

What Parents Need to Know About FAFSA

Reminder for Parents

For the 2023–24 academic year (your child’s first year of post-secondary education) fill out FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1, 2022.



The free Application for Federal Student Aid may sound like a complex document, but filling it out is actually quick and easy.

Helping your high school senior complete the form is one of the most important things you can do for our child’s future. For many, filing FAFSA means the difference between going to college or professional/trade school and not going. With their parents’ help, high school seniors can gain the education they need to secure a place in the world and fulfill their dreams.

FAFSA Opens door for Students.

The FAFSA determines students’ ability to pay for their education, and thus their eligibility for federal, state and institutions grants, loans and work study opportunities. You and your child should fill it out even if you think your child’s grades are good enough (grades are NOT taken into account for federal aid) or your family income is too high (you may be surprised). The U.S. Department of Education awards more than \$150 billion a year in federal student aid (grants, workstudy funds and low interest loans).

What you need to know and do:

The FAFSA will be available on October 1 of this year. Go to www.studentaid.gov. You will use your 2021 taxes to complete the FAFSA. (Most families will be able to use the automatic download feature to provide tax info.) To start, both the student AND one parent must create separate FSA ID’s in order to “sign” the FAFSA. This will require both parent and student social security numbers and separate email addresses. Go to www.studentaid.gov.

The FAFSA Myth Buster

Many myths surround FAFSA. Arm yourself with the truth. Don't miss out on valuable grants, scholarships and loans that can change the direction of your child's life.

Myth: I can't afford to send my child to college or professional/trade school.

Fact: It's possible to receive enough financial aid to even pay for an out-of-state institution. The school may consider your child a good fit and offer enough financial aid to attend. **You won't know until you file the FAFSA form.**

Myth: Only students with good grades qualify for financial aid.

Fact: Most federal student aid programs are based on financial need, not grades. Private scholarships may look at grades, but other factors are considered, such as leadership qualities, heritage, career choice and place of residence.

Myth: My spouse and I make too much money for my child to qualify for financial aid.

Fact: Your income is considered when applying for financial aid, but so is the cost of the institution your child applies to. **The only way to know is to complete the FAFSA.**

Myth: My child can't file FAFSA until I file my taxes.

Fact: FAFSA can and should be filed as soon as possible after October 1 **using your tax returns from 2021.**

Myth: The FAFSA forms are complicated and hard to fill out.

Fact: The application process is much easier than it used to be. The online application is very user-friendly, with assistance in the margins to help you with each question.

Myth: My life savings or amount in home equity disqualifies my child for financial aid.

Fact: FAFSA factors in asset protection, to ensure that your life savings are not depleted. And retirement savings are completely protected. Generally, parents are expected to contribute 5.6 percent of their assets per year toward the cost of college. FAFSA doesn't ask about home ownership, so home equity is not factored into your eligibility.

Myth: I meet one of the conditions to be identified as an Independent Student for FAFSA purposes, but my guardian claims me as a dependent on her taxes.

Fact: As long as a student meets one or more of the criteria to be an Independent Student, she is identified as Independent. It does not matter if someone claims the student as a dependent.

Remember:

Only biological or adopted parents must include their financial info on FAFSA. Guardians, grandparents, siblings, etc. who house and/or care for students do not qualify as parents and therefore do not include their information on the FAFSA.

