



Understanding the FAFSA

& how to fill it out!



Once you decide you're going to go to college, the first thing you should do is fill out the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid**, or **FAFSA**, a form that students fill out to be eligible for federal financial aid. To determine how much federal financial aid you might get, the federal government needs to know financial information about you and your family. Remember, federal financial aid can total several thousand dollars, so **Fill Out The FAFSA**.



The FAFSA is key to getting money to attend school, so make sure you save any personal and financial documents and meet the deadlines for turning it in.

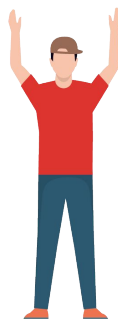
Once you fill out your FAFSA you're going to receive your **Student Aid Report (SAR)**. The SAR contains the information you put into the FAFSA along with another crucial bit of info, the **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**. The EFC is roughly the amount the government believes that you can afford. This is super important because based on this information, you have to figure out how you'll pay for school.

If you're planning on attending college for the 2017-2018 school year, submit the FAFSA as soon as possible. The start date of the FAFSA application process is now October 1st of each year. The final date to submit the FAFSA is June 30th of the next year. The FAFSA application for SY 2017-2018 will be released on October 1, 2016. While the Federal FAFSA deadline is June 30th, many schools have earlier deadlines and money is distributed on a first come, first serve basis.

BIG NEWS!

For the first time this year, FAFSA is offering a mobile app called 'My Student Aid', which allows you to submit your application without accessing a computer. Not only is My Student Aid designed to better fit mobile devices, it allows you to input financial information directly and is integrated with the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, meaning a quicker and smoother application process. Let us know how it works and how it can be improved!

The FAFSA now allows you to use tax returns and W2s from two years prior to the year of the FAFSA form you are filling out. What this means is instead of waiting on W2s and tax returns from the year before that you would not receive until well after the new October 1 start date, you can now use the W2s and tax returns that you received for the year before to take advantage of the new October 1st start date right when the FAFSA is released.



Your Checklist to Filling out the FAFSA ✓

- ☐ Your Social Security number and your parents' Social Security numbers.
- ☐ Your driver's license number or state issued ID number (if available).
- ☐ Your 2015 W2 Forms. This is the record your employer sends you about how much you earned that year. If you've filed taxes then your W2 info is on there.
- ☐ Your (and your spouse's) 2015 Federal Income Tax Return. You need this if you filed taxes.
- ☐ Your current bank statements, if you have a bank account.
- ☐ Your current business and investment mortgage information, business and farm records, stock, bond and other investment records. This is stuff you probably don't have, but your parents might, so ask them. If you don't have any, then don't worry about it.
- ☐ Your alien registration or permanent resident card if you are not a U.S. citizen.

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