



## FAFSA: What Every Student Needs to Know

### Introduction

This resource is intended to help students understand the FAFSA and the importance of completing the necessary paperwork in order to pay for college.

### What is the FAFSA?

- FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Who administers the FAFSA? The FAFSA is administered by Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education that ensures that all eligible individuals can benefit from federally funded or federally guaranteed financial assistance for education beyond high school.

### Who should submit a FAFSA?

- Every student, regardless of family income level, should submit the FAFSA.

### Why should you submit the FAFSA?

- The FAFSA is used by the government, colleges, and organizations to determine financial aid and scholarships.

### How do you complete the FAFSA?

- You may choose any of these three methods to file a FAFSA:
  - Apply online at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> (recommended method).
  - Complete a PDF of the FAFSA at the website above (completed PDF must be mailed for processing).
  - Request a paper FAFSA by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1- 800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

### Is there a deadline for submitting the FAFSA?

- Yes. Deadlines vary from state to state and college to college. The FAFSA should be completed before March 1, but it's recommended that you complete the application as soon after it becomes available on October 1st as possible.

### If you complete the FAFSA, what type of federal financial aid might you receive?

- You could be eligible for grants, college work-study, and loans, including the Pell Grant, Academic Competitiveness Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Work-Study, Perkins Loans, and Stafford Loans, as well as PLUS Loans (for parents).

### Why do you need to include parent income on the FAFSA?

- Students must include parent income until they are classified as an independent student. Students with divorced parents may only need to include data for the parent they live with more and/or the parent who provides the majority of financial support.



# CORE PRACTICES

# PATHWAYS

Is there any way to estimate what the FAFSA will determine?

- The FAFSA4caster provides an early estimate of eligibility for federal financial aid assistance. It is a very helpful tool that all students should use. Look for the FAFSA4caster on [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov).

Where can you go for help in completing the FAFSA?

- Go to <https://fafsa.ed.gov> or call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

Steps to Complete the FAFSA Online

- Get an FSA ID to use for signing your FAFSA electronically. For information and to apply, go to <https://fsaid.ed.gov>. If your parents are submitting information (likely the case unless you are considered independent), they will need their own FSA ID(s).
- You will need a Social Security Number and/or Alien Registration Number.
- Gather information required to complete the FAFSA. For a list of the necessary documents and information, use the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet found at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>.
- Complete the FAFSA online application. Print and save a copy of the submission page containing your confirmation number.
- Follow up after submitting the FAFSA to check the status of your application. In approximately seven to nine days after submission online, you will receive your Student Aid Report (SAR).