

# Do's and Don'ts of Filing Out the FAFSA®

Filing out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is every student's first step to receiving financial aid—and now it's easier than ever, thanks to recent changes to the form.

## ✓ Do

### Gather your materials.

Some of this may be prefilled from IRS information, but it's a good idea to have the following on hand:

- Tax records from two years prior
- Asset records and statements
- Social Security numbers
- Driver's license or government ID
- Federal school codes to where you're applying

### Fill out your application as early as possible.

Applications are typically [available on October 1](#) each year. Check [StudentAid.gov](#) for the exact date.

### Create your FSA ID online.

This is the best and fastest way to get your FAFSA processed—and to prefill your form every year after.

### Talk to your family.

Most unmarried students under the age of 24 are considered dependents and will need their parents' financial information.

### Send to all the schools you're considering.

You can list up to 20 schools on the FAFSA—even ones you haven't applied to yet. If you would like to send to more schools, you can add them after you submit.

## ✗ Don't

### Assume you're not eligible.

All kinds of students and families are eligible, regardless of income or parents' citizenship status. Most people receive some aid.

### Feel intimidated.

The updated FAFSA has been simplified to around 40 questions, making it easier to complete.

### Lose your FSA ID.

Parents and students will need to create an FSA ID and keep it safe—it will be used every year you apply for aid.

### Forget to check your work.

Use the FAFSA Submission Summary you receive after you submit your FAFSA to double-check your application and make any necessary edits.

### Skip it.

Every year, [billions of dollars of aid is left unclaimed](#) because students didn't fill out the FAFSA.



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