



COMPLETING THE FAFSA

You must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form to receive Federal Direct student loans and be considered for grants, scholarships and other types of financial aid. Some schools won't consider you for merit scholarships until you have submitted the FAFSA, so complete one even if you think you won't qualify for federal aid. You must complete a FAFSA form each school year.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Every contributor (student, student's spouse, dependent student's biological or adoptive parent and their spouse) will need to create a StudentAid.gov account before completing their section of the online form. You'll need to have the following documents handy:

- Social Security number for student and parent (if dependent student). Your name and Social Security number must match those on your Social Security card
- Tax returns
- Record of child support received
- Current balances of cash, savings and checking accounts
- Net worth of investments, businesses and farms (if applicable)

If you don't have all this information ready yet, you can still start the FAFSA, save it and come back later to finish it.

WHEN TO COMPLETE THE FAFSA

Each fall, the FAFSA is available for the next school year. For the 2025-2026 school year, the FAFSA is planned to be released by Dec. 1, 2024. It's important to fill it out as soon as possible to meet school and state financial aid deadlines. Some schools also offer aid on a first-come, first-served basis, so plan to submit the FAFSA early.

Each school has its own deadline. Check the college or career school's deadline on its website or call its financial aid office.

FAFSA FILING OPTIONS

- Log in at fafsa.gov to apply online
- Complete a FAFSA PDF (Note: You must print out and mail the FAFSA PDF for processing)
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NEXT STEPS

1. **Make sure your FAFSA form was processed.** You can check the status of your form by logging in to your StudentAid.gov account and checking your FAFSA submission from “My Activity” section of your account dashboard.
2. **Review your FAFSA submission summary.** You will get your FAFSA Submission Summary after your FAFSA form is processed. Review the summary for mistakes and make corrections to your FAFSA data if necessary. The schools listed in your application use this data to build your financial aid package. This [video](#) provides additional information about the submission summary.
3. **Provide required verification.** You may see a note on your FAFSA Submission Summary saying you’ve been selected for verification; or your school might contact you to inform you that you have been selected. Provide the requested documentation by the school’s deadline to ensure that you’re able to receive federal student aid.
4. **Compare aid offers and respond by the deadline listed by the school.** The aid offer may include information for grants and scholarships (free money), federal work-study (earned money) and student loans (borrowed money). You may accept part or all of the aid offer. If there are any questions regarding the offer, contact the school’s financial aid office.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Get free assistance and answers at [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) or (800) 433-3243.

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