

Completing the FAFSA at StudentAid.gov 2023-2024 (2023 High School Graduates)

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 2023-2024?

- You can complete the FAFSA online at FAFSA.gov beginning OCTOBER 1, 2022. • “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
- For one-on-one assistance, register for a Stand by Me NexGen One-on-One Zoom FAFSA Completion Appointment. Register at <https://standbymede.org/stand-by-me-nexgen/college-funding-project/>

What information is needed to complete the FAFSA for 2023-2024?

- Social Security Number (SSN)
- Alien Registration Number (if you are a Permanent Resident)
- Federal tax returns and W-2’s for 2021 (if federal return was filed for 2021)
- 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 living with at least 1 parent are considered DEPENDENT. Keep in mind that grandparents, guardians, siblings who house and/or support students are not their biological parents and therefore do NOT include their financial information on the FAFSA. Some students in these circumstances will be considered INDEPENDENT).

What is the FSA ID and how do you get one?

- You need to create an FSA ID prior to the first time you complete a FAFSA application. Your FSA ID is the username and password you use to sign the FAFSA application electronically and to access StudentAid.gov. At least one of your parent(s) also must create an FSA ID if they provide information on your FAFSA application.
- You can use the “Create Account” option to create your FSA ID (username/password) at: StudentAid.gov.

- You must have a valid Social Security number (SSN) to create your FSA ID. The SSN you use must match your name and birthdate on file with the Social Security Administration.
- STUDENT and at least one PARENT each need to create their own FSA ID.
- Parents who do **NOT** have a valid Social Security Number cannot create an FSA ID. They will input their SSN as 000-00-0000 **on the FAFSA. They will sign the FAFSA manually and mail it through USPS as instructed on the signature page.**
- For assistance creating your FSA ID, call 1-800-4-FED-AID.
- If you forget your FSA ID (username/password), go to StudentAid.gov, select the option to “Log In,” then select “Forgot My Username” to retrieve your username, select “Forgot My Password” to create a new password.

Start the FAFSA

- Go to: FAFSA.gov
- Select: • “Start Here” if you are new to the FAFSA Process (i.e., you are a first-time user)
- “Log In” if you are a “Returning User” (i.e., have used the FAFSA.gov site in the past)
- Once on “Welcome Screen” select: “Start 2023-2024 FAFSA” to complete FAFSA for 2023-2024 academic year (your first year in college)
- Complete ALL required sections of the online FAFSA; sign it and then submit it!
- 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 2023-2024 (NOT the 2022-2023) 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 already registered with the Selective Service. (New Federal rules state that you must answer this question, but answers to this question will not affect your access to any financial aid that you qualify for).
- 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, but failure to say ‘yes’ to this question will exclude you from work study opportunities should you decide later that you want a job while you’re in school). Better to be safe than sorry.

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, but remember that guardians, grandparents and siblings are NOT biological parents and therefore will NOT provide their financial 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.

Section 5: Parent Financials and Student Financials

- Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) to transfer the required **2021** 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 will need to be entered manually from all W-2s even if the IRS DRT is used.

- All income and taxes-paid information must be from your **2021 federal tax return on the 2023-2024 FAFSA** (even if your 2022 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 financial situation has changed from what is reported on the 2021 tax return and would reduce your family's ability to pay for college (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 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 a valid Social Security Number (SSN). Parents without a valid Social Security Number (SSN) should enter 000-00-0000 for their SSN and will need to print out the form and mail it through USPS to the address provided.

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. Completing the FAFSA at studentaid.gov. For more information or assistance, call the U.S. Department of Education help line at (800) 4-FED-AID; or Stand by Me at 302-559-8288.