

HOW TO FILE YOUR FAFSA®

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is a form completed by current and prospective college students in the United States to determine their eligibility for student financial aid. The FAFSA should not be confused with the CSS Profile, which is also required by some colleges.

Create an account (FSA ID)

Student: An FSA ID is a username and password you need to sign the FAFSA form online. If you do not have an FSA ID, get an FSA ID here ASAP. It takes about 10 minutes to create an FSA ID. If this will be your first time filling out the FAFSA form, you will be able to use your FSA ID right away to sign and submit your FAFSA form online. If this is not your first time filling out the FAFSA form, you may need to wait one to three days for the account verification process before you can use your new FSA ID to renew your FAFSA form and sign it online.

Parent: If your child is required to report parent information on the FAFSA form, you need to create your own FSA ID to sign your child's FAFSA form. **Student:** An FSA ID is a username and password you need to sign the FAFSA form online. If you do not have an FSA ID, get an FSA ID here ASAP. It takes about 10 minutes to create an FSA ID. If this will be your first time filling out the FAFSA form, you will be able to use your FSA ID right away to sign and submit your FAFSA form online. If this is not your first time filling out the FAFSA form, you may need to wait one to three days for the account verification process before you can use your new FSA ID to renew your FAFSA form and sign it online.

IMPORTANT: Some of the most common FAFSA errors occur when the student and parent mix up their FSA IDs. If you do not want your financial aid to be delayed, it is extremely important that each parent and each student create his or her own FSA ID and that they do not share it with ANYONE, even each other.

Start the FAFSA form at fafsa.gov

Even if your state and school deadlines are not for a while, you should complete the FAFSA form as soon as possible because some states and schools run out of financial aid early and have limited funds for financial aid. Do not wait until the last minute to apply!

1. Go to fafsa.gov or click on the button below to get started.



Start the FAFSA

TIP: We recommend that the student start the FAFSA form using the instructions below. It makes the application process much easier.

- If you are the student: Click "Enter your (the student's) FSA ID." Then enter your FSA ID username and password and click "Next."
- If you are the parent: Click "Enter the student's information." Then provide the student's name, Social Security number, and date of birth, and click "Next."

Choose which FAFSA form you would like to complete:

- 2021–22 FAFSA form if you will be attending college between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022.

TIP: If you are given the option to complete a “renewal” FAFSA form, choose that option. When you choose to renew your FAFSA form, your demographic information from the previous year will roll over into your new application, saving you some time. Remember, the FAFSA form is not a onetime thing. You must complete a FAFSA form for each school year.

Create a save key:

- Unlike the FSA ID, the save key is meant to be shared. A save key is a temporary password that allows you and your parent(s) to “pass” the FAFSA form back and forth. It also allows you to save the FAFSA form and return to it later. This is especially helpful if you and your parent are not in the same place.

Fill out the Student Demographics Section

This is information such as your name, date of birth, etc. If you have completed the FAFSA form in the past or if you log into the FAFSA form with your FSA ID, a lot of your personal information will be prepopulated to save you time. Make sure you enter your personal information exactly as it appears on your Social Security card. (That is right, no nicknames.)

Parents: Remember that the FAFSA form is the student’s application, not yours. When the FAFSA form says “you” or “your,” it is referring to the student. Pay attention to whether you are being asked for student or parent information. When in doubt, the banner on the left side will indicate whether you are on a student or parent page.

List the schools to which you want your FAFSA® information sent

In the School Selection section, add every school you are considering, even if you have not applied or been accepted yet. It does not hurt your application to add more schools; colleges cannot see the other schools you have added. In fact, you do not even have to remove schools if you later decide not to apply or attend. If you do not end up applying or getting accepted to a school, the school can just disregard your FAFSA form. But you can remove schools at any time to make room for new schools. You can add up to 10 schools at a time.

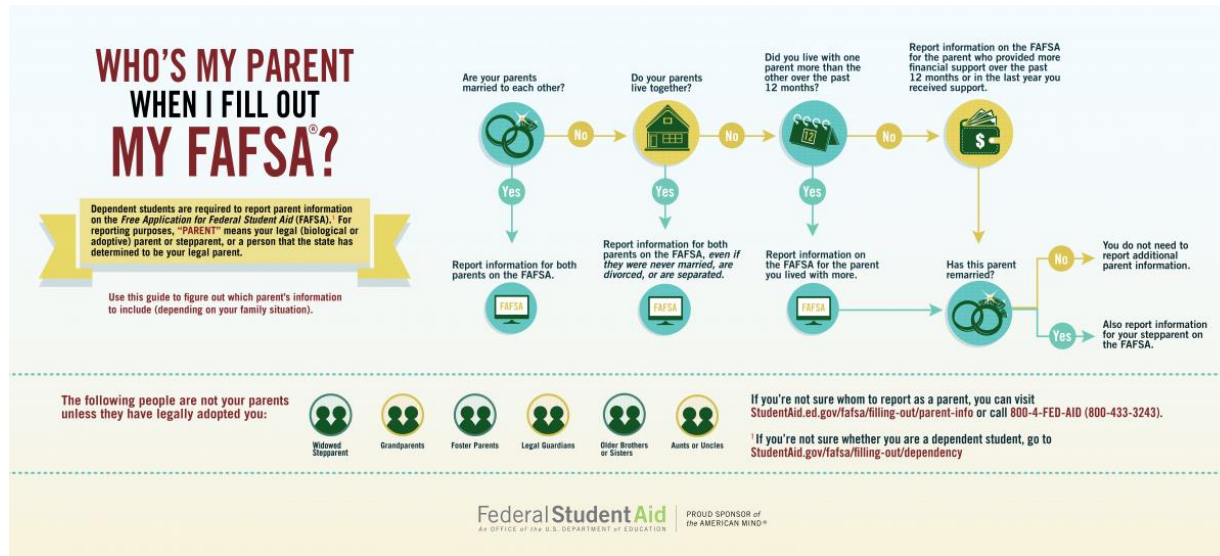
Answer the dependency status questions

In the dependency status section, you will be asked a series of specific questions to determine whether you are required to provide parent information on the FAFSA form. The dependency guidelines are set by Congress and are different from those used by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Even if you live on your own, support yourself, and file taxes on your own, you may still be considered a dependent student for federal student aid purposes. If you are determined to be a dependent student, you will be required to report information about your parent(s).

Fill out the Parent Demographics section

This is where your parent(s) will provide basic demographic information. Remember that it does not matter if you don't live with your parent(s); you still must report information about them if you were determined to be a dependent student in the step above.

Start by figuring out who counts as your parent on the FAFSA form.



Supply your financial information

Here is where you and your parent(s) (if applicable) will provide your financial information. This step is incredibly simple if you use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT), which will return with the 2021–22 FAFSA form on Oct. 1, 2020, with additional security and privacy protections added. The IRS DRT allows you to import your IRS tax information into the FAFSA form with just a few clicks. Using this tool also may reduce the amount of paperwork you need to provide to your school. So, if you are eligible, use it! If you are determined to be an independent student, you will not have to provide parent information and you can skip the next step.

SIMPLE STEPS TO TRANSFER TAX INFORMATION INTO YOUR FAFSA® FORM

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) Electronically Transfers Your Federal Tax Return Information Into Your FAFSA® Form

EASY Transfer info with the click of a button.

FAST Instantly retrieve your information.

ACCURATE Correctly fill in your information.

HOW



1 Log in to your current FAFSA form or start a new application at fafsa.gov.

2 In the finances section of the online form, you will see a "Link to IRS" button if you are eligible to use the IRS DRT.

3 Click the "Link to IRS" button and log in with your FSA ID to be transferred to the IRS to retrieve your info.

4 Once at the IRS site, enter your information exactly as it appears on your federal income tax return and click the "Submit" button.

5 Check the "Transfer My Tax Information into the FAFSA form" box, and click the "Transfer Now" button.*

6 You will know that your federal tax return information has been successfully transferred because the words "Transferred from the IRS" will display in place of the IRS information in your FAFSA form.

*For your protection, your tax information will not be displayed on either the IRS site or fafsa.gov.

The IRS DRT can be used by both students and parents.

Federal Student Aid
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To learn more about the IRS DRT, visit StudentAid.gov/irsdrt

To access the tool, indicate that you've "already completed" taxes on the student or parent finances page. If you are eligible, you'll see a "LINK TO IRS" button. Choose that option and follow the prompts.

STUDENT

Student Demographics School Selection Dependency Status Parent Demographics Financial Information

Student Tax Information

i • Attention! You must provide financial information from your 2016 tax return on the following pages.

✓ • Application was successfully saved.

For 2016, have you completed your IRS income tax return or another tax return?
Already completed ▾

For 2016, what is your tax filing status according to your tax return?
Single ▾

Did you file a Puerto Rican or foreign tax return for 2016?
 Yes No

+ Applying is faster and easier if you transfer your tax return information into this FAFSA with the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT)!
[LINK TO IRS](#)

[PREVIOUS](#) [NEXT](#)

[NEED HELP?](#) [SAVE](#) [CLEAR ALL DATA](#) [VIEW FAFSA SUMMARY](#) [EXIT](#)

Site Last Updated: Sunday, October 1, 2017
[Privacy](#)

Sign and submit your FAFSA form

You are not finished with the FAFSA form until you (and your parent if you are a dependent student) sign it. The quickest and easiest way to sign your FAFSA form is online with your FSA ID.

Note: If you (the student) logged in to the FAFSA form with your FSA ID, you will not need to provide it again on this page, but if you are a dependent student, your parent will still need to sign before you can completely submit.

Sign and Submit Tips

- If you or your parent forgot your FSA ID, you can retrieve the FSA ID.
- Make sure you and your parent do not mix up your FSA IDs. This is one of the most common errors we see, and why it is extremely important for each person to create his or her own FSA ID and not share it with anyone.
- Make sure the parent who is using his or her FSA ID to sign the FAFSA form chooses the right parent number from the drop-down menu. If your parent does not remember whether he or she was listed as Parent 1 or Parent 2, he or she can go back to the parent demographics section to check.
- If you have siblings, your parent can use the same FSA ID to sign FAFSA forms for all his or her children. Your parent can also transfer his or her information into your sibling's application by choosing the option provided on the FAFSA confirmation page.
- We recommend signing the FAFSA form with an FSA ID because it is the fastest way to get your FAFSA form processed. However, if you and/or your parent are unable to sign the FAFSA form electronically with an FSA ID, you can mail in a signature page. From the sign and submit page, select "Other options to sign and submit" and then choose "Print A Signature Page." Just keep in mind that your FAFSA form will take longer to process if you go this route.

YAY! You are one step closer to getting money for college. Now that you are FAFSA is complete, you can accurately answer any financial related questions on your scholarship applications. Some scholarships may even require you to submit your **FAFSA SAR** report. **SAR** stands for Student Aid Report.

**The information above was provided by Brooks Academy and edited by Eryn LaLonde.