

# Navigating the financial aid process

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the gateway to more than \$120 billion in federal aid each year to help pay for college or a career and technical education (CTE) program. The FAFSA is used to determine your eligibility for federal financial aid, many state financial aid programs and for private scholarships. Billions in financial aid are left unclaimed each year. don't assume you won't qualify—everyone should complete the FAFSA, which opens October 1, 2020.

## Steps to completing the FAFSA

### PART ONE: GETTING STARTED

1. Create an FSA ID<sup>1</sup>. At least one parent and the student are required to create an FSA ID (if the student is dependent).
2. Not sure whether you should file as a dependent or independent? Determine your status<sup>2</sup>.
3. If you are a dependent student, you will need your parent's financial information to complete the FAFSA.
4. Create a list of your top school choices. Look up and enter their corresponding school codes<sup>3</sup> within the FAFSA. This will allow the FAFSA to send your results directly to your preferred institutions.
5. Make sure you file your FAFSA in time to meet each of your desired schools' financial aid deadlines and their priority filing dates. Some funds do run out.

### PART TWO: FILLING OUT THE FAFSA

6. Set aside about 30 minutes to complete the FAFSA. File online or via the myStudentAid mobile app.
7. Questions about filling out the form? Get help from your high school or find a FAFSA completion event near you. Find additional resources at [www.ecmc.org](http://www.ecmc.org).
8. Remember to print a copy of your completed FAFSA for your records.
9. Filing for FAFSA runs from October 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022. Those who file early may have access to more aid.

### PART THREE: AFTER YOU FILE

10. Schools may request additional information if you have been selected for verification. Be sure to follow up with the school to ensure you have provided all information requested.
11. Expect to receive a Student Aid Report<sup>4</sup> (SAR) about a week after you file your FAFSA. The SAR summarizes information you provided on the FAFSA and provides your estimated eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant.
12. Also expect to receive an award letter from the schools where you have been accepted.
13. Compare the financial aid packages and choose a school!

<sup>1</sup> FSA ID: <https://fsaid.ed.gov>

<sup>2</sup> Determine your status: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/dependency>

<sup>3</sup> Federal school codes: [https://fafsa.ed.gov/spa/fsc/#/SEARCH?locale=en\\_US](https://fafsa.ed.gov/spa/fsc/#/SEARCH?locale=en_US)

<sup>4</sup> Student Aid Report: <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/review-and-correct/review>

For more information about the financial aid process visit: <https://fafsa.gov>