How do I apply for financial aid to help pay for college?

A college education is an investment in your future, and financial aid is available to help manage the cost. One of the most important steps you can take to find grants, scholarships and low-cost loans is completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

We have some handy tips that will help you complete the FAFSA and start down the road to success!

Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1 every year to meet college and state deadlines.

Reminder
Don't forget to create your FSA ID!

Close   Remind me

Set up your Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID) at **FSAID.ed.gov** before you complete the FAFSA.

Visit **FAFSA.gov** to complete the application online and receive step-by-step instructions. You can also download and print a paper copy that must be completed and mailed in to the processing center. Instructions are included on the **FAFSA.gov** website.

Hit the "Save" button often. Always use the "Next" and "Previous" buttons on the site. Never use the "Back" button on your browser or you may lose your information.

If you have a question while completing the FAFSA online, you can view the 'Help and Hints' box on the right-hand side of the screen to get answers.

Include information about your parents' income when completing the FAFSA. If you have a special situation, you should contact your school's financial aid office.

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FAFSA Facts

Because **FAFSA.gov** is a secure site, your information is encrypted for privacy.

IRS tax data can be electronically transferred directly to your online FAFSA application.

If you answer "yes" to any dependency status question, you'll be considered an independent student. If all questions are answered "no," you'll be considered dependent.

If you're a dependent student applying for aid, your parents' marital status will affect your application. Use the 'Help and Hints' tool at **FAFSA.gov** to accurately report this information.

The FAFSA uses a larger percentage of student income and assets when determining your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), so it's best to keep all savings accounts in your parent(s)' name(s).

You should receive a copy of the SAR (Student Aid Report) after submitting your FAFSA. Remember to review the SAR for accuracy.

Males must be registered with Selective Service to receive federal financial aid. Even if you're not 18 yet, you can still register for Selective Service on your FAFSA.

Even if you think you won't qualify for aid, fill out the FAFSA anyway! Income is only one of the factors considered and nearly everyone qualifies for some type of financial aid.

All school codes are listed on the official FAFSA website, **FAFSA.gov**.

Never pay to complete the FAFSA—the first letter in FAFSA stands for FREE!

Visit **StartWithFAFSA.org** to find FAFSA completion video tutorials, available in English and Spanish.

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