

FAFSA[®] 101

FAFSA[®] or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is often one of the first steps to planning your finances as you take on college. Completing this application will help confirm your eligibility for different types of aid including grants, scholarships, work-study funds, and loans.

FAFSA[®] FAQ

- **Who should complete the FAFSA[®]?**
 - Anyone planning on attending college who would like to be considered for federal, state, or school financial aid.
- **How long does it take to complete?**
 - It should take about 30 minutes to complete.
- **When is the deadline to submit?**
 - The deadline varies by state and school check the [FAFSA[®] Deadline page](#) to verify the deadline.
- **What information is needed to fill out the application?**
 - Verified account username and password (FSA ID)
 - Parent or spouse contributor name, date of birth, Social Security number, and email address
 - Income and asset information (if required)



- **What does financial aid cover?**
 - College costs such as:
 - Tuition
 - Fees
 - Books
 - Housing and meals
 - Technology
 - Transportation

Types of Financial Aid



Grants

A form of financial aid that does not need to be repaid as long as the terms are met.



Scholarships

A form of financial aid that does not need to be repaid and is awarded based on merit, skill, or need.



Loans

Money you borrow to pay for school that has to be repaid with interest.



Work-Study

A program designed to allow students to earn money towards the cost of school by working part-time,

Filling out your application

Once you decide to apply for financial aid, it might be confusing as to where you should start. Luckily, FAFSA® has a [page](#) dedicated to helping you fill out your application step-by-step. The first step is to visit [StudentAid.gov](#) to create an account. It is important to note that anyone who may be considered a contributor is also required to create their own account. This includes you, your spouse, biological or adoptive parent, or even your parent's spouse. Another step that may save you time before actually filling out the application would be to gather the required documents needed for your application.

CAST TIP



Make sure to save your login information somewhere safe so you don't lose it!

What documents are needed to fill out my FAFSA® ?

The specific documents you and your contributors will need to submit could vary but most applicants are required to submit the following:



- Your Social Security Number (if you have one)
- Your parents' SSNs if they have SSNs and you're a [dependent student](#)
- Tax Records
- Records of child support received
- Current balances of cash, savings, and checking accounts
- Net worth of investments, businesses, and farms

As you fill out your FAFSA®, you will answer questions related to your information including demographics, your financial information, your spouse's information (if applicable), your parent(s)' information. Make sure to ensure all the information is accurate and correct at each step. Visit the [studentaid.gov](#) website for guidance and help with your application.

Next Steps

After you submit your FAFSA®, you can check the status of your application on the [studentaid.gov](#) website. Make sure to regularly check your email for updates in case further action is needed to process your application. Once your application is processed, you will receive a FAFSA® Submission Summary, which will provide estimates of your eligibility for federal student aid. Once you are accepted into a college, or career school, they will make their own financial aid offer.