

Completing the FAFSA at *FAFSA.gov* 2021-2022

Information and helpful hints for students needing financial aid to attend a community college, 4-year college, university, or career/vocational trade school for the 2021-2022 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 financial aid (scholarships/grants, work study, loans) to attend a community college, 4-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 2021-2022?

- You can complete the FAFSA online at FAFSA.gov beginning OCTOBER 1, 2020.
- You should be able to complete the entire application and submit it electronically in less than 60 minutes.
- "Tool Tips" are available at each question in the application to provide help in providing all required information (click on question mark symbol next to the question being answered).
- Help also is available from ED at (800) 4-FED-AID; or from Stand by Me at 2-1-1.

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-2's for 2017 (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 to a DEPENDENT STUDENT (most high school students are considered DEPENDENT).

What steps are required to complete the FAFSA for 2021-2022?

- Student Demographics (e.g., name, address, phone number, SSN)
- School Selection (allows you to list the schools you want to receive the FAFSA information from ED)
- Dependency Status (determines if parent(s) information is required)
- Parent Demographics
- Financial Information (e.g., wages, taxes paid, checking and savings, balances, other resources)
- Sign and Submit
- Confirmation

NOTE: Most of this information also will be needed for your parent(s) if the government considers you to a DEPENDENT STUDENT (most high school students are considered DEPENDENT).

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Helpful hints on completing each section of the 2021-2022 FAFSA

Starting the FAFSA

- Go to: fafsa.gov
- Select "**START HERE**" if you have never logged into the fafsa.gov website; select "**LOG IN**" if you have previously logged in on the site.
- If you are the STUDENT, log in using your FSA ID (you can create your FSA ID at this point if you have not already done so); otherwise enter the student's information as requested
- Make sure you select "**START 2020-2021 FAFSA**" once you have completed the log-in process 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 (Personal Information for Student)

- Selective Service: *If male, choose option to REGISTER if you are not already registered with the Selective Service*
- College grade level: Select "**NEVER ATTENDED COLLEGE/1ST YEAR**"
- Degree: Select "**1st BACHELOR'S DEGREE, ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE, CERTIFICATE or DIPLOMA**" as appropriate
- Interested in Work Study: Select **YES** (you can change your mind at a later date if you decide not to work part-time while in school)

Section 2: School Selection

- Enter all the schools you are considering attending — you can list up to ten (10) schools at a time (you can enter additional schools once your FAFSA has been processed, if needed)
- Consider including all the public colleges and universities in Delaware (DTCC, DSU, UD) to be maximize eligibility for state funding

Section 3: Dependency Status

- The questions in this section are used to determine if you are financially DEPENDENT or INDEPENDENT of your parents for purposes of receiving federal student aid according to current federal law.
- 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 regarding SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES at the end of this section if you are unable to provide your parent(s) information. You will need to contact the Financial Aid Office at each school you have selected to receive your FAFSA information to explain those special circumstances after you have submitted your FAFSA.*
- You are considered INDEPENDENT if you answer YES to at least one of the questions — *if so, you will NOT need to provide your parent(s) information of the FAFSA*

NOTE: Most high school seniors are DEPENDENT and, therefore, must provide parent(s) information.

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*. It also will be displayed if you are INDEPENDENT and opted to voluntarily provide your parent(s) information at the end of Section 3.
- 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 currently live together (regardless of their marital status). If they do not currently live together, then information is to be provided by the "custodial parent"—that is the legal parent with whom you live with more of the year at the current time. If that parent has remarried, then your stepparent must also provide information. See the "Tool Tips" if more information is needed.

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Section 5: Financial Information

- All income and taxes paid information is to come from your 2019 federal tax return on the 2021-2022 FAFSA (even if your 2019 federal tax return is available) from you and your parent(s), as requested. *Otherwise income/taxes paid information will need to be entered manually if you do not or cannot use the IRS DRT.*
- Information about wages earned will need to be entered manually from all W-2s even if the IRS DRT is used.
- All income and taxes paid information is to come from your 2018 federal tax return on the 2021-2022 FAFSA (even if your 2018 federal tax return is available). Contact the Financial Aid Office at EACH school you have listed in Section 2 of the FAFSA if your family's financial circumstances have changed in a negative way (e.g., change in marital status, loss of income, loss of employment) to explain these SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. The Financial Aid Office may be able to make an accommodation for this change. You likely will be required to provide additional information to them documenting the change in circumstances.

Section 6: Sign and Submit

- The student can sign the FAFSA electronically with their 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 own 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 not already done so provided they have a valid Social Security Number (SSN). If you do not have a valid SSN, they must follow the directions that are provided to print a signature page to sign and then mail it 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 (4) business days.
- The student will receive an email (assuming the student 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, if needed.

What's next?

- Contact Financial Aid Office at each school; *ask if any other materials/information are needed; advise them of any SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.*
- Review Financial Aid Award notification when received from school(s) and respond as needed/instructed to complete the process. *Student should receive their Financial Aid Award notification at some point after: (1) the FAFSA information and all other required financial aid application materials have been received/reviewed by the school and (2) the student has been offered admission to that school.*
- Continue researching and applying for privately-funded scholarships.

For more information or assistance, call the U.S. Department of Education help line at (800) 4-FED-AID; or Stand by Me at 2-1-1.