

Federal Student Aid
studentaid.gov
fafsa.gov

7 Things You Need Before Filling Out the FAFSA Form

1. Your FSA ID

If you haven't done so already, create an FSA ID, which is your account username and password. The FSA ID is a digital legal signature that lets you complete and update the FAFSA form, so create your own and keep it safe. Parents of dependent students will need to use their own FSA ID to complete the FAFSA process.

We recommend creating your account early—even before you're ready to complete the FAFSA form. This extra step can avoid delays in the process especially since it can take [up to three days before you can use your FSA ID](#).

For step-by-step instructions, watch

<https://youtu.be/iTb7hMVtzco?si=3R4TKxS7K781DWiT>

2. Your Social Security Number. If you are not a U.S. citizen but **meet other eligibility criteria for federal student aid** as an eligible noncitizen, you'll also need your **Alien Registration number**. Both parents and students need this information for the FAFSA form.

3. Your Driver's License Number

You'll need to enter your driver's license on the FAFSA form. If you don't have a driver's license, then don't worry about this step.

4. Your Federal Income Tax Return

On the 2023–24 FAFSA form, you (and your parents, if you are a dependent student) will report your 2021 income. Since you probably filed your 2021 income tax return by the time the FAFSA form is available, you may be eligible to transfer your tax information into the FAFSA form right away using the **IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT)**.

- Not everyone is eligible to use the IRS DRT
- The IRS DRT does not input all the financial information required on the FAFSA form. Therefore, you should have your 2021 tax return and 2021 IRS W-2 available for reference.

The IRS DRT is the fastest, most accurate way to input your tax return information into the FAFSA form. To address security and privacy concerns related to the IRS DRT, the tax return information you transfer from the IRS will not display on fafsa.gov. Instead, you'll see "Transferred from the IRS" in the appropriate fields on fafsa.gov. You **cannot use** your 2022 tax information. We understand that for some families the 2021 income doesn't accurately reflect your current financial situation. If you experienced a reduction in income since the 2021 tax year, you should complete the FAFSA form with 2021 tax information. Then, contact the school where you plan to attend and explain and document the change in income. School officials can assess your situation and adjust your FAFSA form if warranted. You cannot update your 2023–24 FAFSA form with your 2022 tax information after filing the 2022 tax return. The 2023–24 FAFSA form requires 2021 information.

5. Records of Your Untaxed Income

The FAFSA questions about untaxed income, such as child support, interest income, and veterans' noneducation benefits may apply to you. On the 2023–24 FAFSA form, you'll report 2021 tax or calendar year information when asked these questions. Find specific details for **parent's untaxed income and student's untaxed income**.

6. Records of Your Assets (Money)

This section includes savings and checking account balances, as well as the value of investments, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate (excluding your primary residence.) Report the current amounts as of the date you sign the FAFSA form, rather than reporting the 2021 tax year amounts.

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

7. List of the School(s) You're Interested in Attending

Be sure to add any college you're considering, even if you haven't applied or been accepted yet. Even if it's only a slight chance you'll apply to a college, list the school on your FAFSA form. You can always remove a school later if you decide not to apply, but if you wait to add a school, you could miss out on financial aid. The schools you list on your FAFSA form 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 school to your FAFSA form and later decide not to apply for admission to that school, that's OK! The school likely won't offer you aid until you've been accepted anyway. You can list up to 10 schools at a time on your FAFSA form. **Tip:** Several states require you to list schools in a particular order to be considered for state aid. For instance, you might need to list a state school first. Find out whether your state has a **requirement for the order you list schools** on your FAFSA form.

Ready to start?

Once you're ready to fill out your FAFSA today? Go to the fafsa.gov website.