

# COMPLETING THE FAFSA AT FAFSA.GOV

## Financial aid information and hints for the 2020-2021 academic year.

### What is the FAFSA?

- The FAFSA is the “Free Application for Federal Student Aid.” You must complete and submit the FAFSA to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) every year you need scholarships/grants, work study or loans to attend a community college, four-year college, university or career/vocational trade school.
- Information you and your parent(s) provide on the FAFSA is used by the financial aid office at the school you attend to determine your eligibility for financial aid and the amount/type of aid you receive.

### How and when can I complete/submit the FAFSA for 2020-2021?

- You can complete the FAFSA online at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) beginning October 1, 2019.
- “Tool Tips” are available at each question to help you provide all required information (*click on question mark next to the question*). Help is available from ED at 800-4-FED-AID; or from Stand by Me, 302-255-9621.

### What information is needed to complete the FAFSA for 2020-2021?

- Social Security Number (SSN)
- Alien Registration Number (if you are a permanent resident)
- Federal tax returns and W-2s for 2018 (if federal return was filed for 2018)
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
- FSA ID (username and password used to sign the FAFSA electronically)

*Note: Most of this information also will be needed for your parent(s) if the government considers you a “dependent student” (most high school students are considered “dependent”).*

## START THE FAFSA

### Hints to complete each section of the 2020-2021 FAFSA

- Go to [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov). Select “**Start here**” if you have never logged into the [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) website; select “**Log in**” if you are returning to the site.
- If you are the student, log in using your FSA ID (you can create your FSA ID if you have not done so); otherwise enter the student information as requested.
- Make sure you select “**Start 2020-2021 FAFSA**” once you have completed the log-in and are on the Welcome screen. Create “**Save Key**” as requested — this allows you or your parent(s) to return to the FAFSA application at a later date.

### Section 1: Student Demographics

- Selective Service: If male, choose option to “Register” if you are not registered with the Selective Service.
- College grade level: Select “**Never attended college/1st year**”.
- Degree: Select “**1st bachelor’s degree, associate degree, certificate or diploma**” as appropriate.
- Interested in Work Study: Select “**Yes**” (you can change your mind at a later date).

### Section 2: School Selection

- Enter all the schools you are considering attending. You can list up to 10 at a time (*you can enter additional schools once your FAFSA has been processed*).
- Consider including all Delaware public colleges and universities to maximize state funding eligibility.

### Section 3: Dependency Status

- You are considered “dependent” if you answer **no** to all the questions. If you do so, you will need to provide your parent(s) information in Sections 4 and 5 of the FAFSA. Follow the directions for “Special Circumstances” at the end of this section if you are unable to provide your parent(s) information.
- You are considered “independent” if you answer **yes** to at least one of the questions.

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## Section 4: Parent Demographics

- This section will be displayed if you are “dependent” and indicated at the end of Section 3 that you would provide parent(s) information. *It will not be displayed if you indicated you have special circumstances at the end of Section 3 or if you are independent.*
- Your legal parents are your biological or adopted parents. **They are not your grandparents, aunts/uncles, foster parents, legal guardians.**
- Information must be provided about *both* legal parents if they live together (regardless of their marital status). If they do not live together, information is to be provided by the “custodial parent” — the legal parent with whom you live most of the year. If that parent has remarried, your stepparent must also provide information.

## Section 5: Financial Information

- Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) to transfer the required 2018 tax return information from you and your parent(s), if tax return was filed. *Income/taxes-paid information must be entered manually if you do not or cannot use the IRS DRT.*
- Information about wages earned must be entered manually from all W-2s even if the IRS DRT is used.
- All income and taxes-paid information must be from your **2018 federal tax return** on the 2020-2021 FAFSA (even if your 2018 federal tax return is available). Contact the financial aid office at *each* school you listed in Section 2 of the FAFSA if your family's income has declined (e.g., change in marital status, loss of employment) to explain these *special circumstances*. The financial aid office may make an accommodation for this change. You likely will be required to document your changed circumstances.

## Section 6: Sign and Submit

- You can sign the FAFSA electronically with your FSA ID (username and password). At least one parent also must sign the FAFSA if parent(s) information was provided. Parent(s) must use their FSA ID to sign the FAFSA electronically. They cannot use the student's FSA ID. Parent(s) can create their FSA ID in this section if they have a valid Social Security Number. Parents without a valid SSN must follow the directions to print a signature page to sign and mail to the federal processor.

## Section 7: Confirmation

- You will receive confirmation that your FAFSA has been submitted once you have answered all required questions in Sections 1-6, signed the FAFSA and submitted the completed FAFSA at the end of Section 6.
- Processing typically takes up to four business days.
- You will receive an email (assuming you provided an email address in Section 1) when the processing has been completed and/or if further action is required.
- Parent(s) can transfer their information into another child's FAFSA at this step.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- Contact the financial aid office at each school. Ask if other information is needed.
- Review financial aid award notification when received from school(s) and respond as needed to complete the process.
- Expect to receive financial aid award notification after:  
(1) The FAFSA information and all other required financial aid application materials have been received/reviewed by the school, and  
(2) You have been offered admission to that school.
- Continue researching and applying for privately funded scholarships.

[standbyme.org](http://standbyme.org)



United Way of Delaware