

FAFSA

FREE APPLICATION
FOR FEDERAL
STUDENT AID

Tipsheet



The basics on filing the FAFSA & getting financial aid

Visit FAFSA.gov to complete & submit your application for financial aid.

WHAT IS THE FAFSA?

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the most important form you must complete in order to qualify for almost all types of financial aid including federal, state, local, and private grants and scholarships.

WHY COMPLETE A FAFSA?

The only way to find out if you qualify for "free money" awards (such as federal and state grants and scholarships) and federal student loans is to complete and submit a FAFSA. The U.S. Department of Education uses the information provided on your FAFSA to determine your eligibility for aid from federal student financial assistance programs. In Pennsylvania, the FAFSA is used to determine State Grant eligibility. Schools also use FAFSA data to award their own financial aid.

WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES?

Current high school seniors should complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1. Financial aid deadlines vary by school, state, program of study, and more. To ensure that you are considered for all financial aid programs, the FAFSA should be filed by the earliest application deadline date for each school you are considering attending. Check with your school for details.

YOU MUST COMPLETE A NEW FAFSA FORM EACH YEAR.

FOR PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRANT APPLICANTS, THE FAFSA DEADLINES ARE:

- **MAY 1** – for students attending colleges, universities and college-transferable programs (excluding community colleges) and for all renewal students
- **AUGUST 1** – if you plan to enroll in a community college, a business, trade, or technical school, a hospital school of nursing, an "open admissions" institution (visit PHEAA.org for a list of these schools), or a non-transferable 2-year program

IRS Data Retrieval Tool. If you complete your FAFSA online, you have the option of retrieving your income and tax data from the Internal Revenue Service and having it automatically transferred into your FAFSA.

WHERE CAN I GET A FAFSA?

You can access the FAFSA online at PHEAA.org/FAFSA or FAFSA.gov. You can also download a PDF FAFSA at FAFSA.gov. (PDF FAFSAs must be mailed for processing.) If you do not have Internet access, you can get a paper copy of the FAFSA by calling the U.S. Department of Education toll-free at 800.4.FED.AID (800.433.3243) / TTY (Hearing Impaired) 800.730.8913.

WHAT DO I NEED TO FILE THE FAFSA ONLINE?

- A Federal Student Aid Personal Identification Number (PIN), which enables you to access your federal financial aid information online (You need a PIN to electronically sign your FAFSA and to renew your FAFSA online. To obtain a PIN, go to the U.S. Department of Education's PIN website at pin.ed.gov. Be sure to choose a PIN you will remember and keep it in a safe place, as you will need it each year. If you are a dependent student, both you and your parent require PINs.)
- Your Social Security Number
- Your driver's license number, if you have one (optional)
- Your alien registration number, if you are not a U.S. citizen
- Your W-2 forms
- Records of other untaxed income received, including workers' compensation, child support, payments to tax-deferred pension and savings plans, etc.
- Your federal income tax return – 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ (If your taxes are not yet finalized, use the prior year tax return and current W-2 forms to estimate your income. Be sure to update your FAFSA with accurate information once your tax return is filed.)
- Your current bank statements and records of stocks, bonds and other investments

If you are a dependent student, you will also need:

- Your parent's Social Security Number(s)
- Your parent's income and financial records (as listed above)

continued ►

MY FAFSA COMPLETION RECORD

Date I submitted my FAFSA (Received Confirmation Page):

- If income and tax info was estimated, I understand that I need to return to the FAFSA to correct this information as soon as I can.

Correction Date for income and/or tax information:

I used the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on this date:

- Income and tax info was NOT estimated when I submitted the FAFSA. I used the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on this date:

NOTES:

**TO CHANGE THE
SCHOOLS LISTED
ON THE FAFSA:**

Log on to FAFSA.gov, using your PIN, to add or delete a school code. Or call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800.4.FED.AID / TTY (Hearing Impaired) 800.730.8913.

ONCE YOUR FAFSA IS PROCESSED:

You will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR), which summarizes all the information you provided on your FAFSA. Check your SAR for any errors. Receiving a SAR does not mean that you are eligible for financial aid.

If you don't have any changes to make to the information listed on your SAR, just keep it for your records. If you review your SAR and find a mistake, you will need to make necessary corrections using one of the following methods:

- Online (fastest method) at FAFSA.gov
- U.S. Mail
- Telephone 800.4.FED.AID (800.433.3243) / TTY (Hearing Impaired) 800.730.8913

Changes to financial information are permitted only if you provided incorrect and/or estimated information when you submitted the FAFSA. If a Social Security Number is reported incorrectly, a new FAFSA must be submitted.

Your processed FAFSA results will be shared with the school(s) you listed on the FAFSA, as well as with the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) for purposes of determining PA State Grant eligibility. Look for your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) near the top right corner of the SAR. The federal government determines your EFC. Schools use the EFC to determine your financial aid awards.

These materials have been developed and paid for by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) for informational purposes. Although the information contained in this document is believed to be accurate at the time of printing, PHEAA does not guarantee its accuracy. You should independently verify that this information is correct.