid to repeat a previously completed course one additional time.
- In general, once a student has completed any course twice, he/she is no longer eligible to receive aid for that course.
- If a student retakes a course that is not aid eligible, a recalculation of aid is done to exclude the credits for the repeated course.
- This rule applies whether or not the student received aid for earlier enrollments in the course.

Withdrawing from Classes and Financial Aid

Financial aid is paid for students who regularly attend class. Students who are eligible for financial aid and enroll at Rock Valley College receive an award notification which lists each type of financial aid you may receive. The award amount shown in the award notification is based on full-time enrollment (12 or more credit hours enrolled) at the time the award is processed. If you register for classes and do not plan to attend, you are responsible for completing a Drop/Withdrawal Form in the Records Office. If students withdraw from any classes, they should contact the Financial Aid Office to see what effect this will have on their financial aid. Students receiving Title IV funds (Federal Pell Grant, Federal SEOG and Stafford Loans) or Federal Tuition Assistance (provided through the Department of Defense) who withdraw from all classes (officially or unofficially) and/or receive all Fs due to non-attendance after receiving Title IV aid will be subject to Rock Valley College's refund policy and the federal policy regarding the possible return of Title IV funds awarded to students and may owe a portion of their funding back. In these situations, financial aid will be adjusted based on student's actual enrollment status, up through the 60% point of each term or course. **As a result, this may create a balance due to Rock Valley College due to unpaid tuition, fees, books, or other institutional charges. Please note that this adjustment period is different from the census date discussed earlier in this document.** There is no appeal for students who owe funds back due to this calculation. Students not attending class in which they have enrolled must withdraw. It is your responsibility to officially withdraw from your classes. Official withdrawals are processed by the Records and Registration Office on the second floor of the Student Center. You may withdraw from a course by processing an Add/Drop form through this office. Failing to withdraw properly may result in a failing grade of F in the course.

Order of Return of Title IV Funds

A school must return Title IV funds to the programs from which the student received aid during the payment period or period of enrollment as applicable. The Financial Aid Office is required to implement Return to Title IV Aid for students who withdraw to zero hours prior to completing 60% of the course and/or receive all Fs due to non-attendance after receiving Title IV aid of Federal Tuition Assistance. Title IV aid is comprised of the following federal financial assistance programs: Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Direct Subsidized, Unsubsidized, and Plus Loans. Federal Tuition Assistance consists of various Tuition Assistance programs offered through the Department of Defense, typically by branch, to Active Duty members of the armed forces and their dependents. If you withdraw to zero hours and/or receive all Fs due to non-attendance, a refund formula is used to determine if any amount of federal assistance received must be repaid by you or the school. The withdrawal date is used to calculate eligibility. When calculating a R2T4 for the fall and spring terms, the break periods must be taken into account as well, and depending on the length of the break may or may not be counted as part of the length of enrollment. As a result of the refund calculation, you may owe a balance to the college. If a Return of Title IV Funding is required for Title IV funding, aid will be returned to the Department of Education in the following order, up to the net amount disbursed from each source:

1. Unsubsidized Direct Stafford loans (other than PLUS loans).
2. Subsidized Direct Stafford loans.
3. Direct PLUS loans.
4. Federal Pell Grants for which a return of funds is required.
5. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG) for which a return of funds is required.

Funding returned to Federal Tuition Assistance programs will be returned independently of Title IV funding.

RVC Refund Policy

When you officially withdraw from a class(s) within the acceptable time limit, you may be eligible for a 100 percent refund. Every course has its own refund date and refund dates vary according to the type and length of the course. For information on tuition refunds that may occur due to withdrawing from a course at various times throughout the semester, please view our tuition refund policy at the link provided: <http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Admission/Registration/tuitionrefunds.cfm>

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA") affords students certain rights regarding their education records.

These rights include:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records.
- The right to request an amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
- The right to provide written consent before Rock Valley College discloses Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Rock Valley College to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

What is Legitimate Educational Interest?

Legitimate educational interests are essential to the general processes of higher education including teaching, research, public service, as well as those directly supporting activities such as advising, general counseling, discipline, career services, financial assistance, academic assistance activities, essential learning activities such as cooperative education and international study programs, and co-curricular activities including varsity and intramural sports and all recognized student organizations.

RVC Contact List

OFFICE	STUDENT CENTER	PHONE NUMBER	HOURS
Accounts Receivable	Student Center, 2 nd Floor	815-921-4414	M-F, 8am-5pm
Admissions	Student Center, 1 st Floor	815-921-4250	M-Th: 8am-5pm, F: 8am-6pm
Academic Advising/Counseling	Student Center, 2 nd Floor	815-921-4100	M-Th: 8am-5pm, F: 8am-6pm
Career Services	Student Center, 2 nd Floor	815-921-4091	M-F, 8am-5pm
Dean of Students/TIX Coordinator	Student Center, 2 nd Floor	815-921-4187	M-F, 8am-5pm
Disability Services	Student Center, Ground Floor	815-921-2356	M-F, 8am-5pm
Financial Aid	Student Center, 2 nd Floor	815-921-4150	M-Th: 8am-5pm, F: 8am-6pm
Records and Registration	Student Center, 2 nd Floor	815-921-4250	M-Th: 8am-5pm, F: 8am-6pm

Additional Information

List of Third Party Servicers involved in the administration of Title IV aid:

ASA "Salt": This vendor assists Rock Valley College with default management and prevention as well as financial and career literacy.

National Student Clearinghouse: This vendor assists the school in reporting various student data elements (enrollment, program information, etc.) to various entities within the Department of Education (example: National Student Loan Data System).

Academic Programs Offered

Rock Valley College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission

(<http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Academics/Accreditation.cfm>). A description of the academic programs offered at RVC is listed in the College's catalog. Additional information may be obtained from the Admissions Office. A list of programs eligible for Financial Aid can be found at the link below.

<http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu/Admission/FinancialAid/upload/Form-13-Curr-Code-2016-17-updated-3-3-16.pdf>

Employer Tuition Assistance

Many times area employers offer tuition reimbursement plans. Check with your employer or even your parent(s) employer to see if this benefit is offered.

For additional information regarding financial aid, please refer to The Student Guide from The U.S. Department of Education at <http://studentaid.ed.gov>.

There are many additional places where you can find more information on how to get assistance paying for college. Some resources you might find useful include:

RVC Financial Aid Office

www.rockvalleycollege.edu/financialaid (815) 921-4150

Illinois Student Assistance Commission

www.isac.org 1-800-899-4722

U.S. Department of Education

www.studentaid.ed.gov 1-800-433-3243

U.S. Department of Education Student Loan Ombudsman

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/repay-loans/disputes/prepare/contact-ombudsman> 1-877-557-2575

FAFSA on the WEB

www.fafsa.gov 1-800-433-3243

The Financial Aid Information Page

www.finaid.org

Tax Benefits for Higher Education

www.irs.gov

Department of Veterans Affairs

www.gibill.va.gov

Paying for College

www.consumerfinance.gov/paying-for-college/

The College Scorecard

www.collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard

The College Navigator

<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

Mapping Your Future

www.mappingyourfuture.org

As regulations and procedures are revised, the information in this booklet is subject to change. Call the Financial Aid Office @ (815) 921-4150 if you have any questions.



FINANCIAL AID OFFICE
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Rockford, IL 61114
Phone (815) 921-4150
Fax (815) 9214169
RVC-FIA@rockvalleycollege.edu