

The FAFSA: the most important financial aid form you'll ever fill out.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, is used by colleges and the federal government to determine your eligibility for grants, need-based scholarships, loans and workstudy programs.

The FAFSA usually becomes available each year on October 1. However due to many changes to the form, we are expecting a December date for the 2024-2025 school year. The sooner you submit it, the more aid will be available to you. Each school and some states have their own priority deadlines as well. [You can look up your state's deadline here.](#)

Get Ready! Filing the FAFSA isn't as complicated or time-consuming as it sounds – a little preparation will help make the process go smoothly.

Before you can submit your FAFSA, you'll need to [create your FSA ID](#). You'll need an FSA ID to log in to your account, sign the FAFSA and make changes or add schools. You and your parent/contributor must create separate FSA IDs.

Get Filing!

Here's a checklist of everything you and your parent need to fill out, sign and submit the FAFSA: An [FSA ID](#). Your FSA ID allows you to log in to your account, sign the FAFSA and make changes or add schools. You and your parent/contributor must create separate FSA IDs. Create this first as it takes a couple days for the ID to be verified and active!

You and your parent's Social Security or Alien Registration number. Here's what to do if your parent [doesn't have a Social Security number](#).

Driver's license (if you have one)

Your and your parent's federal income tax returns and W-2s from 2022 (you can use the Future Act Direct Data Exchange FADDX)

Bank statement

If applicable, other records of money earned, and records of investments and untaxed income

Don't worry if you can't find these materials right away: you can start the FAFSA and come back as many times as you need to update information or add schools. The important thing is to get started!

Get Help

Don't worry about getting stuck while you're filling out the FAFSA – lots of help is available, starting with your school's financial aid office. They'll help you with any questions you have at any step of the process. On the FAFSA app and website, there are tooltips next to each

question, [detailed help pages](#) and a chat option. There's also an 800 number to call (1-800-4FED-AID). The FAFSA even has its own YouTube channel! [Check it out](#) for step-by-step instructions on creating an FSA ID and filling out the form, help understanding different types of aid and more.