



## Guide for the First-Time FAFSA Applicant

01

### Create your FSA ID (your parents/guardian will also need one)

This serves as your username and password for the FAFSA. It will also help verify your identity and serve as your digital signature for your FAFSA. Visit [studentaid.gov/fsa-id](https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id) for more information. **DO THIS EARLY!**

02

### Gather Important Documents

- Your Social Security Number (parent(s) too if you're a dependent). **If you are not a US Citizen**, this is referred to as your "Alien Registration number" (term designated by the US Dept. of Education)
- 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 (2022-2023 school year will use 2020 tax info)
- Financial Information including cash, saving and checking account balances, investments, business/farm assets, and untaxed income records

### What is the FAFSA?

- Stands for "Free Application for Federal Student Aid"
- Must be completed to be eligible for: need-based federal aid, federal student loans, some state aid, come college campus aid
- Necessary if you wish to use federal student loans to fund your education

03

### Start your FAFSA

Head to [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) or myStudentAid mobile app to begin. Be sure to use **ONLY** [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.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

Colleges need your FAFSA information to be able to award financial aid. You are required to list one school, but you can add up to 10. Some states require in-state schools to be listed first for state aid, so check if your state has this requirement!

07

### Sign and Submit FAFSA

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

**\*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.