

Step 1

File the FAFSA Early!

File as soon as possible after January 1. College financial aid deadlines may be as early as February.

Common Deadlines:

Feb 15

University of Alaska

Alaska Pacific University

June 30

Alaska Performance Scholarship

Alaska Education Grant

Pro Tip

Don't wait until after you file your taxes! To meet early financial aid deadlines, it's best to use estimated tax or income information. You can easily update the information later using the automated data retrieval process described on the back of this folder.

Step 2

Determine Dependency Status

To complete the FAFSA, you will need income and identification information for yourself, your spouse if applicable, and for your parents or guardians, if you are considered a dependent student.

If you answer “Yes” to any of the questions in the table on the back of this folder, you may be considered an independent student and should visit www.fafsa.ed.gov to learn more. If you answered “No” to all questions, you are a dependent student and are required to provide parent information.

Pro Tip

Who is a “parent”? Dependent students need to provide information for birth parents, adoptive parents, and step-parents. If your parents are married or living together, provide both their information. If you live with one parent, you need to provide only the information for the parent you live with most. If that parent is remarried, you also need their spouse’s information. Unless they have adopted you: grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, older brothers or sisters, and uncles or aunts are not parents and their information does not need to be provided.

Step 3

Gather Your Documents

For each student, parent and/or spouse on the application:

- Social security numbers
- Last year's tax returns (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ)
- Last year's W-2 Forms and other records of money earned (or this year's, if available)
- This year's untaxed income records (social security, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, child support received, interest income or veterans benefits records)
- Information on cash, savings, and checking account balances

For the Student:

- Driver's license (if any)
- Alien registration card (if not a U.S. citizen)

Other important recent income information may include:

- Business and investment mortgage information
- Business and farm records
- Stock, bond and/or other investment records

Pro Tip

If you are a dependent student with a special circumstance that prevents you from providing parental information, you may still be able to submit your FAFSA. However, your FAFSA will be considered incomplete. You must contact the financial office at your college and provide them with documentation to verify your situation. For more information, visit <http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/filling-out/parent-info#unwilling-parents>

Step 4

Apply for a PIN

Students and parents (if applicable) will need a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to electronically sign their FAFSA. Apply now at www.fafsa.ed.gov. It's easy and only takes about 5 minutes!

Step 5

Complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov

If you need help, attend your local College Goal Alaska event – details are available at CollegeGoalAK.org.

- Use PIN(s) to sign and submit the FAFSA electronically (or print, sign and mail your signature page)
- Print and save your confirmation page
- Save copies of all documents you used to complete the FAFSA – you can use this folder.

Pro Tip

Always check the ending of the website –it should be “.gov” and not “.com”!
Remember, the first “F” in FAFSA stands for FREE –you should never be asked to pay a fee to file your FAFSA.

Step 6

Review Your Student Aid Report (SAR)

You should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) via e-mail. If you did not provide a valid e-mail address, you will receive it by mail within three weeks of filing.

- Locate your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) in the upper left corner of your SAR
- Review your SAR for accuracy
- Make corrections or supply additional information (if applicable) to your processed FAFSA through the update process described on the back of this folder
- Notify school(s) if you update your FAFSA with changes/additional information
- Contact your school financial aid office if you have special circumstances which prevent you from meeting the EFC
- Provide your school with the necessary documentation of your special circumstances, if applicable

Step 7

Review Your Award Letters

Shortly after you receive your SAR, the school(s) listed on your FAFSA will send an award letter; many award letters are now issued electronically. Award letters provide a financial aid “award package,” explaining how the student can cover the cost of attending their institution. Awards might include a combination of grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans.

- Compare award letters from different colleges using the Award Letter Comparison Tool - www.finaid.org/calculators
- Act on each award letter – notify the school if you accept all or part of the award package, or decline it.
- Response Deadline(s): _____
- Register for an Alaska Student Aid Portal account at APS.alaska.gov to monitor your eligibility status for the Alaska Performance Scholarship, if you are a recent high school graduate. Because eligibility information is not available until late July after you graduate from high school, your initial award letter may not reference the APS award, even if you do qualify.

Pro Tip

Some schools require additional paperwork, such as school financial aid applications or the CSS Financial Aid Profile. Make a note of deadlines and be sure to submit all requested information timely.

If Requested

Verify Your Information

Verification is a process in which your school is required to confirm the data reported on your FAFSA. Colleges are asked to verify approximately 30% of all applicants. When the information is validated by your school, they will verify or update the data with the U.S. Department of Education.

- Submit the requested information by the verification deadline: _____
- Keep copies of all documents used to complete your FAFSA to use in verification

Determine your Dependency Status

- Are you 24 years old or older?
- Are you married?
- Will you be working on a master's or doctorate program this year?
- Are you currently on active duty in, or a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- Do you have children or other dependents who live with you and receive more than half of their support from you?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- Are you or were you an emancipated minor or in a legal guardianship? (determined by the court)
- Are you or were you within the past few years homeless, or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

If you answer "Yes" to any of the questions above, you may be considered an independent student and should visit www.fafsa.ed.gov to learn more.

If you answered "No" to all questions, you are a dependent student and are required to provide parent information.

Update Your Information (if applicable)

You can go back to update your information any time after you file the FAFSA. If you selected the “will file” option on your FAFSA, you must update your financial information after you file your tax return. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool is the best way to retrieve accurate tax information, if you file your taxes electronically and your filing status permits you to use it. Tax information is available for retrieval 1-2 weeks after you file.

- Update financial information using IRS Data Retrieval Tool two weeks after taxes are filed (if applicable)
- Notify school(s) if you update your FAFSA
- Add any schools you did not originally list on your FAFSA, but plan to apply to or attend

Need additional help? Contact the location you picked up the folder, or call the APCE Success Center at 800-441-2962

CollegeGoalAK.org
800-441-2962 option #4

Important “.gov” websites:

www.fafsa.ed.gov

studentaid.ed.gov

APS.alaska.gov

acpe.alaska.gov