

# FAFSA Checklist

**Create an FSA ID:** The FSA ID (account username and password) allows individuals to access Federal Student Aid websites and complete the FAFSA form online. Both you and your parent(s) will need to create an FSA ID.

**Create a StudentAid.gov Account:** Every contributor— You and your parent(s) will be required to create an account before you are able to access the FAFSA Form.

**Gather Required Documents:** The following are needed to complete the FAFSA Form.

- Your parents' SSNs if they have SSNs and you're a dependent student
- Tax returns
- Records of child support received
- Current balances of cash, savings, and checking accounts
- Net worth of investments, businesses, and farms

**Start your FAFSA Form:**

**You may choose any of these methods to file a FAFSA form:**

- Log in at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) to apply online
- Complete a [FAFSA PDF](#) (note: you must print out and mail the FAFSA PDF for processing)

If you are starting the FAFSA form for the first time on [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov), select “Start New Form” and enter your account username and password(FSA ID) to access the FAFSA form.

**List your College(s)/and or Career Schools:** While completing the FAFSA form, you must list at least one school to receive your information. The schools you list will use your FAFSA information to determine the types and amounts of student aid you may receive.

- You can list up to 20 schools online and 10 schools on the PDF form
- You must list 1 in-state school to be considered for state aid (e.g. grants/scholarships)

**Determine your Dependency Status:** The FAFSA form asks a series of questions that determine whether you are a dependent or independent student for the purpose of applying for federal student aid. If you are a dependent student, you must report parent information, as well as your own information, on your application.

**Report Your Parent's Information:** If you're a dependent student, you'll need to report parent information on your FAFSA form.

**Provide Financial Information:** The FAFSA form asks for financial information, including information from tax forms and balances of savings and checking accounts.

- The 2025–26 FAFSA form will ask for 2023 tax information.

**Automatically Transfer Your Tax Information:** The Financial Aid Direct Data Exchange will transfer contributors' federal tax information from the IRS directly into your FAFSA form.

- All contributors must provide consent and approval to
- disclose their personally identifiable information provided on the FAFSA form to the IRS for matching purposes;
- obtain their federal tax information from the IRS via direct data exchange;
- allow the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to use their federal tax information to determine the student's eligibility and amount of federal student aid;
- allow ED to share their federal tax information with colleges, career/trade schools, and state higher education agencies for use in awarding and administering financial aid; and
- allow ED to reuse their federal tax information on another FAFSA applicant's form (e.g., if a parent has multiple dependent students or a parent's own FAFSA form).

**IMPORTANT:** If a required contributor doesn't provide consent and approval to have their federal tax information transferred into the FAFSA form, you (the student) will not be eligible for federal student aid—even if the contributor manually enters tax information into the FAFSA form.

**Sign and Submit Your FAFSA Form:** After you complete your required section of the FAFSA form online, you'll acknowledge the terms and conditions of the form and electronically sign your section. You can then submit your section of the FAFSA form. However, your FAFSA form won't be considered complete until all required contributors provide their information on the FAFSA form, give their consent and approval to transfer federal tax information into the form, and provide their signatures.

- Once you submit the FAFSA form, you'll see a confirmation page that displays your completion date, data release number, and next steps. This page will automatically be emailed to you for your records.

**Be sure your FAFSA Form is Processed:** Check the status of your form by logging in to your StudentAid.gov account and selecting your FAFSA submission from the "My Activity" section of your account Dashboard.

If you submit a paper FAFSA form, you can check its status after it has been processed (roughly 7–10 days from the date mailed).

**Be sure to review your FAFSA Submission Summary carefully to ensure there are no mistakes. You may submit corrections to your FAFSA data if necessary, online in your FAFSA account.**