



## Guide for the First-Time FAFSA Applicant

01

### Create your FSA ID

This will serve as your username and password specifically for the FAFSA. It will also help verify your identity and serve as your digital signature for your FAFSA.

02

### Gather Important Documents

- Your Social Security Number (parent(s) too if you're a dependent)
- Driver's License Number (if applicable)
- Federal Tax Information/Tax Returns - W-2 information for you and your parents (if you're a dependent) from two years prior (2021-2022 school year will use 2019 tax info)
- Financial Information - Cash, savings and checking account balances, any investments you or your parents have made

03

### Start your FAFSA

Head on over to [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov) and click "start here." Be sure to use ONLY [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov).

04

### Evaluate your Dependency Status

FAFSA asks questions to determine your dependency status. Generally, if you're under 24, not married, and not a military member, you are considered a dependent for the FAFSA.

05

### Input Financial Information

Pro tip: Be sure to utilize the IRS data retrieval tool if you given the option. This automatically syncs your tax return with your FAFSA.

06

### Select FAFSA Recipients

You are only required to list 1 school, but can add up to 10 school to receive your FAFSA. Upon acceptance, the colleges can access your FAFSA to create a financial aid package for you. You can always add more schools later.

07

### Sign and Submit FAFSA

Your must sign your FAFSA with your FSA ID before hitting "submit." You'll then hit a confirmation page and receive an email.

### What is the FAFSA?

- It stands for "Free Application for Federal Student Aid"
- It must be completed to be considered for need-based scholarships and grants
- It is necessary if you wish to use federal student loans to fund your education

\*Steps 1 and 2 can be done prior to October 1

The earlier you complete your FAFSA, the better. Some colleges have priority financial aid deadlines and some funds do run out.



The FAFSA opens on October 1st of each year for the following school year.\*

For more college planning advice, please visit [myOptions.org/advice](https://myOptions.org/advice) or download the myOptions app in the Apple App Store.