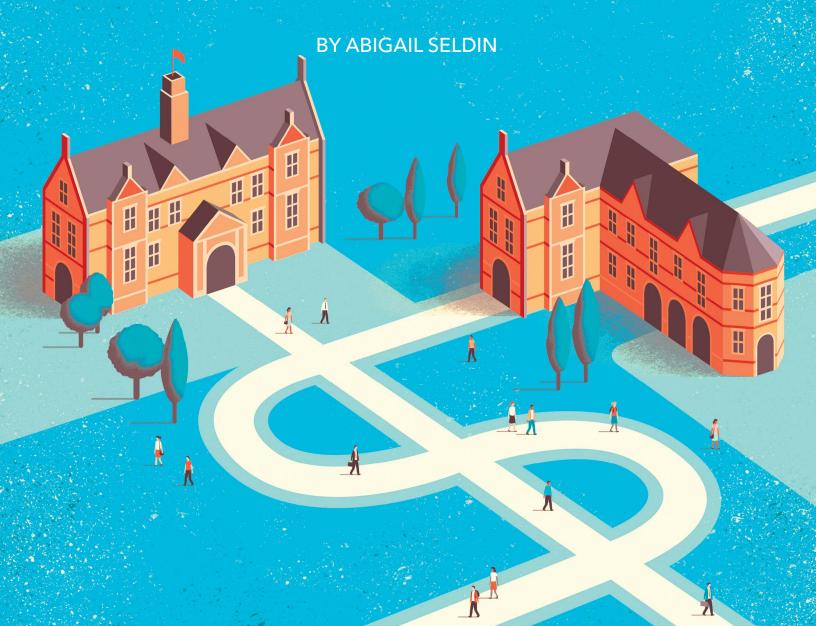# FINANCIAL AID HELP FOR STUDENTS — AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES TOO

In its first year, SwiftStudent helped simplify financial aid appeals for more than 70,000 students.

BY ABIGAIL SELDIN

SwiftStudent offers community college leaders a (free) way to comply with new regulations – and ensure that students can ask for the help they need to succeed in school. Through SwiftStudent, students are learning about the financial aid appeal process, reviewing eligibility requirements, and customizing free template appeal letters to submit to their college financial aid office.

IN THE PAST THREE RELIEF BILLS, CONGRESS APPROPRIATED dollars for direct disbursement to college students, many of whom are struggling with food and housing insecurity. Yet the vast majority of our students do not know that they can ask for additional financial aid. Recognizing this information gap, Congress now requires institutions in receipt of these funds to notify students that they can appeal their financial aid award or eligibility.

SwiftStudent offers community college leaders a (free) way to comply with new regulations — and ensure that students can ask for the help they need to succeed in school. Through SwiftStudent, students are learning about the financial aid appeal process, reviewing eligibility requirements, and customizing free template appeal letters to submit to their college financial aid office. During the COVID-19 emergency, SwiftStudent has helped more than 70,000 students with financial aid appeals, providing both factual information about eligibility and industry-approved template letters for submission.

The Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation (SHSF) developed SwiftStudent's content and design in partnership with 17 leading higher education organizations from around the country, including the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), College Promise, Achieving the Dream, Montgomery College, and Everett Community College. These partners provided extensive and exhaustive input on the tool, reviewing numerous iterations through the development process. As a free website, SwiftStudent does not share or sell user information, which has enabled easy partnerships with institutions and access organizations. Numerous community colleges have posted SwiftStudent links to their financial aid pages to provide students with a primer about the financial aid appeals process.

Now one year old, the SwiftStudent is addressing the barriers community college students face — and saving time for financial aid officers as they manage new compliance requirements and assist students.

Abigail Seldin is the producer of SwiftStudent and CEO of the Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation.

FormSwift

SWIFT STUDENT FROM FORMSWIFT

How can I request a change to my college financial aid package?

SwiftStudent will help you write a financial aid appeal letter – for **free.**

- ✔ Am I eligible?
- 📄 What documents do I need?
- ≡ How do I write an appeal letter?
- ⬇ How do I download and email to the financial aid office?

SwiftStudent helps students understand the financial aid appeal process.