

FAFSA FACTS

Keep this page to help you when filling out the FAFSA and applying for financial aid.

1. Only families who make LESS than \$50,000 should fill out FAFSA.
 - Everyone should file for FAFSA. Most colleges require it.
 - Some merit aid scholarships are filtered through FAFSA.
 - Undocumented immigrant students are not eligible for federal aid. However, FAFSA is a gateway to other money.
 - Even if you think you may not get aid because you or your parents earn too much, you should file the FAFSA, so you can access federal loans.

2. FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

3. Most colleges use FAFSA as a starting point to determine how much financial support a student will need to attend college.
 - The Financial Aid Office at each college uses your results to aid in determining how much financial aid they will offer you.
 - Your FAFSA determines how much FEDERAL financial aid you can receive. This is different from what the college may offer you.
 - The financial need is the difference between your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and the college's cost of attendance. Example: Cost of college = \$8,000 minus your expected family contribution (EFC) = \$2,000. Your financial aid package will equal \$6,000.
 - Colleges use the FAFSA to determine whether you are eligible for federal student aid, including Pell Grants, Student Loans, and Work Study.
 - FAFSA is also the gateway for state funding, college support, and many private scholarships.

4. I can complete the FAFSA on my own without assistance.
 - Students require help from a family member in gathering important documents, tax records, and social security cards.
 - Most people need help when completing the form. Your high school counselor or the college financial aid office can help you. Or, you can call the FAFSA Hotline 1-800-433-3243.

5. Financial aid is awarded "first come, first served," and the FAFSA deadline must be met.
 - You can apply any time after FAFSA opens (check the FAFSA website for deadlines), but the earlier the better since it's "first come, first served."
 - Applying is FREE and you can do so at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

6. The "Expected Family Contribution" (EFC) means your family has a lot of money and can pay for college without any assistance.
 - Your EFC measures your families' financial strength and is used to determine your eligibility FOR federal student aid, school, college, or state aid.
 - This is the amount you or your family may need to pay. This may be done through additional scholarships and loans as well as personal cash and savings.

7. Your family income tax for the current year must be filed before you can complete the FAFSA.
 - The FAFSA requires tax information from the calendar year just completed. You can go ahead and fill it out with the previous year to help you get an idea of how much aid you will receive.
 - **HOWEVER, YOU WILL NEED TO GO BACK IN TO PUT THE MORE CURRENT YEAR OF TAXES IN WHEN AVAILABLE.**

8. I will not receive any information about my Student Aid Report (SAR) for two months.
 - You will receive your SAR through email within 3-5 days if you use a valid email and sign with FSA ID(s) or two weeks if the signature page is used and/or did not provide a valid email. Continue checking your email, including spam.
 - If you don't receive your SAR, or if you have any problems, call 1-800-433-3243.

9. Once your application is complete, each college will award you the same amount of money.
 - Each college determines the amount awarded as college costs vary.
 - Do not commit to a college until you have received the financial aid packages from all the colleges.

10. It is important to fill out the college application at the same time you complete the FAFSA.

- A college will not send you a financial aid package until you have applied and been accepted to that college. You do not have to apply at the same time; however, the sooner the better in order to make sure financial aid is available.

11. To be considered an “independent” student by FAFSA, the only criterion is that the student must be responsible for all educational and living expenses.

- Most high school graduates will be considered dependent and parents’ income and tax information will be needed.
- However, if a student meets any of the following qualifications, they may be considered independent, and parents’ information will not be necessary. Visit the FAFSA website for a questionnaire about your dependency status.
 - Age 24 or older by Dec. 31st.
 - Married or separated, but not divorced.
 - A graduate student or professional student.
 - Student has a child and that child receives over ½ of the support from the student.
 - Since the age of 13: both parents deceased, lived in foster care, ward of the court, emancipated or under legal guardianship, unaccompanied homeless youth.
 - Currently serving on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces or a veteran.

For More Information:

FAFSA Website: <https://studentaid.gov>

FAFSA Wakelet:

Contact FAFSA:

Website Contact: <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/contact>

Phone: 1-800-433-3243