



FAFSA PREP STEP-BY-STEP

Follow these steps for quick, easy, and correct Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion

1.

DETERMINE YOUR DEPENDENCY STATUS

INDEPENDENT STUDENT

only reports information about themselves; may report information about a spouse if married

VS.

DEPENDENT STUDENT

reports information about themselves and their parents

You are an **independent** student if at least ONE of the following applies to you:

- You will be 24 years of age or older as of Jan 2025
- You have a child or other dependent for whom you provide the majority of financial support
- You have a court-ordered legal guardian who is not your biological or adoptive parent
- You were in foster care at any point after age 13
- You were a ward of the court at any point after age 13
- You are married (but not separated or divorced)
- You are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- Your parents are deceased, incarcerated, or otherwise difficult to locate or contact
- You are currently on active duty or are a veteran of the US armed forces

You are a **dependent** student if NONE of the above apply.

If unusual circumstances prevent you from providing parental information, you will be able to submit the FAFSA as a **provisionally independent student**. Follow up with the Financial Aid Office at the school(s) listed on the FAFSA afterwards.



CREATE STUDENTAID.GOV ACCOUNT (FSA ID)

2.

An FSA ID is a StudentAid.Gov account username and password student and contributors create to gain access to the US Department of Education's online systems. An FSA ID serves as a legal signature when completing the FAFSA.

You will need to provide the following information to create your FSA ID:

- Name (exactly as it appears on your Social Security Card if you have one)
- Social Security Number (if you have one)
- Date of birth
- Email address (you will have access to in the future; do not use school or work email)

3.

GATHER INFORMATION (YOURS & YOUR CONTRIBUTOR'S)

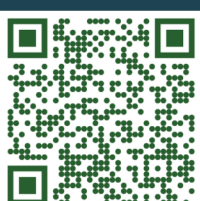
If you are a **dependent** student, collect this info for your parent(s). If your parents are divorced/separated, include info about the parent who provided more financial support in the past 12 months. If that parent is remarried, include your stepparent.

GENERAL INFO

- Current marital status: Married/Remarried; Divorced/Separated; Unmarried & living together; Widowed; Single
- StudentAid.Gov account (FSA ID)
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number or Individual Tax Identification Number (if any)
- Email address (and mailing address)
- List of postsecondary institutions student will apply to, or current schools student will continue attending

FINANCIAL INFO

- 2023 federal tax forms (1040 and all schedules)
- Total current amount in checking and savings account(s)
- Net worth (value minus debt) of current stocks, bonds, mutual funds, 529 plans, etc.
- Net worth of investment/rental property/rented portion of a home
- Net worth of business(es) and/or family farm(s)
- Records of child support received in the past year for all children
- Federal benefits (SNAP, WIC, TANF, etc.) received in 2023/2024



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