



# FAFSA COMPLETION

If you need financial aid to help pay for college, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). The 2021-22 FAFSA is available on October 1, 2020. You should fill it out as soon as possible at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov). Gather your information ahead of time to make completing the FAFSA easier.

Here's what you need:

## 1. Your FSA ID

An FSA ID is a username and password that gives you access to Federal Student Aid's online systems and can serve as **your** legal signature. Each student, and one parent of each dependent student, will need an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA at [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov). We recommend creating your FSA ID early—even before you're ready to complete the FAFSA—to avoid delays in the process.

For step-by-step instructions, click [here](#).

**IMPORTANT:** Do NOT create an FSA ID on behalf of someone else. That means parents should not create FSA IDs for their children and vice versa. Doing so may result in issues signing and submitting the FAFSA and could lead to financial aid delays. (Also, it's against the rules to create an FSA ID for someone else.)

## 2. Your Social Security number

You can find this number on your Social Security card. If you don't have access to it and don't know where it is, ask your parent or legal guardian or [get a new or replacement Social Security card](#) from the Social Security Administration. If you are not a U.S. citizen, but meet Federal Student Aid's [basic eligibility requirements](#), you'll also need your Alien Registration number.

## 3. Your driver's license number

If you don't have a driver's license, then don't worry about this step.

## 4. Your 2019 tax records

- For the 2021-22 FAFSA, you (and your parents, as appropriate) will report your 2019 income information, rather than your 2020 income information.
- Since you will have filed your 2019 taxes by the time the FAFSA launches, you'll be able to import your tax information into the FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT). (No need to log back in after filing taxes!)
- Not everyone is eligible to use the IRS DRT. Also, the IRS DRT does not input all the financial information required on the FAFSA. Therefore, you should have your 2019 tax return and 2019 IRS W-2 available for reference.

The IRS DRT remains the fastest, most accurate way to input your tax return information into the FAFSA. To address security and privacy concerns related to the IRS DRT, the tax return information you transfer from the IRS will no longer be displayed on [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) or the IRS DRT web page. Instead, you'll see "Transferred from the IRS" in the appropriate fields on [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov).

- You **cannot use** your 2020 tax information. We understand for some families, 2019 income doesn't accurately reflect your current financial situation. If you have experienced a reduction in income since the 2019 tax year, you should complete the FAFSA with the information it asks for (2019), and then contact each of the colleges to which you're applying to explain and document the change in income. They can assess your situation and make adjustments to your FAFSA if warranted.
- You cannot update your 2021-22 FAFSA with your 2020 tax information after filing 2020 taxes; the 2019 information is what's required. No updates are necessary or allowed.

#### 5. Your untaxed income

The FAFSA questions about untaxed income may or may not apply to you, but they include things like child support received, interest income and veteran's noneducation benefits. On the 2021-22 FAFSA, you'll report 2019 tax or calendar year information. Find specific details for [parents](#) and [students](#).

#### 6. Your money and assets

This includes savings and checking account balances, as well as the value of investments such as stocks, bonds and real estate (except the home in which your family lives). You should report the current amounts as of the date you sign the FAFSA, rather than the 2019 tax year amounts.

**Note:** Misreporting the value of investments is a [common FAFSA mistake](#). Carefully review what is and is not considered a [student investment](#) and [parent investment](#) to make sure you don't over- or under-report. You may be surprised by what can (and cannot) be excluded.

#### 7. List of the college(s) you are interested in attending (be sure to add any college you're considering, even if you haven't applied or been accepted yet)

- Even if there is only a slight chance you'll apply to a college, list it on your FAFSA. You can always remove colleges later if you decide not to apply, but if you wait to add a college, you could miss out on first-come, first-served financial aid.
- The colleges you list on your FAFSA will automatically receive your FAFSA results electronically. They will use your FAFSA information to determine the types and amounts of financial aid you may receive.
- If you add a college to your FAFSA and later decide not to apply for admission to that college, that's OK! The college likely won't offer you aid until you've been accepted anyway.

You can list up to 10 colleges on your FAFSA at a time. [If you're applying to more than 10, here's what you should do.](#)