

FAFSA - FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

FAFSA APPLICATION - <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

Financial aid is money to help pay for college. It comes from the federal and state governments, colleges and universities, banks, and organizations. Applying for financial aid is a separate process from applying for admission to a college.

To receive financial aid, you must apply for it using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is for US Citizens and eligible non-citizens (non-citizen categories can be found here: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/non-us-citizens>). The FAFSA requires students to have a valid Social Security Number. It can be filed by U.S. citizens or U.S. nationals, U.S. permanent residents (those with a green card), and some non-residents. Please check the Federal Student Aid website (<https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>) to see if you are eligible. Students granted refugee status are eligible to file the FAFSA.

Students with the [College Bound Scholarship](#) must file their FAFSA or WASFA as close to October 1st of your senior year to receive maximum financial assistance. *Federal student aid includes:*

- [Grants](#)—Financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund, or you do not meet grade/enrollment requirements)
- [Loans](#)— Borrowed money for college or career school; you must repay your loans, with interest. For an overview on federal student loans visit <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/direct-loan-basics-students.pdf>
- [Work-Study](#)—A work program through which you earn money to help you pay for school

FAFSA is the most important document that a student needs to be eligible for financial aid from state, federal and school levels. Many schools will not award school scholarships/aid unless the FAFSA is completed. It is recommended that you complete your FAFSA in October (or as close to October as you can) to ensure you do not miss any college deadlines and receive the best financial package (financial aid is given out on a first-come, first-served basis). However, each college has their own priority filing deadline. For students planning to attend a Washington State college/university it is recommend that file your FAFSA before January 15th – you may still apply after January 15th, however the amount of money schools have to distribute begins to be given out by their priority filing deadline and it would be good for you to have your FAFSA in once funds begin to be allocated.

FAFSA Resources

FAFSA Completion Worksheet <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/2020-21-fafsa-worksheet.pdf>

Check out this full FAFSA walkthrough: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1GmaBMD-oY>

[8 Steps to Filling Out the FAFSA® Form](#)

College Goal Washington FAFSA/WAFSA - <https://readyssetgrad.wa.gov/educators/grad/cgw-students-families>

Non-Citizens Eligible for FAFSA - <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/non-us-citizens>

Undocumented Students and Financial Aid - <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/financial-aid-and-undocumented-students.pdf>

Want more video help? Visit [Federal Student Aid](#)

Not convinced you should file the FAFSA? Worried that you won't qualify? You might be surprised.

[Who Gets Aid?](#)

[12 Myths About the FAFSA® Form and Applying for Financial Aid](#)

[Why you should fill out the FAFSA® ASAP](#)

Important FAFSA Facts/Reminders

✓ Make sure you visit the official FAFSA webpage at fafsa.gov. It is FREE to file the FAFSA! Be cautious of websites requesting you to pay a fee. In order to file, you will first need an FSA ID. This will give you access to federal student aids online systems and serve as your legal signature. You can create your FSA ID at fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm

✓ Pay attention to college deadlines for financial aid. While the FAFSA is available from October 1st -June 30th annually, colleges may have earlier deadline requirements. Colleges use the results of students' FAFSA to create a financial aid package.

✓ You will need to fill out the FAFSA to qualify for the Federal Pell Grant program. Pell Grants are need-based grants given to help meet the cost of college. To learn more about Pell, visit studentaid.gov.

✓ In order to qualify for financial aid each year, you must file the FAFSA for every year you attend school. For example, if you are currently a high school senior, you would be completing the FAFSA during senior year to qualify for aid in the following year (freshman year in college). In Fall of your freshman year, you would then complete the FAFSA to qualify for aid in your sophomore year. This would continue through each year you attend college.

✓ Check the status of your FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov by clicking on the FAFSA follow-up. You can check the status of your FAFSA immediately after submitting it online. There is also an online chat function to answer any questions students or parents might have.