

# Federal Student Aid Info 2018-2019

## Which financial aid application should students use?

Student Residency Status	FAFSA or TASFA
U.S. citizen	<b>FAFSA</b>
Permanent resident with an Alien Registration Card (I-551 visa)	<b>FAFSA</b>
Conditional permanent resident (I-551C visa)	<b>FAFSA</b>
Eligible noncitizen with an Arrival/Departure Record (I-94 visa)	<b>FAFSA</b>
None of the statuses above BUT Texas resident, eligible for in-state tuition	<b>TASFA</b>

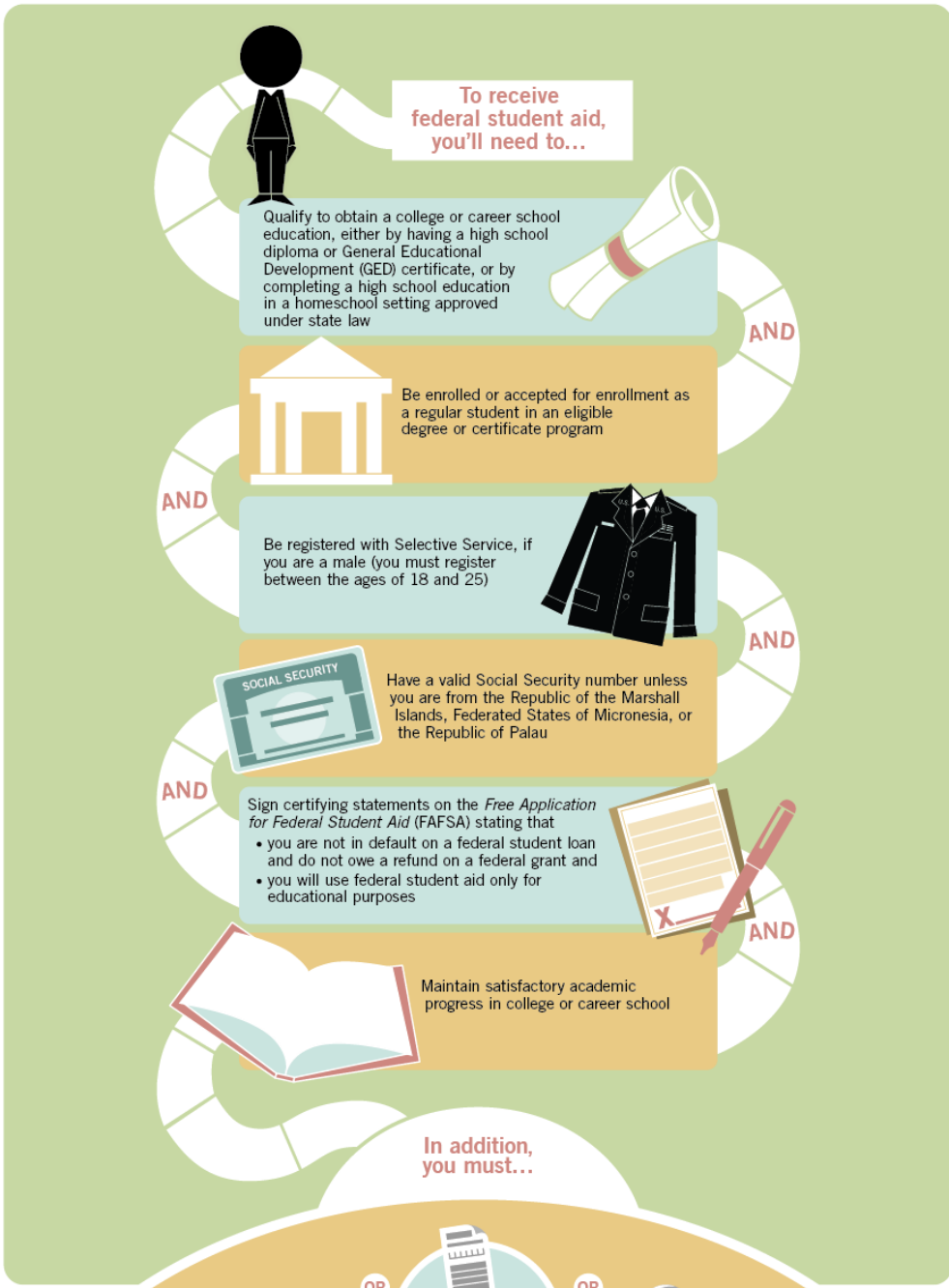
**IMPORTANT:** The parents' citizenship status does not affect the student's eligibility for federal student aid, so students whose parents do not have a Social Security number **can** complete the FAFSA using zeros for their parents' Social Security number if eligible. The parent won't be able to create an FSA ID, but will complete a signature page instead. After the FAFSA is completed, the student will need to print it so the parent can physically sign and then mail it.

### DACA Students

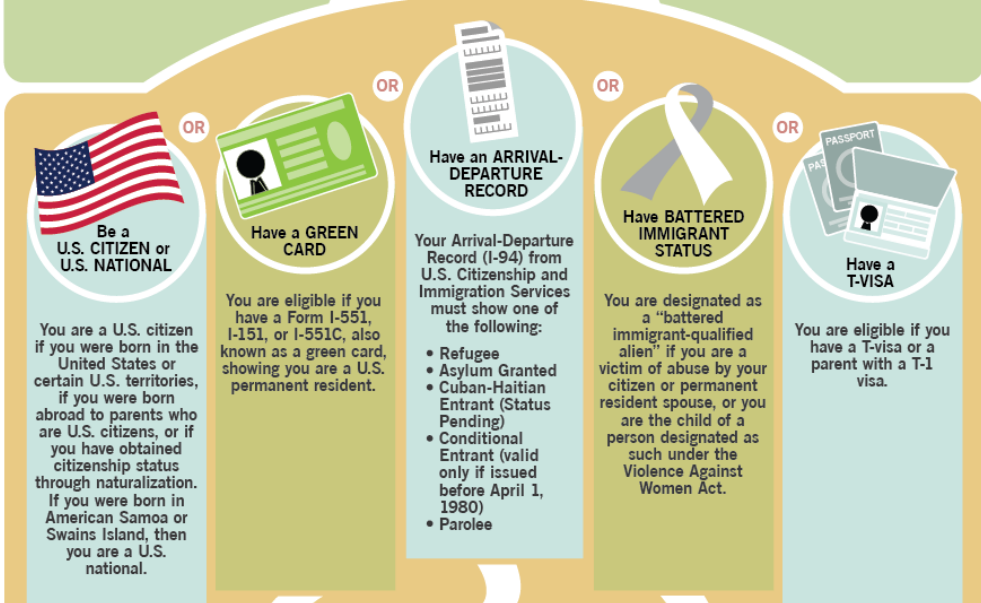
Students granted DACA status do not qualify to receive federal student aid; however, they may be eligible for state and institutional financial aid. Undocumented students can establish Texas residency, and qualify for in-state tuition and Texas grants if they have lived in Texas in the 36 months leading up to high school graduation. Texas colleges require either the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) or a paper version of the FAFSA. DACA students should contact the college's financial aid office to find out which they prefer. If they want the paper FAFSA, then check "No, I am not a citizen or eligible noncitizen" option. Enter your DACA Social Security number, but for your parents' Social Security number write in all zeros.

# ELIGIBILITY FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

Most students are eligible to receive financial aid from the federal government to help pay for college or career school. Your age, race, or field of study won't affect your eligibility for federal student aid. While your income is taken into consideration, it does not automatically prevent you from getting federal student aid.



## In addition, you must...



## What is FAFSA? <http://www.fafsa-application.com/learning-center/what-is-fafsa>

Completing a FAFSA is the first step in applying for most federal, state, and college-provided financial aid for students. It stands for **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** because it is filed with the US Department of Education, but most state and college aid require it.

The FAFSA is used to determine the amount of the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which measures what the family can contribute toward the student's college education.

The FAFSA is over 100 questions long and can cover various areas such as the student's family situation, the student's educational background, the student's educational plans and prospective colleges, the student's finances, the finances of the student's finance or parent. Whether or not parent financial information is required depends on whether the student is determined to still be a dependent of a parent.

## When should I file?

The sooner the better! You only submit the FAFSA once each academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) to apply for all three types of aid (federal, state & collegiate), however each type of aid may have its own deadline. Texas residence should try to fill it out as soon as possible since funds are given on a first-come, first-served basis, but for sure **before Jan 15 which is the new deadline for Texas grants and colleges for the fall semester.**

It is also important to understand that state aid is based upon the state of the student's legal residence, not necessarily the state that the college is in. "State of legal residence" is usually defined as the location of the student's permanent home. If the student moved into a state for the sole purpose of attending a school, do not count that as the state of legal residence.

## How do I file a FAFSA?

It is a two-part online process. First, apply for a Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID). Second, complete the FAFSA online application. Both student and parent will need their own FSA ID. **REMEMBER YOUR FSA ID as it will be used every year you complete the FAFSA!** The student and the parent cannot use the same email address. To receive the FSA ID, you will need to provide: your name, DOB, Social Security number, and create challenging questions. You will need to confirm your email by inserting a code they send you. The password used for the FSA ID will expire every 18 months, but the FSA ID will remain the same. Parents without a Social Security number are unable to create an FSA ID and instead will need to complete a signature page.

### Which FAFSA to fill out:

**FAFSA 2018-2019** if attending college Fall 2018, Spring 2019 &/or **Summer 2019** (requires 2016's income tax information)

**Opened October 1, 2017** and Closes June 30 2019

**FAFSA 2019-2020** if attending college **Fall 2019**, Spring 2020 &/or Summer 2020 (requires 2017's income tax information)

**Opens October 1, 2018** and Closes June 30 2020

Part 1 – Create FSA ID here: [www.StudentAid.gov/fsaid](http://www.StudentAid.gov/fsaid) Click box “Create FSA ID Now”

Part 2 – Start a FAFSA Application go to either:

Mobile Devices: [MyStudentAid App](#)

Computers: <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

**You can save and continue later; however, it only saves your info for 45 days.**

Find videos and other FAFSA resources here: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/resources>

**ONLY 61% OF THE 2018 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES COMPLETED THE 2018-2019 FAFSA.**

<http://www.collegeaccess.org/FAFSACompletionRate>

# What documents will I need before I can file a FAFSA?

[http://www.collegexpress.com/articles-and-advice/financial-aid/articles/applying-financial-aid/how-fill-out-fafsa-step-step/?utm\\_source=In-House&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=CX\\_NL\\_121015](http://www.collegexpress.com/articles-and-advice/financial-aid/articles/applying-financial-aid/how-fill-out-fafsa-step-step/?utm_source=In-House&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=CX_NL_121015)

There are several documents you will need to have available for reference as you complete the FAFSA .

- Most recent tax return forms (1040s, W-2s) and other records of income earned but you may be able to use the Data Retrieval Tool in the application instead. Taxable income for parent(s) and student include: wages, pensions, capital gains, interest, dividends, annuities, unemployment compensation, alimony received, rent collected, and business income.
- Records of non-taxable income for parent(s) and student including: workers' compensation, welfare benefits (excluding food stamps), housing and food allowances, child support received, untaxed Social Security benefits, untaxed income from pensions and annuities, veterans' non-education benefits, tax-exempt interest income, deductible payments made to a retirement plan (such as: an IRA or Keogh), and earned income credit.
- Record of expenses such as U.S. income taxes paid and child support paid
- Current statements showing net worth of asset as of the date you electronically sign/submit the form. (The value of cash, savings, and checking accounts held under the names of parents and the student so be sure to pay off bills; pay down consumer debt, like credit card balances and car loans) Investments (except for retirement plans), including stocks, bonds, CDs, money market funds, mutual funds, commodities, trust funds, education IRAs, state-based college savings plans (except pre-paid tuition plans), and real estate holdings (rental property and second homes). Do **not** include the equity in your family's primary residence.
- Records of assets/net worth of any family business, real estate investment, and/or farm (excluding farms that are principal residences).
- Social Security number (or alien registration number if a non-citizen)
- FSA ID (student's and parent's)

Once you've collected these documents, you will be ready. Having all your documents when you sit down to fill out the form will keep the time to less than an hour to complete. There is a Worksheet at [www.fafsa.ed.gov/help/ffdef44.htm](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/help/ffdef44.htm) and a 4caster at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm?execution=e1s1>

## Be accurate and truthful

In completing the FAFSA, be as accurate as you can. Mistakes will cause your application to be returned. If a question or two seems confusing, **call the 24 hour federal student aid hotline at 800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**. Answer each question even if that means the answer is 0, unless the FAFSA specifically tells you it's a step you can skip. Let's review each of the 7 sections:

### 1. Student demographics and eligibility

Covers basic personal information (name, e-mail address, permanent address, Social Security number, date of birth, permanent phone number, citizenship status, marital status, and optional driver's license number), plus some other basics, such as:

- The student's educational plans and high school
- The highest level of education completed by the student's mother and father
- The student's state of legal residence
- The types of aid for which you want to be considered (work-study) (To maximize your chances for receiving aid, you should indicate a willingness to accept loans and work-study. You can always change your mind later.)
- Registration for the Selective Service (military) (If you're male, age 18–25, you may use this section to register or go here <https://www.sss.gov/> . In most instances, male students must be registered to receive federal student aid.)
- Drug offenses (If you've never been convicted of a drug offense, simply check the "No" box and move on. If you do have a past drug-related conviction, you will not be considered for federal aid; however, you may still receive state or institutional aid, so it's still worth filing the FAFSA.)

### 2. School selection

You can add **up to 10 colleges** to receive your FAFSA results. You'll be asked if you intend to live on campus, off campus, or with parents too; this helps aid administrators better determine the cost of attendance.

### 3. Dependency determination

These questions will determine your dependency status. Students who meet any **one** of these criteria may be considered an "independent" student and your eligibility for financial aid will be determined without consideration of your parents' income and assets.

**You're independent if you are:**

- 24 years old by December 31 of the award year
- A graduate student or professional student during the award year
- Married (or separated)
- A parent or have other dependents who currently receive more than half their support from you
- An orphan, a ward of the court, or does someone other than your parent or stepparent have legal guardianship of you as determined by a court in your state of legal residence or are you an emancipated minor
- A veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or on active duty

Colleges may determine dependent status based on unique living circumstances, such as being raised by grandparents. You should fill out the FAFSA and then immediately contact the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend.

#### 4. Parent demographic information

Dependent students must provide information about their parents' marital status, Social Security numbers, number of household members (including the number who will be enrolled in college), and more. Each of these elements affects the calculation for your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), so answer the questions carefully. For example:

- Older parents are expected to contribute less since they are closer to retirement.
- Parental contribution is divided by the number of children in college.
- If parents are divorced or separated, include financial data on the parent the student lives with the greater part of the 12 months preceding the date of the application. If that parent has remarried, the student must include that stepparent's income and asset data as well. Note: some colleges request info on the "other" natural parent and may expect them to contribute.

#### 5. Financial information

Both student and parents provide their financial information. You can also transfer filed tax information online by using the IRS Data Retrieval tool which pulls tax info directly from the IRS, making the FAFSA much easier to complete! The EFC calculation is based primarily on the family's adjusted gross income (AGI); however, it is designed to reflect the financial strength of the household, so it counts untaxed income as well. Be exact in your numbers—and truthful. Many people think the "net worth" of their assets will eliminate them from aid consideration but this is not necessarily the case. Remember, the FAFSA takes many financial considerations into account, and parents may have sheltered assets. Some of these questions cover student income and assets, and dependent students may find they are not relevant. In this case, enter "0." Keep in mind an unanswered question can get your FAFSA returned with a "request for additional information." This will hold up the processing of your form and could jeopardize the amount of funding you will receive.

##### How to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool

- Click on the Financial Information tab, enter your FSA ID, and click the LINK TO IRS button
- Click OK to leave the FAFSA website and enter the IRS Data Retrieval Tool website
- Click OK to accept the IRS Data Retrieval Tool terms of use
- Enter the requested info exactly as it appears on your tax return and click SUBMIT
- Check the box next to "Transfer My Tax Information into the FAFSA" and click the Transfer Now button
- Questions that were populated with tax info transferred from the IRS won't be visible. They will be marked with "Transferred from the IRS"

##### Who cannot use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool? Students or parents who:

- are married and filed as Married Filing Separately
- are married and filed as Head of Household
- Filed a form 1040X amended tax return
- Filed Puerto Rican or foreign tax return
- Do not have a Social Security number

#### 6. Sign and submit

Finally, students (and parents) must electronically sign with their FSA ID and date the form. In doing so, they certify that (if requested) they will provide information to verify any recorded data. They also declare that they are not in default on any federal student loans and promise to use any federal student aid for educational purposes only.

#### 7. Confirmation

Here you will see a confirmation number, your expected family contribution amount, along with college graduation, retention, and transfer rates for schools you listed on your FAFSA.

## You completed the FAFSA, now what?

**Keep copies of all your FAFSA information for your record!** When you submit your FAFSA, make sure you receive a confirmation number. This number tells you that your application was successfully submitted and provides the following info:

- graduation rate, retention rate and transfer rate of the college(s) you listed
- Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which measures how much you and your family can contribute to the cost of your education (but not that they must).
- Federal aid that you are eligible for such as: Pell Grant, Direct Subsidized Loans &/or Direct Unsubsidized loans.

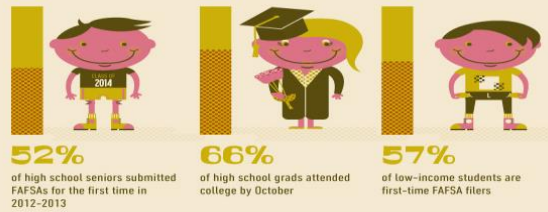
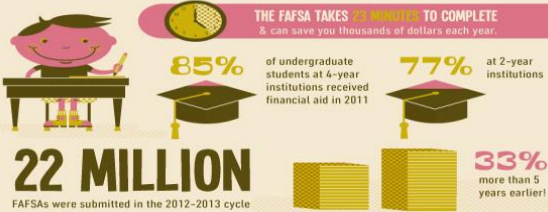
**Your application will take about 3-5 days to process and then you should receive an e-mail with a link to your Student Aid Report (SAR).**

If you did not provide an e-mail address, you will receive your SAR in the mail in 7-10 days. You should review your SAR for any necessary corrections or updates. If you don't hear anything from them after a week, go to the FAFSA website and click "Check the Status of a Submitted FAFSA" so you can resolve any issues. The colleges you listed on the FAFSA will receive an ISIR (Institutional Student Information Record). If you have been accepted to their institution, the financial aid office will send you an Award Letter stating what financial aid you qualify for. Keep in mind that you have the option of accepting it, declining it, or decreasing any awards (say loans) to fit your needs. If you forgot to add a college, you can go back into the FAFSA to add it even after your application has been processed. Check with your college to make sure they do not require additional documents to complete your financial aid packet.

# 6 COMMON FAFSA MISTAKES

It may seem like you have plenty of time to file your FAFSA — after all, for any given school year, the deadline isn't until June of the following year. But students can miss out on a lot of potential aid if they don't file soon. FAFSA.gov recommends filing ASAP after Jan. 1 — and that means getting your taxes done ASAP, too!

## MISTAKE #1: SKIPPING THE FAFSA



## MISTAKE #2: PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is a bad habit for any college hopeful, especially when you're applying for financial aid.

2014-2015 DEADLINES VARY BY STATE, RANGING FROM **FEBRUARY 1, 2014,** TO 30 DAYS AFTER THE TERM STARTS

Most need-based financial aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, including:

- Grants
- Loans
- Work-study

**DON'T FORGET YOUR TAXES:** You need to complete your taxes before you complete the FAFSA, so get started on your taxes ASAP!

## MISTAKE #3: SAYING 'NO' TO WORK STUDY

You can always opt out later, but don't deny yourself the opportunity for on-campus work up front.

**\$1.1 Billion:** Federal work-study (FWS) awards for 2012-2013

**683,000** Number of students awarded FWS, 2012-2013

**\$1,524:** Average work-study earnings per year

**1 in 2** FWS recipients come from households with incomes less than \$30,000

## MISTAKE #4: FAILING TO DOUBLE-CHECK

MAKE SURE YOU'RE FILLING OUT THE RIGHT QUESTIONS WITH THE RIGHT ANSWERS.



MAKE SURE TO GET THESE RIGHT:

- Household size
- Your honest-to-goodness, full legal name as it appears on your government ID
- Social security number
- And remember, the FAFSA you fill out today is for the upcoming school year

## MISTAKE #5: TMI

Reporting incorrect tax information can disqualify you from need-based aid.

DON'T INCLUDE:



Your AGI (adjusted gross income), or your application will be rejected



Home equity from your primary residence



Qualified retirement accounts in your nontaxable net worth of your investments:

- IRAs
- 401(k)
- 403(b)
- PENSION PLANS

The FAFSA asks for a federal income tax figure from a specific line of the federal tax return

## MISTAKE #6: FORGETTING YOUR SIGNATURE

(YES, THIS ACTUALLY HAPPENS.)

**MOST COMMON REASONS A FAFSA LACKS A SIGNATURE:**

- Parent is not present to sign his/her portion
- No PIN
- Forgotten PIN

To avoid many of the most common FAFSA mistakes, use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to automatically transfer your tax information.



SOURCES: Bureau of Labor and Statistics | CBS News | FAFSA.gov Student Aid Alliance | U.S. Department of Education



# WHO FILLS OUT THE FAFSA?

A student always provides information for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) but when do family members also provide information?



**Student always provides information.**



**Who in addition to the student provides information?**

**Are your parents married?** Both provide information.

or live together

**Are your parents divorced or separated?**

Parent with whom you live with the most is your **custodial parent** and they fill out the FAFSA.

*If this parent has remarried, your stepparent also fills out the FAFSA.*

If you live with your parents equally, the parent providing more financial support fills out the FAFSA.

*If support is equal, parent with higher income fills out the FAFSA.*

**Is one of your parents deceased?**

Surviving parent fills out the FAFSA.

*If remarried, your stepparent also fills out the FAFSA.*

**What if I don't live with my parents?**

If you are considered a dependent, you must answer the questions about your parents, regardless of your living situation.

**Who does not provide information for the FAFSA?**

Foster parent

Legal guardian

Grandparent or other relative whom you live with (and has not legally adopted you)

Noncustodial parent