



## Fact Sheet – FAFSA

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**What is the FAFSA?** FAFSA stands for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, this form determines the financial aid being given from the government and most colleges.

**Does the youth complete the FAFSA application before or after he or she has applied to colleges?** You should apply for admission to the colleges you are interested in BEFORE filing your FAFSA. Once you are accepted to the colleges you have applied to, you can add those schools to receive financial aid award offers from when you file your FAFSA.

**Do schools require students to complete the FAFSA to qualify for aid or scholarships they may offer?** Some schools require FAFSA for merit aid, and if they do not fill out a FAFSA it is possible that the student will not be offered merit aid.

### **What information does the youth need to fill out the FAFSA?**

To complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®), you will need:

- Your Social Security Number, Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned.  
(Note: You may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.)
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
- An FSA ID to sign electronically.

**How long does it take to complete the FAFSA application?** Gathering the necessary information may add a few hours to the total. The frequently asked questions on the FAFSA web site reports that it takes 55 minutes to complete a FAFSA for the first time, 45 minutes for a Renewal FAFSA and 10 minutes to submit corrections to the FAFSA.

### **How quickly will the youth find out how much aid he/she has been awarded?**

To check on the status of financial aid being disbursed to you or your account, check with the financial aid office at your college or career school. Note: If you submitted a paper FAFSA form, you can check the status of your application after it has been processed (roughly seven to ten days from the date mailed).

**How does the youth receive the financial aid?** If you've been accepted at a college or career school that you listed on your FAFSA form, the school will calculate your aid and send you an electronic or paper aid offer, sometimes called an award letter, telling you how much aid you're eligible for at the school.

**Who does the youth contact with questions?** Do you have general questions about federal student aid? Here's what to do. If you have a question about the FAFSA form, you might want to take a look at the online help at StudentAid.gov/fafsa-help.

[https://studentaid.gov/help-center/contact 1-800-433-3243](https://studentaid.gov/help-center/contact-1-800-433-3243)

**Website to apply:** <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>