

FAFSA CHECKLIST

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The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, is a financial aid form that students must fill out and submit if they hope to qualify for federal, state, and institutional aid. This form must be submitted every year you are enrolled in school to maintain aid eligibility.

When filling out the FAFSA, there are specific documents that everyone will need to complete the fields on the form. Below is the comprehensive list for first-time FAFSA filers:

IDENTIFICATION

Depending on your citizenship status, you will need one or some of the following:

- Social Security card
- Driver's License
- Alien registration card if you're not a U.S. citizen

FSA ID

You and your parents/guardians will all need individual FSA IDs to begin working on the FAFSA. These personal IDs will be used to sign and complete the form:

- FSA ID for both student and parents/guardians

FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

Financial documentation must come from both you and your parents or guardians. Note that submitting their financial information does not require your parents or guardians to contribute to your college costs financially. However, without their information, you will be unable to qualify for financial aid:

- Your [the student's] previous year's federal income tax returns, W-2s, and any other records of income earned, if applicable
- Your parents/guardians' previous-previous year's federal income tax returns, W-2s, and 1040s
- Records and documents of other nontaxable income: *Welfare benefits, Social Security income, child support, etc.*
- Additional applicable financial information: *Income earned from apprenticeships, fellowships, grants, scholarships, etc.*
- Current bank and brokerage statements
- Business or investment farm records
- Records relating to unusual financial information: *High dependent care costs, death, divorce, job loss, etc.*

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SCHOOL CODES

Finally, the form asks for school codes to ensure your financial information is sent to the correct colleges:

- Title IV Institution codes for each school you're applying to

FAFSA APPLICATION TIPS

- Complete your FAFSA as soon as possible. Many states distribute aid on a first-come, first-served basis.
- State deadlines differ from the national deadline, which is always June 30 of the following year that the FAFSA is released. Try to have your form submitted by the state deadline so that you can qualify for state financial aid.
- Remember to submit the form every year to remain eligible for financial aid. Resubmitting the form is easier and takes less time in the subsequent years.

HELP COMPLETING THE FAFSA

Completing the FAFSA can be a barrier to attending college and qualifying for financial aid for some students. Be sure that you're seeking help to complete the form. There are many resources available to both students and parents/guardians:

- You can call, email, or chat with the Federal Student Aid Information Center.
- Furthermore, you can request an Interpreter for your call to the Federal Student Information Center. The interpreters cover 10 different languages.
- The FAFSA is available in both English and Spanish.
- Many communities offer FAFSA Help Days, where students and parents can meet one-on-one with a financial aid expert who will walk them through filling out the form.
- Meet with your school counselor or a financial aid administrator for FAFSA help.