

# COUNSELORS AND MENTORS HANDBOOK

## On Federal Student Aid



2010–11

A Guide for Those Advising Students About  
Financial Aid for Postsecondary Education



## Important Web Sites

### For You

- FSA for Counselors—resources to help you help your students [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov)
  - Online training and information about live training
  - Financial aid PowerPoint presentation and script
- Federal Student Aid Publications Ordering System [www.FSAPubs.gov](http://www.FSAPubs.gov)

### For Your Students

- Student Aid on the Web—planning for college, paying for college, and repaying student loans [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov)
- **NEW** *College Preparation Checklist*—newly expanded version; a student’s or parent’s first stop for information on academic and financial preparation [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/collprep](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/collprep)
- *Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid* [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/guide](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/guide)
- Looking for Student Aid Without Getting Scammed [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/LSA](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/LSA)
- Fact sheets on various topics [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs)
- *FAFSA on the Web*<sup>SM</sup> and Federal School Codes [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
- PIN information and registration [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)
- *FAFSA4caster*<sup>SM</sup>—early estimate of aid eligibility [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov)

## Important Contacts

### For You and Your Students

#### Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC)

- Toll-free number for questions about federal student aid **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**
- TTY (for the hearing impaired) **1-800-730-8913**
- Toll number **319-337-5665**
- E-mail: [studentaid@ed.gov](mailto:studentaid@ed.gov)

#### Inspector General Hotline

- Reporting student aid fraud (including identity theft), waste, or abuse of U.S. Department of Education funds **1-800-MIS-USED (1-800-647-8733)**
- E-mail: [oig.hotline@ed.gov](mailto:oig.hotline@ed.gov)
- Web site: [www.ed.gov/misused](http://www.ed.gov/misused)

#### DID YOU KNOW ...

The Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) isn’t just for students. Counselors may call **1-800-4-FED-AID** to get a variety of questions answered. Check out Appendix B for more information about how the FSAIC can help you.

### Important note:

The information in this book was compiled in the spring and summer of 2009. For any changes to the federal student aid programs since then, consult the “Announcements” section at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).

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**2010–11**

Counselors and Mentors  
**HANDBOOK**  
On Federal Student Aid

*A Guide for Those Advising Students About  
Financial Aid for Postsecondary Education*



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GO FURTHER   
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Secretary

## Federal Student Aid

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Chief Operating Officer

## Student Aid Awareness and Applicant Services

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General Manager

January 2010

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College.gov

**Abbreviations                      Inside Back Cover**

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**Federal Student Aid, an office of the U.S. Department of Education, plays a central and essential role in America’s postsecondary education community.**

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Federal Student Aid ensures that all eligible individuals benefit from federal financial assistance—grants, loans, and work-study programs—for education beyond high school. By championing the promise of postsecondary education, we uphold its value as a force for greater inclusion in American society and for the continued vitality of America as a nation.





# INTRODUCTION

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*The 2010–11 Counselors and Mentors Handbook on Federal Student Aid provides useful information to help high school counselors, TRIO and GEAR UP staff, and other mentors advise students about financial aid for postsecondary education. This book focuses on the federal student aid programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education.*

## What's New in This Year's Handbook?

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We have updated the handbook in the following ways:

- We explained that a student now can receive Federal Pell Grant funding year-round (see page 12).
- We described the process by which an aid applicant might be able to transfer tax and income data automatically from the Internal Revenue Service's database to his or her *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>) (see page 20).
- We detailed how a student whose parents refuse to provide information on the FAFSA or to support him or her can submit the application and request an unsubsidized loan (see pages 20–21).

## Help Us Improve the Handbook

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We welcome any comments or suggestions on ways to make this handbook more useful in future editions. Please send your comments to

U.S. Department of Education  
Awareness and Outreach Division  
3rd Floor  
830 First St., N.E.  
Washington, DC 20202

If you prefer, you may e-mail comments to [ask.aidawareness@ed.gov](mailto:ask.aidawareness@ed.gov).

Please note that we provide the [ask.aidawareness](mailto:ask.aidawareness@ed.gov) e-mail address for counselors and mentors to send us feedback or questions about our products and services for them. If your students have questions about federal aid, give them the contact information for the Federal Student Aid Information Center on the inside front cover of this book.

## Need More Copies?

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To order additional free copies of this publication for your staff, call **1-800-394-7084** or visit the Federal Student Aid Publications Ordering System (FSAPubs) at [www.FSAPubs.gov](http://www.FSAPubs.gov).





# PART 1:

## The Federal Student Aid Programs

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**M**any students are unaware that they might be eligible for financial aid to attend college or trade school. High school, TRIO, and GEAR UP counselors are an important source of information about financial aid from private, school, state, and federal student aid programs.

*For information about resources you can use to help students learn about federal and other student aid, see Appendix B. For a variety of fact sheets you can copy and distribute to students, see Appendix E.*

### What Is Student Aid?

---

Student aid is money provided by the federal government or another entity, such as a school or a state government, to help students pay for college or trade school. The U.S. Department of Education's federal student aid programs deliver billions of dollars to students each year, representing a substantial federal commitment to provide financial assistance for postsecondary students. In 2010–11, the federal student aid programs will provide more than \$100 billion in aid to 11 million people.

### The Major Federal Student Aid Programs

In this section, we will provide a brief introduction to the federal student aid programs. For more detailed information, you and your students may visit [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov).

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) offers three major types of aid. Grants are gift aid, and most do not have to be repaid unless an overpayment has resulted due to the student withdrawing from school before the planned end of the period of enrollment for which the grant was awarded. It is the school's responsibility to inform the student whether any funds must be returned to ED. Loans must be repaid with interest. Federal Work-Study provides income (which does not have to be repaid) from a part-time job.

#### DID YOU KNOW ...

Our office, Federal Student Aid, has created a Web site just for you. The site, called FSA for Counselors, provides federal student aid information especially for middle school, high school, TRIO, and GEAR UP counselors. The site offers access to U.S. Department of Education publications, information about training, important announcements, and aids for promoting federal student aid and college access. Visit the site at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).



## **Federal Grants: Pell, Academic Competitiveness, National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent, Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education, and Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants**

The above-mentioned grants are awarded according to rules set by Congress. If a student is eligible on the basis of those rules (see pages 8–11), an eligible participating school will pay the student his or her grant. In all cases, grant payments may not exceed the student's cost of attendance at the school; and payments are adjusted if the student is enrolled less than full-time.

## **Campus-based Programs: Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work-Study, and Perkins Loans**

Campus-based programs are administered by the financial aid office at eligible schools that choose to participate. ED provides funding for the campus-based programs at participating schools based upon the amount the school has applied to receive, the amount available nationally, and the amount the school utilized in the previous year. The school then awards these funds to students according to federal guidelines. Because funds are limited, the earlier an eligible student applies, the more likely he or she is to receive available campus-based aid. The campus-based programs are

- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) Program—provides funds to exceptionally needy students
- Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program—provides income that does not count in assessment of student's financial need the following year
- Federal Perkins Loan Program—provides need-based loan funds

## **Federal Student Loans: Stafford, PLUS, and Consolidation**

The William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program<sup>SM</sup> enables eligible students and parents to borrow from ED instead of from a bank or other lending institution. This allows borrowers to work with a single

entity, ED, through its Direct Loan Servicing Center when repaying loans or dealing with loan-related issues.

There are four types of Direct Loans:

- Federal Direct Subsidized Stafford Loans (for students)
- Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans (for students)
- Federal Direct PLUS Loans (for parents and graduate or professional students)
- Federal Direct Consolidation Loans (to combine federal education loan debts)

The funds lent under the Federal Family Education Loan<sup>SM</sup> (FFEL<sup>SM</sup>) Program are provided by banks and other lenders, guaranteed by state agencies, and reinsured by the federal government. There are four types of FFELs:

- Federal Subsidized Stafford Loans (for students)
- Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans (for students)
- Federal PLUS Loans (for parents and graduate or professional students)
- Federal Consolidation Loans (to combine federal education loan debts)

As noted above, the Direct Loan Program<sup>SM</sup> and the FFEL Program have subsidized and unsubsidized loans:

- Subsidized loans are awarded to students on the basis of financial need. The federal government pays the borrower's accrued interest during certain periods, such as when the student is in school, thereby "subsidizing" these loans.
- Unsubsidized loans are not need based; the borrower is responsible for accrued interest throughout the life of the loan.

Both subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford Loans are available to students. PLUS Loans are available to parents of dependent undergraduates, to graduate students, and to professional students and are always unsubsidized.

A student cannot receive the same type of loan (subsidized or unsubsidized) from both the FFEL Program and the Direct Loan Program at the same school for the same enrollment period. Similarly, a parent cannot receive a FFEL PLUS Loan and a Direct PLUS Loan at the same time for the same student. The school the student plans to attend will inform the student which program is available at that school.



**NEW** At the time this handbook went to print, Congress was considering a proposal that would eliminate the FFEL Program, beginning with the 2010–11 school year, and would have all Stafford, PLUS, and consolidation loans funded from the Direct Loan Program. For up-to-date information, please visit [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).

### REMEMBER:

- Grants are free aid and do not have to be repaid except in certain circumstances.
- Loans must be repaid with interest.
- Federal Work-Study provides income (which does not have to be repaid) from a part-time job.

## Loan Default

Even after signing a promissory note (i.e., a contract promising to repay a loan with interest), many students are only vaguely aware of their responsibility to repay the funds. Defaulting on a student loan (failing to repay the loan according to the terms of the promissory note) will affect a borrower's credit rating and could result in withholding of federal income tax refunds and denial of further federal student aid.

In Appendix E of this book, we have provided a one-page overview of a borrower's responsibilities. (See "Got a Federal Student Loan?") For an in-depth look at student loans, repayment options, and the consequences of default, we recommend *Your Federal Student Loans* at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/repayingpub](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/repayingpub). Ordering information for the paper copy is in Appendix B of this handbook.

## Other U.S. Department of Education (ED) Programs

### Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) Program

The LEAP Program assists states in providing grants or work-study to eligible students. Each state has its own award amounts and application procedures. Many of the eligibility criteria are established by the state agency administering the program, although LEAP recipients must also meet the same basic eligibility criteria that

apply to other federal student aid recipients. Inquiries about LEAP and other state assistance should be directed to the appropriate state agencies. State agencies are listed at [www.ed.gov/erod/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_cd=sgt](http://www.ed.gov/erod/org_list.cfm?category_cd=sgt). For more information about LEAP, visit [www.ed.gov/programs/leap](http://www.ed.gov/programs/leap).

### Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program

Under the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program, ED makes grants to states to provide scholarships to exceptionally able postsecondary students. Applicants must follow the application procedures established by the sponsoring state education agency. Each state education agency establishes its own eligibility criteria. In all cases, applicants must be graduating from high school in the year they apply and must be residents of the awarding state. Scholarship recipients may be awarded the scholarship for each of their first four years of study at an institution of higher education. More information and state agency details can be found at [www.ed.gov/programs/iduesbyrd](http://www.ed.gov/programs/iduesbyrd).

### Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

ED's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) provides grants to state vocational rehabilitation agencies to help individuals with disabilities train for employment, obtain employment, and live more independently. State vocational rehabilitation agencies are listed in the state government section of the telephone book and at [www.ed.gov/erod/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_id=svr](http://www.ed.gov/erod/org_list.cfm?category_id=svr). RSA also provides grants to postsecondary schools for scholarships to students interested in pursuing careers in rehabilitation. RSA's Web site is at [www.ed.gov/osers/rsa](http://www.ed.gov/osers/rsa).

For more information about assistance for students with disabilities, visit [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov).

### Other Federal Programs

This section lists several federal programs that provide financial assistance for postsecondary education. For links to a wide variety of government programs, visit [www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov).



## Federal Income Tax Credits

Two federal income tax credits are available for higher education expenses:

- The Hope Credit, a tax credit worth up to \$1,800 per student per year, can be claimed for qualified first-year and second-year students enrolled at least half-time.
- The Lifetime Learning Credit is a tax credit up to \$2,000 per tax return for virtually any postsecondary education and training, including undergraduate years, graduate and professional schools, and even less-than-half-time study.

The Hope and Lifetime Learning Credits may not be claimed at the same time for the same student.

For details about these income tax credits, as well as other education benefits, read *Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education*, at [www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf).

## National and Community Service

AmeriCorps, a program of national and community service, provides funding for education in exchange for service. Participants can earn up to two education awards of up to \$4,725 each. Individuals can use the funds either to pay current or future education expenses or to repay federal student loans. Participants must be at least 17 and be U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent residents. For more information, students may call 1-800-942-2677, visit [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org), or e-mail [questions@americorps.org](mailto:questions@americorps.org).

## Health Professions

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) administers a number of financial aid programs for students interested in health profession careers. For more information on programs administered by HHS, visit [www.hhs.gov/grants/index.shtml#education](http://www.hhs.gov/grants/index.shtml#education). For information about aid from HHS's Bureau of Health Professions, students may call 1-877-464-4772, e-mail [callcenter@hrsa.gov](mailto:callcenter@hrsa.gov), or visit [www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/dsa](http://www.bhpr.hrsa.gov/dsa).

## Veterans Benefits

For information about U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education programs, call 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551) or visit [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov). Each of the major benefits programs is described in detail on its own section of the VA's site. See Appendix B of this handbook for a list of URLs to visit for military education benefit information.

## Other Assistance From the Military

### ROTC Scholarships

Reserve officer training scholarships are available through the Army, Air Force, and Navy. Military scholarship recipients will have a service obligation in either the reserves or active duty after graduating from college. A fact sheet in Appendix E of this book provides information for high school students about ROTC scholarships. Feel free to photocopy and distribute the fact sheet.

### Assistance in Return for Active Duty

Active duty military service also offers numerous programs to help students earn or pay for a college degree. For further information about these programs, students should contact a local U.S. armed forces recruiter.

Students who receive federal student loans may be interested in repayment assistance from the U.S. Army's loan repayment program. Enlistment in either the Army or Army Reserve can lead to assistance; repayment amounts vary depending on several factors. For more information, students should contact a recruiting officer or visit [www.goarmy.com/benefits/education.jsp](http://www.goarmy.com/benefits/education.jsp).

## Nonfederal Sources: State, School, and Private

### State Aid

Each state administers its own student aid programs, which might include scholarships, loans, fellowships for graduate school, or other types of aid. Students can contact their state education agency for more information; telephone numbers and Web addresses are listed in Appendix C of this handbook. Most agencies have Web sites describing their state aid. You can link to state agencies' sites from [www.ed.gov/erod/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_cd=sgt](http://www.ed.gov/erod/org_list.cfm?category_cd=sgt).



### Prepaid Tuition and College Savings Plans

Every state offers at least one of two types of tuition savings plans. The programs are known as Section 529 plans after the section of the *Internal Revenue Code* in which they are described.

The typical prepaid tuition program allows families to purchase future tuition by paying a predetermined monthly amount into the program. The savings cover full tuition at a public state school or a specified amount toward tuition at a private or out-of-state school.

A Section 529 college savings plan is essentially an investment account created to save for a specific child's college expenses.

For more information on Section 529 plans, visit the College Savings Plans Network site at [www.collegesavings.org](http://www.collegesavings.org).

### School Aid

Many postsecondary schools offer aid from their institutional funds. Most require that the student submit an application in addition to the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) to be considered for institutional aid. Some require a FAFSA before considering a student for merit aid; so encourage your students to complete the FAFSA even if they think they won't qualify for need-based aid. The best source of information on aid available at a school is the school's financial aid office.

### Private Scholarships

A student also might qualify for a private grant or scholarship for academic achievement, religious affiliation, ethnic or racial heritage, community activities, athletic ability, or hobbies and special interests. The Federal Student Aid Web site at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship) offers a free scholarship search based on these and other criteria.

### Private Aid Consultants

There are many privately operated scholarship search and financial aid advice services; these services tend to be relatively expensive, so a student or parent should consider the extent of the search being offered before

committing to such a service. Most financial aid comes from federal and state programs that students can easily find out about through *Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid* (see inside front cover of this book), other free publications, and Web sites. A large portion of the remaining aid comes in the form of institutional grants; so it is important for a student to check with his or her college to find out what it offers from its own funds.

Despite the numerous free sources of information about money for college, some students and parents still prefer to hire a private advisor. A student considering using a for-fee service can find information about it by contacting several sources. Most of these sources will be able to tell the student whether complaints have been lodged against the service. However, keep in mind that a few complaints do not necessarily mean a company is not reliable or legitimate. Rather, the student should use careful judgment and weigh all available information about the number and nature of complaints before making a decision.

The student might obtain information from, or complain to, the following entities:

- Local Better Business Bureau offices are listed in the phone book; alternatively, students can search for offices at [www.bbb.com](http://www.bbb.com).
- The U.S. Postal Inspection Service Fraud Complaint Unit offers a toll-free number, **1-877-876-2455**. Alternatively, the student may access an online complaint form at <http://postalinspectors.uspis.gov>.
- State attorneys general are listed in the State Government section of the phone book. A full list of attorneys general is at [www.naag.org](http://www.naag.org).

### Avoiding Scholarship Scams

Students and parents do not always receive the information they expect from a financial aid advice service. Over time, this problem became so widespread that, in 2000, Congress passed the *College Scholarship Fraud Prevention Act*. For links to the text of the Act, the FTC's and ED's annual reports to Congress on scholarship scams, and other related information, visit the counselors page of Looking for Student Aid at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/LSA](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/LSA).



You can help raise awareness of financial aid scams and the availability of free advice by

- mentioning the issue at financial aid information sessions,
- telling students and parents about the Looking for Student Aid Web site,
- distributing the *Save Your Money, Save Your Identity* brochure (see below), and
- distributing the “Don’t Get Scammed” fact sheet from Appendix E of this handbook.

Although ED does not evaluate private search services, the Looking for Student Aid Web page and *Save Your Money, Save Your Identity* brochure provide some helpful guidelines for students considering using a search service. Looking for Student Aid is at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/LSA](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/LSA).

Ordering information for the brochure is in Appendix B (page 48).

**DID YOU KNOW ...**

There is a free scholarship search at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship).

## Who Can Get Federal Student Aid?

### General Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility for most federal student aid programs is based on financial need rather than on academic achievement. To have his or her financial need determined, a student must complete and file a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA). Part 3 of this handbook discusses the correct completion of the FAFSA.

Additionally, to be eligible for federal student aid, a student must

- have a high school diploma or its equivalent, receive a passing score on an independently administered examination approved by ED, have satisfactorily completed six credit hours or the equivalent course work toward a degree or certificate, or have been homeschooled and either (1) have a secondary school completion credential for homeschools as provided for under state law, or (2) if the state does not require the credential described above, have completed a secondary school education in a homeschool setting that qualifies as an exemption from the compulsory attendance requirements under state law;
- enroll as a regular student in an eligible degree or certificate program;
- be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen;
- have a valid Social Security number (with the exception of students from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau);
- make satisfactory academic progress;
- sign certifying statements on the FAFSA such as agreeing to use federal student aid funds only for educational expenses; and
- be enrolled at least half-time to be eligible for Direct Loan or FFEL Program funds, an Academic Competitiveness Grant, or a National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant.

**NEW** In the first bullet above, the criterion that a student may qualify for aid if he or she has completed six credit hours or the equivalent course work is new.

**Note:**

*This is not a comprehensive list of eligibility requirements. For detailed information on eligibility, see the Student Eligibility volume of the Federal Student Aid Handbook in the “Publications” section of [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov).*

### Selective Service Registration

Most male students must be registered with Selective Service to receive federal student aid. Students who must register with Selective Service may use the FAFSA to do so. One of the questions on the FAFSA asks a male applicant if he wants Selective Service to register him. Students can call Selective Service toll-free at **1-888-655-1825** for general information about registering, or they can register online at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov).





## Drug-related Convictions

A student convicted of the sale or possession of illegal drugs may have federal student aid eligibility suspended if the offense occurred while the student was receiving federal student aid. If a student has a conviction or convictions for these offenses, he or she should call the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) to find out how the law applies to the student and to seek assistance in determining the period of ineligibility. (FSAIC contact information can be found on the inside front cover of this handbook.)

An affected student can regain eligibility early by successfully completing an approved drug rehabilitation program or **NEW** by passing two unannounced drug tests conducted by an approved drug rehabilitation program.

### **NEW** Civil Commitment for Sexual Offenses

A student subject to an involuntary civil commitment after completing a period of incarceration for a forcible or nonforcible sexual offense is ineligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant.

## Eligibility Requirements for Specific Programs

Some federal student aid programs have their own eligibility criteria in addition to the general requirements listed above and on page 8.

### Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) Requirements

To receive an ACG, a student must

- be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant;
- be a first- or second-year undergraduate student enrolled at least half-time in a degree program or in a certificate program of at least one year in length at a two-year or four-year degree-granting institution;
- have completed a rigorous secondary school program of study; and

- if a first-year student
  - have completed secondary school after Jan. 1, 2006, and
  - not, while in high school, have been enrolled as a regular student in an ACG-eligible postsecondary program except as part of a dual enrollment program
- if a second-year student
  - have completed secondary school after Jan. 1, 2005, and
  - have at least a 3.0 grade point average as of the end of his or her first academic year of undergraduate study.

For detailed information about the ACG, including a list of acceptable “rigorous” programs of study, visit the “Federal Financial Aid Programs” section at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).

#### Note:

*As of July 1, 2009, eligible noncitizens (as well as citizens) may receive ACGs.*

### National SMART Grant Requirements

To receive a National SMART Grant, a student must

- be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant;
- be enrolled at least half-time in the third or fourth year of an undergraduate degree or certificate program (or the fifth year of a five-year program) at a degree-granting institution;
- be pursuing a major (or, in some cases, equivalent course work) in physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, engineering, or a critical foreign language as described in the “Federal Financial Aid Programs” section at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov); and
- have at least a 3.0 grade point average as of the beginning of each payment period (e.g., semester).

#### Note:

*Beginning July 1, 2009, eligible noncitizens (as well as citizens) may receive National SMART Grants.*



## TEACH Grant Requirements

To receive a Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Be enrolled as an undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, or graduate student in a postsecondary educational institution that has chosen to participate in the TEACH Grant Program.
- Be enrolled in course work that is necessary to begin a career in teaching or plan to complete such course work. Such course work may include subject area courses (e.g., math courses for a student who intends to be a math teacher).
- Meet certain academic achievement requirements (generally, scoring above the 75th percentile on at least a single battery of a college admissions test or maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25).
- Sign, each year he or she receives TEACH funding, a TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve, indicating that he or she will
  - serve as a full-time, highly qualified teacher in a high-need field in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves low-income students;
  - teach for at least four academic years within eight calendar years of completing—or otherwise ceasing to be enrolled in—the program of study for which he or she received a TEACH Grant; and
  - repay the grant as a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan, with interest accrued from the date the grant funds were disbursed, if he or she fails to meet the requirements in the teaching service agreement.

A current or former teacher or retiree from another profession is exempted from the academic achievement requirements above.

For more information about high-need fields, schools serving low-income students, and the definition of “highly qualified teacher,” students may refer to the TEACH Grant fact sheet in Appendix E of this book. Alternatively, they may visit [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/funding](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/funding) or speak to a financial aid administrator.

### Note:

*It is crucial that students understand that if they do not fulfill the teaching service agreement, they must repay—in the form of an Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loan—all TEACH Grant funds they received.*

## Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, and Federal Work-Study

In addition to the students who qualify for these programs through the general eligibility and financial need requirements, certain other students may qualify as well.

**NEW** Students with intellectual disabilities may receive funding under these programs if they

- are enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities at an institution of higher education;
- are maintaining satisfactory academic progress; and
- meet the other federal student aid eligibility requirements.

**NEW** A Pell-eligible student whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after Sept. 11, 2001, may receive a maximum Pell Grant if, at the time of the parent's or guardian's death, the student was less than 24 years old and/or was enrolled at least part-time at an institution of higher education. The student will receive an Expected Family Contribution (see page 11) of zero, which maximizes Pell eligibility and can increase eligibility for other federal student aid programs.

### **NEW** Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants

A student whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after Sept. 11, 2001, may receive an Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant if

- the student is not eligible for a Pell Grant, and
- at the time of the parent's or guardian's death, the student was less than 24 years old and/or was enrolled at least part-time at an institution of higher education.



The maximum amount of the Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant is the same as the maximum Pell Grant award; and as with a Pell Grant, the payment will be adjusted if the student is enrolled less than full-time. The student's Expected Family Contribution will not be affected, and therefore neither will his or her eligibility for any need-based federal student aid.

## How Is Financial Need Determined?

As we've said, a student must demonstrate financial need to be eligible for most federal student aid. At its simplest level, a student's financial need is the difference between the student's cost of attendance at the school and the amount the family is expected to contribute to the student's education.

### Need Analysis

The process of analyzing a student's financial need, known as need analysis, focuses on determining how much the family reasonably can be expected to contribute toward the student's education. An applicant's need is calculated by collecting information about the family's income, assets, and living expenses. For the federal student aid programs, the law specifies a need analysis formula that produces the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC and the school's cost of attendance (see below) are used by the postsecondary school to establish the student's need as well as to award federal aid. (The school might ask the student to complete other paperwork to determine the student's need for nonfederal aid.)

### Calculating the EFC

For an EFC calculation, a student must complete and file the FAFSA. The fastest and easiest way to do so is to apply online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Unlike college admissions applications, the FAFSA is sent to a U.S. Department of Education (ED) processing center, rather than directly to a college. The student's information is entered into ED's computer system, which then calculates the student's official EFC. The overall application process for financial aid is described in Part 2 of this handbook, while completing specific questions on the FAFSA is discussed in Part 3.

For a detailed breakdown of the EFC formula, go to [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs). From there,

you can download the EFC formula worksheets. Alternatively, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center (see inside front cover of this handbook) and request that a copy of the worksheets be mailed to you.

### Cost of Attendance

Once the school knows the student's EFC, the next step is to subtract it from the student's cost of attendance (COA) at that school. The result is the student's financial need.

For the federal student aid programs, the financial aid administrator must use the definition of "cost of attendance" given in the law to determine what education-related expenses may be considered. The law specifies that the COA includes tuition and fees and an allowance for living expenses, such as room and board, books and supplies, miscellaneous personal expenses (including a reasonable allowance for renting or purchasing a personal computer), and transportation costs. The law also provides limited allowances for loan fees, dependent-care costs, and expenses for disabled students.

#### Note:

*Many high school students (and their parents) don't immediately understand that the definition of "cost of attendance" includes more than just tuition. Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid explains the concept in the section titled "Important Terms." You also can find a definition at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/funding](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/funding) (click on "Student Aid Eligibility").*

The financial aid administrator at a school usually develops different COAs for different categories of students. For instance, some programs of study might have lab fees or higher charges for books and supplies than other programs; and students living off campus might have slightly higher allowable costs for room and board and transportation expenses than students living on campus.

## The Financial Aid Package

Using all available federal and nonfederal aid, the financial aid administrator (FAA) constructs a financial aid package that comes as close as possible to meeting the student's demonstrated financial need; however, because funds are limited, the amount awarded can be less than the amount for which the student is eligible.



The financial aid package often is presented to the student in an award letter, whether hard copy or electronic.

The student may accept or decline any of the financial aid offered. Students often have questions about the financial aid package; these questions are best handled by the financial aid office at the postsecondary school. While the U.S. Department of Education (ED) does not regulate how a postsecondary school packages aid, we do require that the institution inform all students about all federal, state, local, private, and institutional student financial assistance available at that school. In addition, ED requires that participating institutions describe the procedures and forms for application; the student eligibility requirements; the selection criteria; and the criteria for determining the amount of an aid award.

### How Much Federal Pell Grant Funding Can a Student Get?

To determine the amount of a student's Federal Pell Grant, the FAA consults a table that indicates Pell awards based on the cost of attendance, the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), and other factors.

The lower the EFC is (the less money the family is assumed able to pay for school), the higher the grant award is; a student with a zero EFC—no family contribution is expected—has the most need and may be eligible to receive the largest possible Federal Pell Grant award.

For 2009–10, the maximum yearly Federal Pell Grant was \$5,350, and the maximum Pell-eligible EFC was 4617. **NEW** A student attending year-round (e.g., during summer, fall, and spring terms) could receive as much as two consecutive maximum awards in that time. Summer 2010 Pell funds may be paid from either the 2009–10 or the 2010–11 award year. The student might wish to check with his or her FAA if the student is scheduled to receive payment for summer from the year in which the student is eligible for less Pell funding. At the time this book was published, the maximum grant and the maximum Pell-eligible EFC for 2010–11 had not been determined. For more information, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) (contact information is on the inside front cover of this book).

#### Note:

*A student who is attending two postsecondary schools during the same enrollment period must notify the FAAs at both schools. The student may not receive Pell Grants at both schools during the same enrollment period.*

### How Much Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), National SMART Grant, and TEACH Grant Funding Can a Student Get?

The table on page 62 (in "Federal Student Aid at a Glance," near the beginning of Appendix E) lists annual maximum awards for these grants. In all cases, the amount could be reduced if the student attends less than full-time or if the award causes the student's total financial aid award package to exceed his or her financial need.

### How Much Campus-based Aid and Subsidized Loan Money Can a Student Get?

When awarding campus-based aid or subsidized loans, the FAA must consider other aid available to the student in addition to the EFC. (For maximum award amounts, see the table on page 62 in "Federal Student Aid at a Glance," near the beginning of Appendix E.)

For example, using 2009–10 figures, consider a full-time student with an EFC of 1000 who enrolled in a program that cost \$7,000:

- The student then needed \$6,000 in financial aid to go to school ( $7,000 - 1,000 = 6,000$ ).
- However, when the student received a \$4,400 2009–10 Federal Pell Grant and a \$1,000 outside scholarship, the student's need was reduced by \$5,400.
- Therefore, the FAA could award up to \$600 (the remaining need) in the form of campus-based aid and a subsidized Federal or Direct Stafford Loan ( $\$6,000 - \$5,400 = \$600$ ).



## How Much Can a Student Get in Unsubsidized Stafford Loans?

The table on page 62 (in “Federal Student Aid at a Glance,” near the beginning of Appendix E) lists annual maximum awards for these loans. Note that whatever the student receives in subsidized Stafford funds will be subtracted from the maximum amount for an unsubsidized loan, so that the student will not receive more than that maximum amount in subsidized and unsubsidized Stafford Loans combined.

Because unsubsidized Federal or Direct Stafford Loans or PLUS Loans are not need based, the FAA applies the following principles to determine eligibility for unsubsidized loans:

- The amount of the loan may not exceed the difference between the student’s cost of attendance and all other aid the student is receiving, including aid from private and other nonfederal sources.
- The school must consider the student’s eligibility for other aid before determining a loan amount. For instance, if a full-time student in his or her first year of study in 2009–10 had a cost of attendance of \$11,000 and was eligible for a maximum Federal Pell Grant of \$5,350 and a maximum subsidized Stafford Loan of \$3,500, the aid administrator could approve the student for an unsubsidized Stafford Loan of up to \$2,150 ( $\$11,000 - \$5,350 - \$3,500 = \$2,150$ ).

A table showing the federal student aid programs and their award limits is in Appendix E of this handbook. (See “Federal Student Aid at a Glance.”)





# PART 2:

## Application Process for Federal Aid

2

**F**ederal law requires the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to allow students to apply for federal aid without paying a fee. To be considered for most of the federal student aid programs, a student must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>). This application (available in English and Spanish) collects financial and other information used to calculate the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which postsecondary schools use to determine the student's eligibility for aid. (See page 11 for a discussion of the EFC.)

States and many schools also use FAFSA information in awarding funds from their own financial aid programs. To be considered for state or institutional aid, a student might be required to complete additional questions on a separate nonfederal form, and a fee might be charged for processing this additional information. Students should check with the schools to which they plan to apply and with their state agencies to find out whether aid applicants are required to submit additional data on nonfederal forms.

A student needs to complete the FAFSA only once each year. After the first year, certain data from the student's previous FAFSA are prepopulated in the subsequent year's FAFSA to expedite the application process.

### Early Eligibility Indicator: **FAFSA4caster<sup>SM</sup>**

#### What Is the Purpose of **FAFSA4caster**?

**FAFSA4caster** is a free online tool to provide students with early estimates of their eligibility for federal student aid. The tool instantly calculates an estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and sample award packages, including an estimated award amount for the Federal Pell Grant program. Having such information helps families plan ahead for college. The student then can have **FAFSA4caster** prepopulate certain data on the student's official FAFSA, expediting the application process.

#### Who Should Use **FAFSA4caster**?

**FAFSA4caster** is for anyone who is not yet ready to file an official FAFSA, which the student must complete and submit to receive federal student aid. A student does not have to be a high school senior to use **FAFSA4caster**; in fact, we recommend the tool for juniors, and even as early as middle school.

#### How Do You Use **FAFSA4caster**?

**FAFSA4caster** is accessible at [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov). It is divided into three sections: "Get Started" lets the student know what information to gather in preparation for completing the tool; "Use the **FAFSA4caster**" provides access to the tool itself; and "Take the Next Step" includes tips on choosing a college and filing a FAFSA.



The student logs on to *FAFSA4caster* by creating a user ID and password. He or she has the option to provide identifiers such as name, Social Security number (SSN), and date of birth. The personally identifiable information is not required unless the student wishes to have *FAFSA4caster* prepopulate the FAFSA. Once in *FAFSA4caster*, the student answers financial and other questions that are used in determining federal student aid eligibility.

Note that no signatures are required to submit *FAFSA4caster* because it is not the official federal student aid application.

## What Information Does *FAFSA4caster* Provide?

When the student clicks on the “Submit My *FAFSA4caster* Now” button, the tool displays an estimated EFC and invites the student to see what college might cost for him or her based on average costs for categories of schools. For instance, the tool might show cost of attendance for a full-time student at a four-year public school. **NEW** The student also has the option of entering the cost of attendance—if he or she knows it—for a specific school. Then it shows the types of federal student aid that might help cover that cost, providing examples of award packages with in-state and out-of-state costs. Finally, *FAFSA4caster* shows any estimated financial need that remains after the estimated aid amounts and EFC are taken into account.

### Note:

*It is important that students understand that the EFC and award amounts provided by FAFSA4caster are estimates. FAFSA4caster explains that the student also might receive aid from the state or other entities, and it encourages the student to research scholarships and other nonfederal aid.*

## What Happens After Using *FAFSA4caster*?

*FAFSA4caster* is not an aid application. The student still must fill out an official FAFSA for the year the student plans to go to college. Let’s use an imaginary student called Junior as an example. Junior fills out *FAFSA4caster* in spring of 11th grade. Junior decides

that he will want *FAFSA4caster* to prepopulate his FAFSA next year, so he provides personally identifiable information such as his name, date of birth, and SSN. Junior’s name and date of birth are provided to the Social Security Administration; if they match the SSN he provided, then a personal identification number called a Federal Student Aid PIN is generated and held in a database for Junior.

In November of Junior’s senior year, he receives his Federal Student Aid PIN, either via e-mail if he provided a valid e-mail address on *FAFSA4caster*, or via the U.S. Postal Service if he did not. Then in January or February of his senior year, Junior receives a notice reminding him to fill out the FAFSA. Junior accesses the FAFSA using his PIN to identify himself (and again at the end of the FAFSA, to sign electronically). Data from Junior’s *FAFSA4caster* will automatically appear on the FAFSA, and he can update or correct items as necessary. Additional questions on the FAFSA help determine Junior’s eligibility for aid from states and schools.

Please remind students that income, household size, or other factors could affect the EFC between the time the student completes *FAFSA4caster* and the time he or she completes the FAFSA.

## Before Applying

### Helping Students Learn About the FAFSA

#### FAFSA Demonstration Site

A demonstration site is available so you can increase your own understanding of *FAFSA on the Web* and show it to students and parents before they apply. At the site, you can complete a sample FAFSA, make corrections, or check the status of the application. However, when you choose “submit,” the information is not actually submitted. The site is purely a learning tool.

To access the demo site, go to <http://fafsademotest.ed.gov>. The user name is **eddemo**, and the password is **fafsatest**. The site displays both the English and Spanish versions of *FAFSA on the Web*. The 2010–11 demo site was posted in mid-December 2009.





## FAFSA on the Web Screen Shots

If you're preparing a presentation about financial aid and want to show students what the online FAFSA looks like, you can download PowerPoint slides with images (or "screen shots") of *FAFSA on the Web* screens at our FSA for Counselors site at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).

## Financial Aid PowerPoint Presentation

Also at the counselors site is a general presentation about federal student aid, along with a script and information about planning a financial aid workshop at your school. At [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov), look for "Planning a Financial Aid Night" under "Getting the Word Out."

At your presentation, you might consider distributing the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* to help students prepare to fill out the online FAFSA. The worksheet is discussed on page 19, and you can find an image of the worksheet in Appendix A.

## Financial Aid Videos

Another useful tool at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov) is the financial aid video called *Start Here, Go Further With Federal Student Aid: Money for Education Beyond High School*. The program is split into a section for students and parents and a section for counselors and mentors. The student and parent section explains the federal student aid programs and application process, while the counselor and mentor section provides tips on planning a financial aid night, using the FSA for Counselors Web site, and ordering our publications. The video was produced in 2007 and has not been updated due to budgetary constraints. The video does not include the complete list of current dependency status questions but does provide a good introduction to the federal student aid programs and application process. If you plan to show the video to students, we recommend you supplement the content by giving them the handout titled "Am I Dependent or Independent?" (available in Appendix E of this handbook).

We also have produced a video for Spanish-speaking students and parents. The program, called *Empiece aquí, y llegará lejos: Dinero para los estudios superiores (Start Here, Go Further: Money for Higher Education)*, follows a high school student, his mother, and his cousin as they learn about federal student aid.

Feel free to link to the video programs from your Web site; or order DVDs or VHS tapes of the Spanish program at [www.FSAPubs.gov](http://www.FSAPubs.gov). The English DVDs are out of stock, but some VHS copies were still available as this handbook went to print. You may order only one DVD or tape per program, but you may make as many copies as you like.

## Getting a Federal Student Aid PIN

We recommend that students and parents save time by requesting personal identification numbers called Federal Student Aid PINs before the student applies for aid.

Share information about the PIN with your students by copying and distributing the fact sheet "What Is a Federal Student Aid PIN and Why Do I Need One?" found in Appendix E of this handbook.

## What's a PIN For?

The PIN can be used to sign the FAFSA electronically, drastically decreasing the processing time.

The PIN can be used in the following ways (among others):

- Applicant's electronic signature on the FAFSA and certain student loan contracts
- Parent's electronic signature on the FAFSA (if parent obtains his or her own PIN)
- Access to applicant's information on *FAFSA on the Web*, to view FAFSA processing results, to make corrections, or to file a FAFSA based on data the student filed previously
- Access to online information about federal student aid the student has received





## Why Would a Parent Need a PIN?

At least one parent of a dependent student must sign that student's application. (To determine a student's dependency status, see "Am I Dependent or Independent?" in Appendix E of this handbook.) The PIN is the most efficient way to sign the FAFSA. Because each person signing a FAFSA needs his or her own PIN, a dependent student's parent should get a PIN. The parent's PIN can be used to sign FAFSAs for all of that parent's children or for the parent's own FAFSA.

## How and When Should You Get a PIN?

A student who fills out *FAFSA4caster* and provides his or her name, date of birth, and Social Security number (SSN) receives a PIN automatically, as described on page 16. If a student has not completed *FAFSA4caster*, the ideal time to get a PIN is November or December of the student's senior year in high school. The PIN must be requested online at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). The PIN site can be viewed in Spanish by clicking on the "Español" button at the top right corner of the home page.

At the PIN site, the PIN applicant (the student or parent) provides his or her name, date of birth, and SSN. The site gives the applicant the choice of creating his or her own PIN or having the site generate one. If the applicant chooses to have the site generate the PIN, he or she is then given the option of viewing the PIN immediately on the screen, having it immediately e-mailed, or having it sent through the postal system.

A student (or parent) who chooses to have the PIN e-mailed should add [FederalStudentAidPIN@cpsemail.ed.gov](mailto:FederalStudentAidPIN@cpsemail.ed.gov) to his or her e-mail address book or "safe list" to ensure that his or her Internet service provider does not treat the e-mail as spam. The PIN e-mail contains a link to a Web page that displays the PIN. The e-mail link will be active for 14 days. The applicant can link to this page only one time and therefore should make a note of the PIN for future reference. If the link to the online PIN is not accessed within 14 days, a paper PIN mailer will be sent to the student (or parent); the mailer should arrive within seven to 10 days after the 14 days have passed.

If the PIN applicant chooses to have a mailer sent through the postal system, he or she should expect to receive the mailer within seven to 10 days of applying.

### DID YOU KNOW ...

The Federal Student Aid PIN gives the student access to personal information and therefore should be kept **PRIVATE**. Counselors should not offer to hold onto students' PINs. A student concerned about forgetting the PIN should go to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) and change the PIN to a number he or she will remember.

The PIN can be used immediately to sign a FAFSA. Then, within one to three days of the PIN being issued, the PIN applicant's name, date of birth, and SSN are verified with the Social Security Administration (SSA). If the SSA confirms the PIN applicant's information, the PIN is then valid for all its uses. If there is a problem with the SSA match, the PIN applicant will be notified via e-mail or postal mail, depending on whether he or she provided a valid e-mail address on the PIN site.

## What if the Student Forgets the PIN?

If the student forgets the PIN, he or she can request a duplicate PIN at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). Again, the student can choose to view the PIN immediately on the screen, have it e-mailed, or have it mailed. We recommend the student then return to the PIN site and use the "Change My PIN" function to choose a PIN he or she will be able to remember.

## What About PIN Security?

The student should keep his or her PIN in a safe place and **never** share it with anyone, even if that person is helping the student fill out the FAFSA. Revealing the PIN could make the student susceptible to identity theft.

### Note:

*Students can learn to avoid identity theft by reading our brochure Save Your Money, Save Your Identity (see pages 8 and 49).*

## Gathering Documents for the FAFSA

To complete the FAFSA, students (and their parents, if applicable) need their Social Security numbers, driver's licenses (optional), federal income tax returns, Form(s) W-2, current bank statements, and records of any stocks, bonds, and other investments and assets.



You can find a list of items needed to complete the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov/before003.htm](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/before003.htm) and in Appendix E of this handbook.

### **FAFSA on the Web Worksheet**

A useful tool in preparing to complete the online application is the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* (available in English, Spanish, and Braille). The worksheet, designed to give applicants an idea of the questions they will be asked when applying online, lists many of the FAFSA questions and provides boxes for students' (and parents') answers. The order of questions on the worksheet follows that of *FAFSA on the Web*, which differs from the paper FAFSA. Therefore, to avoid confusion, we recommend that students not use paper FAFSAs to prepare for *FAFSA on the Web*.

A copy of the worksheet is in Appendix A of this handbook.

You can view and download the worksheet in PDF at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/worksheet](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/worksheet) and photocopy it for distribution to students. Or, to save time and paper, you might wish to e-mail it to your students.

#### **Note:**

*The worksheet is not an application and cannot be submitted to the Central Processing System. A student without access to the Internet should use an official paper FAFSA.*

## **When to Apply**

The FAFSA processing cycle lasts 18 months. For the 2010–11 award year, applications may be completed on or after Jan. 1, 2010. Processing begins Jan. 2, 2010. FAFSAs for that award year will be accepted until June 30, 2011. Note that most states have much earlier deadlines for students who want to be considered for state aid. You can check state deadlines at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

Additionally, some schools have limited institutional funds that are awarded on a “first-come, first-served” basis to eligible students. Students and parents should fill out their tax forms and the FAFSA as early as possible in 2010. **Those who are unable to complete tax forms early should estimate amounts as accurately as possible and fill out the FAFSA accordingly, correcting the information with actual amounts once the tax forms are complete.**

A student should not submit a paper 2010–11 FAFSA for processing before Jan. 1, 2010. Paper applications received before that date will be returned to the student unprocessed. Applications signed before Jan. 1 but received by the Central Processing System (CPS) after Jan. 1 will be processed, but the student will be sent a rejected *Student Aid Report* (SAR) with a request to sign the SAR after Jan. 1 and then return it to the CPS. (Electronic applications will not be available before Jan. 1, 2010, or after June 30, 2011.)

## **How to Apply**

### **Electronic Application Methods**

#### **FAFSA on the Web<sup>SM</sup>**

*FAFSA on the Web*—available in both English and Spanish—allows students to complete their FAFSAs faster and more easily than the paper method. This Internet application offers detailed online help for each question as well as live online one-on-one communication with a customer service representative. Due to the ease of applying this way, more than 90 percent of all FAFSA applicants complete the form on the Web—and the numbers are growing all the time.

The address for *FAFSA on the Web* is [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

#### **Note:**

*There are Web sites at which students can get help filing the FAFSA for a fee. These sites are not affiliated with or endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). We urge you to advise your students not to pay these sites for assistance that is provided for free at ED's Web site.*

The applicant begins by clicking on “Fill Out a FAFSA” and then selecting the award year (e.g., 2010–11). If the student completed a FAFSA the previous year, or if he or she has a *FAFSA4caster* on file, *FAFSA on the Web* will request the student's PIN and present an application with certain data filled in, based on the student's existing file. (Note that there is no longer a “Fill Out a Renewal FAFSA” link; applicants simply click on “Fill Out a FAFSA.”)



*FAFSA on the Web* contains informational text to assist the student in completing the form. “Skip logic” automatically omits questions that do not apply to the student, based on how the student answered previous questions. (For example, if an applicant indicates that she is female, she will not be asked whether she wants to register with Selective Service.) Built-in edits help students detect and correct any errors before submitting the data to the Central Processing System (CPS). This feature significantly reduces the number of applications rejected by the CPS.

### Filling Out a Simplified FAFSA

Certain questions on *FAFSA on the Web* determine whether the student is eligible for the automatic assignment of an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of zero; those questions will be asked near the beginning of the application. Based on their answers to those questions, applicants might be able to skip certain questions about income and assets.

Additionally, the Simplified Needs Test (see page 36) allows some students to have assets excluded from consideration in calculating the EFC. The questions determining eligibility for the Simplified Needs Test formula are also at the beginning of the *FAFSA on the Web* application. Based on their answers to those questions, applicants might be able to skip the questions about assets.

However, for purposes of determining eligibility for state financial aid, some states require asset and income information. Students who are residents of such states will be asked those questions regardless of their eligibility for the federal Simplified Needs Test formula or for an automatic-zero EFC. Students who are not residents of such states will be asked whether they want to skip the optional questions. Some schools, too, require the student to complete those questions to determine eligibility for institutional aid, so the student should check with the schools to which he or she is applying before deciding to skip those questions. (Providing all income and asset information will not negate the student’s eligibility for the Simplified Needs Test formula or for the automatic-zero EFC.)

### **NEW** Automatically Transferring Income and Tax Data

Beginning Jan. 1, 2010, applicants who fill out the 2009–10 FAFSA online will have the option of automatically transferring their income and tax data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) database to the FAFSA. *FAFSA on the Web* will walk the applicant through the process, which requires that the applicant provide his or her Federal Student Aid PIN and confirm that he or she wants to transfer the data. Federal Student Aid expects to offer this functionality to 2010–11 FAFSA applicants in June or July 2010, once 2009 tax data are available from the IRS.

### Filling Out the FAFSA Without Access to Parental Information

*FAFSA on the Web* asks whether the student is able to provide information about his or her parents. If not, and if the student indicates that he or she has a special circumstance such as having left home due to an abusive situation or having incarcerated parents, *FAFSA on the Web* allows the student to submit the application without entering parental data.

It is important for the student to understand that although the application will be submitted, it will not be processed. The student will not receive an EFC and must contact the financial aid administrator at the school he or she plans to attend. The financial aid administrator will ask for additional information to determine whether the student can be considered independent and have an EFC calculated without parental data. For more information about dependency status, see the box on page 28.

### **NEW** Filling Out the FAFSA When Parents Refuse to Provide Information

In situations in which the parent refuses to provide information on the FAFSA and no longer supports the student, federal law now allows the student to submit the FAFSA without parental information and—after review by the financial aid administrator (FAA) at the student’s chosen school—potentially to receive only an Unsubsidized Stafford Loan. The student indicates on the FAFSA that he or she wishes to apply only for



the unsubsidized loan. The FAFSA is then submitted without parental information; and the student must follow up with the FAA to find out what to do next to receive the loan.

If the FAA chooses, he or she may use “professional judgment” to allow the student to receive the loan. The FAA will ask for a written statement from the parents, indicating that they refuse to provide their information on the FAFSA and that they no longer support the student. Forms of support include allowing the student to live in the parent’s home, including the student on the parent’s auto or health insurance, providing a car to drive on anything other than an occasional basis, and payment of the student’s tuition or fees (including via a PLUS Loan or college savings or prepaid tuition plan).

### Note:

*Although this new flexibility will make an important difference in some students’ ability to attend postsecondary school, we encourage you to advise your students to think carefully before attempting to take advantage of it. A dependent student whose FAFSA is submitted without parental information will not receive an EFC. Remember that some nonfederal aid programs look at the EFC in order to determine a student’s eligibility for their funds; therefore, a student without an EFC cannot be considered for those aid programs. Similarly, some programs (e.g., the Gates Millennium Scholarship) require that a student be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant in order to qualify; a student without an EFC cannot have Pell eligibility determined and therefore cannot receive funds from those programs. Please stress to students and parents that if a dependent student does not provide parental information on the FAFSA, he or she is giving up a chance at many sources of aid.*

## Saving the FAFSA With a Password

Students do not have to complete *FAFSA on the Web* in one sitting. At the beginning of the process, the student is asked to supply a password. If the student is interrupted or needs to leave the application before completing it, or if the site automatically logs the student off due to 30 minutes of inactivity, the information will be saved and will remain available via the password for 45 days. The student should keep the password in a safe place. If the student forgets the password, he or she may return to *FAFSA on the Web*

or call the Federal Student Aid Information Center (see inside front cover of this handbook) to reset it.

The password is different from the PIN: the PIN allows the student to sign the FAFSA or to access processed FAFSA data, whereas the password is created solely to access the incomplete application at a later time.

## Signing the Application With a PIN or Signature Page

At the end of the FAFSA, the student (and the dependent student’s parent) signs electronically using his or her PIN.

A student or parent without a PIN has the option to apply for a PIN, receive it instantly, and immediately use it to sign the FAFSA. If the student or parent chooses not to use a PIN to sign, he or she should print, sign, and mail a signature page to the CPS. The student should be sure to submit the FAFSA after printing the signature page. If the student does not sign (either electronically or with a signature page) within 14 days of submitting the application, or if the student indicates at *FAFSA on the Web* that he or she will not sign via PIN or signature page, he or she will receive a *Student Aid Report (SAR)* in the mail requesting the appropriate signatures. The student (and parent, if appropriate) must sign the SAR and return it to the CPS before the application can be processed and an EFC calculated.

### Note:

*See page 22, under “Paper Application Method,” for information about using a high school counselor’s or financial aid administrator’s signature instead of a parent’s.*

## Submitting the FAFSA and Getting an Estimated EFC

When the student submits his or her information at *FAFSA on the Web*, a confirmation page appears. The confirmation page verifies that the application was submitted successfully, displays an estimated EFC (unless the student is dependent and is submitting the FAFSA without parental information), and indicates whether the student might be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant and/or for an Academic Competitiveness Grant. It is important to note that the EFC on the confirmation



page is only an estimate; the official EFC will appear on the SAR. Once the student's FAFSA has been processed, the student may view the official EFC results at *FAFSA on the Web*. (The student must use his or her PIN to access the results.)

**Note:**

*Please encourage your students to print and save the confirmation page or to e-mail it to themselves for their records.*

For more information about *FAFSA on the Web*, or for technical assistance, students may access live online customer service at the site by selecting the “Live Help” icon or may call **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243; TTY: 1-800-730-8913)**.

## Applying Through the School

Students also may file the FAFSA at some postsecondary schools. The student provides the necessary information, and the school enters the information electronically and sends it electronically to the CPS. The student should contact the financial aid administrator at the school he or she plans to attend to ask whether this option is available at that school.

## Paper Application Method

Students may complete a paper FAFSA (available in English and Spanish) and submit it for processing using the accompanying envelope. The Central Processing System also will accept FAFSAs printed out from PDFs available at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov). The PDF lists an address to which the student should send the completed application. Be sure your students do not submit FAFSAs marked “DRAFT.” E-mailed or faxed copies of the FAFSA will not be accepted, nor will the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet*. Students should keep a photocopy of the completed form for their own records.

**Note:**

*Applicants should send only the FAFSA itself (pages 3–8) to the processor. They should not send copies of their tax returns or any other documentation.*

A high school counselor or a postsecondary school's FAA may sign the paper FAFSA in place of parents when

- the parent(s) are not currently in the United States and cannot be contacted by normal means,
- the current address of the parent(s) is not known, or
- the parent(s) have been determined physically or mentally incapable of providing a signature.

Substituting the signature of a counselor or FAA is a way to move the FAFSA through the processing system. The counselor or FAA must provide his or her title in parentheses next to his or her signature and briefly state the reason he or she is signing for the parent(s).

By signing in place of a parent, the counselor or FAA is assuring a minimum level of credibility for the data submitted. However, the counselor or FAA does not assume any responsibility or liability in this process.

## How the FAFSA Is Processed

FAFSA data are transmitted to Federal Student Aid's Central Processing System (CPS). The CPS uses this information to calculate the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and produce a printed output document reporting that EFC. The student will receive an e-mail or a printed output document (either a *Student Aid Report [SAR]* or a *SAR Acknowledgement*) from the CPS within a few days to three weeks of submitting the FAFSA, depending on how the FAFSA is submitted. Descriptions of the SAR and *SAR Acknowledgement* are on pages 24–26. Because the two documents serve almost the same purpose, for simplicity's sake we refer to “the SAR” to mean “one of these two output documents” throughout most of this chapter.

When processing the application, the CPS uses a series of edits to check the consistency of FAFSA information. For instance, it would be inconsistent for an independent student to report that he or she is single and has no dependents but then to report a household size of two or more people. If the FAFSA data are inconsistent, the CPS may be unable to calculate the EFC or may calculate an EFC based on assumptions. If assumptions have been used, they are indicated on the student's SAR; the student must make sure the assumptions are correct. The SAR includes instructions for making corrections.



## Data Matches

In addition to checking the FAFSA data against predetermined edits, the CPS also performs several database matches. If discrepancies arise, the student's record is flagged and the student may not be eligible to receive federal student aid unless the discrepancy is resolved. Resolving such a discrepancy usually requires the student to submit additional documentation to the school where he or she is applying. The SAR includes the appropriate instructions for the student.

## Social Security Administration (SSA) Matches

The CPS matches FAFSA data against SSA records to check the validity of a student's Social Security number (SSN). If the SSN is invalid, the student will receive a SAR with a comment instructing him or her to review the SSN and explaining how to resolve the discrepancy. The student also will receive a SAR comment if the SSN is a valid number but the name or date of birth reported on the FAFSA doesn't match the SSA's records. The student must resolve the discrepancy as indicated by the SAR before he or she can receive federal student aid. Resolution may be achieved by correcting the information if it is incorrect or reentering the information if it is correct. The student also might receive a SAR with similar comments if some or all of the parent's information does not match the SSA's database. For advice about the best course of action in his or her circumstances, a student should follow the guidance on the SAR or contact the financial aid administrator at the school he or she plans to attend.

If the student indicates on the FAFSA that he or she is a U.S. citizen, ED also conducts a match with the SSA to verify U.S. citizenship status. The results of the citizenship match appear on the student's SAR. When a student's reported data conflict with the SSA's database—or when no citizenship match can be performed—the SAR will indicate that there is a conflict. The student must then provide the school with documentation confirming his or her citizenship status.

The SSA database match also checks whether the SSA has a date of death listed for the person with that SSN. The match is intended to detect when someone might be fraudulently attempting to receive federal student aid.

## Department of Homeland Security (Formerly Immigration and Naturalization Service) Match

The CPS also matches FAFSA records against citizenship records maintained by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). If the student reports on the FAFSA that he or she is an eligible noncitizen (and, therefore, could be eligible for federal student aid) and reports an Alien Registration Number, that information is checked against the database maintained by the DHS. If the match does not confirm the student is an eligible noncitizen, he or she will receive a comment on the SAR. A student is not eligible for federal student aid until his or her status as an eligible noncitizen is resolved.

## National Student Loan Data System<sup>SM</sup> (NSLDS<sup>SM</sup>) Match

The CPS also matches FAFSA data with the NSLDS, which identifies students who have defaulted on any Federal Perkins Loans, Direct Loans, or Federal Family Education Loan Program loans. If a student is found to be in default and has not made satisfactory arrangements to repay, he or she will receive a comment on the SAR. A student is not eligible for federal student aid until the default status is resolved. The NSLDS match also reveals whether a student owes a refund due to overpayment of a federal grant, as well as simply reporting a history of any federal student aid received by the student in the past.

## Other Matches

The CPS also performs matches against registration status information maintained by the Selective Service System and against veteran status information maintained by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (for students who say they are veterans).

### DID YOU KNOW ...

The College.gov Web site is designed to engage, inform, and inspire young people who may not have considered higher education a viable option. Learn more about it in Appendix B.



## What to Expect After Applying

### Checking the Status of a FAFSA

After filing (either electronically or on paper), students can check the processing status of their FAFSAs or any corrections they've made at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

A student without access to the Internet can check the status of the FAFSA by calling **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)** and answering questions asked by an automated system. TTY users (who call **1-800-730-8913**) will be connected to an operator rather than to an automated system. Students without access to the toll-free number can call **319-337-5665**.

### Where the Processor Sends the FAFSA Information

Within 72 hours after the Central Processing System (CPS) receives a completed application and signature, schools listed on the student's FAFSA have access to the student's information. The schools download the processed FAFSA data in electronic form on a report called an *Institutional Student Information Record*.

The processor also sends the student's information to the state agency (or agencies) in the student's state of legal residence and to the state agencies of the states in which the schools listed on the FAFSA are located. This maximizes the student's chances of receiving state-based and school-based financial aid.

### What the Student Receives After Applying

A student who completes the FAFSA and whose Social Security number (SSN), name, and date of birth are confirmed by the Social Security Administration (SSA) will automatically receive a PIN if he or she does not already have one. The student receives the PIN either by e-mail (if a valid address is provided) or by a hard-copy mailer.

Each applicant also receives an output document—either a *Student Aid Report* (SAR) (paper or electronic) or *SAR Acknowledgement*. To determine what a student will receive, consult the table below. (If an e-mail to the student is returned as undeliverable, a paper output document will be sent.) If the student fills out a Spanish FAFSA, the output document also will be in Spanish.

Type of FAFSA	E-mail supplied	Type of SAR	When SAR arrives (at the latest)*
<b>FAFSA on the Web</b>	YES	E-mail link to SAR information online	If FAFSA signed with PIN(s): 3–5 days; if signature page used: 2 weeks
	NO	Paper <i>SAR Acknowledgement</i>	If FAFSA signed with PIN(s): 7–10 days; if signature page used: 2 weeks
<b>FAFSA submitted by school</b>	YES	E-mail link to online SAR	3–5 days
	NO	Paper <i>SAR Acknowledgement</i>	7–10 days
<b>Paper FAFSA</b>	YES	E-mail link to online SAR	2 weeks
	NO	Paper SAR	3 weeks
<b>Corrections at FAFSA on the Web</b>	YES	E-mail link to online SAR	1–5 days
	NO	Paper <i>SAR Acknowledgement</i>	7–10 days

*If changes do not require data match, updated SAR immediately available at FAFSA on the Web*

\*The time frames in this table indicate how long it takes for the SAR to arrive after the FAFSA is submitted.



**Note:**

Most students will receive an e-mailed link to the SAR. To prevent the e-mail from being treated as spam, the student should add `FederalStudentAidFAFSA@cpsemail.ed.gov` to his or her e-mail address book or "safe list."

## Reviewing the SAR and SAR Acknowledgement

The student does not need to take or send the SAR to a school that already received the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and FAFSA information electronically on the *Institutional Student Information Record*. If a student wants an additional school to receive the information, the student can add that school to the list (see page 28) or give the school permission to add itself. Note that the school must receive the student's information by one of the above methods before the student may receive federal student aid at that school.

A student can request a copy of his or her SAR by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) (see inside front cover of this handbook). The student should select "Application Status" in the automated menu. The system will then ask the student a few questions, including his or her SSN and the first two letters of his or her last name. The duplicate SAR is then sent to the student. TTY users (and those without a touch-tone phone) will be connected to an operator rather than to an automated system.

### SAR

Unless the student's SAR is identified as having problems, the EFC is printed on the front page at the upper right. The SAR also includes instructions such as how to make corrections to the data the student supplied on the FAFSA.

In addition, there is a section for the financial aid administrator's use and a section of summary data from the National Student Loan Data System. If the student has not had any previous federal student aid, this section will be blank.

Finally, there is a summary detailing the information the student supplied on the FAFSA. On the paper SAR,

there is space for the student to correct the information (if necessary). Data elements questioned by the CPS are highlighted in bold type.

If a student receives a rejected SAR, the form will highlight specific information for the applicant to provide so the CPS can determine his or her eligibility. A rejected SAR does not include an EFC. A rejected SAR is sent when an application (a) has inconsistent or insufficient data to calculate an EFC, (b) lacks required signatures, or (c) has an invalid student SSN or—in the case of a dependent student—lacks a valid SSN for at least one parent.

If the student makes any changes to the data on the SAR, he or she may either return the form for reprocessing or make the changes through *FAFSA on the Web* (see page 27). At some schools, financial aid administrators can make the changes electronically.

### The SAR and Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) Eligibility

Part 1 of this handbook explains that in order to receive an ACG, a student must be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant, have an eligible high school graduation date, and have completed a rigorous program of study in high school. Students who fill out *FAFSA on the Web* are asked about these criteria while filling out the application. However, the paper FAFSA does not contain questions about the applicant's high school graduation date or rigorous program of study. Applicants who file the paper FAFSA and are Pell-eligible will receive a note on the SAR explaining what to do. The SAR tells the student to use *FAFSA on the Web* or to call the FSAIC (see inside front cover of this handbook) to provide the additional information. Because of this extra step in the paper process, we urge students to use the Web for the entire FAFSA process if at all possible.



### **Data Release Number (DRN)**

The student's DRN appears at the top right corner of the SAR (as well as on the *FAFSA on the Web* confirmation page). The student will need the DRN if he or she wants to add a school to his or her record, either by having a school add itself electronically or by calling the FSAIC. As noted on page 28, the student can use his or her PIN to add schools at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) by selecting "Add or Delete a School Code." The DRN is not the same as the PIN: when the student provides the DRN to the financial aid administrator or the FSAIC, the student is providing permission for the financial aid administrator or the FSAIC to access his or her application record, while the PIN gives the student direct access to his or her file and acts as an electronic signature. The PIN should never be shared with anyone.

### **Viewing SAR Information Online**

Once the FAFSA is processed, applicants with PINs can go to *FAFSA on the Web* and click on "View and Print Your Student Aid Report" to view SAR information. The SAR is available online whether the student applied electronically or not *and* whether he or she provided an e-mail address or not.

A link to the electronic SAR is sent instead of a paper SAR when a student supplies a valid e-mail address on the FAFSA. The electronic SAR shows the same information the paper SAR does. The student will be able to print a copy of the SAR for reference.

### **SAR Acknowledgement**

A paper acknowledgement is sent when the student applies electronically but does not supply a valid e-mail address. The *SAR Acknowledgement* allows the student to review the processed FAFSA information and results. If changes or corrections are needed, they must be made through the school or at *FAFSA on the Web* (using the PIN to access the student's data), or the student may request a paper SAR to make a correction.

## **Verification**

The effectiveness of the federal student aid programs depends on the accuracy of the data reported by students. It directly affects the eligibility of millions of applicants

for these programs. Because of this, the CPS follows procedures established by federal regulations to select students for a process called verification.

The CPS prints an asterisk next to the EFC on the SAR to identify students who have been selected for verification. Additionally, a comment on the first page of the SAR informs the student that he or she has been selected. A code also is provided on the information sent to schools. If the student is selected for verification, a school's financial aid administrator will check the information the student reported on the FAFSA, usually by requesting a copy of signed tax returns filed by the student and, if applicable, by the student's parent(s) or spouse. Many schools also select applications to be verified in addition to those selected by the CPS.

If a student is selected for verification, the school will contact him or her to indicate what documentation the student must submit to the school. The student should be sure to provide all documentation promptly. It is unlikely that the school will process financial aid for the student until the required documentation is submitted.

## **Making Changes**

There are situations in which the student will have to change information that was reported on the application. This may involve correcting errors or updating certain information.

### **Corrections and Updating**

When a student files a FAFSA, it creates a "snapshot" of the financial situation of the student's family as of the date the application was signed. Errors may occur, however, if the student fills in the wrong information on the FAFSA. The student must correct this information so it is accurate as of the day the FAFSA was originally signed.

### **What Information Can Be Changed**

The student **must** update

- a change in dependency status (see discussion on pages 27–28),



- a change in the number of family members in the household (must be updated *only if* the student is selected for verification), and
- a change in the number of family members enrolled in postsecondary schools (must be updated *only if* the student is selected for verification).

**Note:**

*If any of these changes occurs as a result of a change in the student's marital status, the student is not permitted to update accordingly.*

The student also may not update income or asset information to reflect changes to the family's financial situation that took place after the FAFSA was filed. For example, if the student's family spent some of their savings after filing the FAFSA, the student may not update his or her information to show a change in the family's assets.

### How to Make Changes

As previously stated, students can make corrections using the SAR or can ask the school to transmit corrections electronically using its access to the CPS. Even if the student did not originally apply through the school, a school may still be able to make the corrections electronically if the student takes the corrected information to the school.

The student can quickly and easily correct or update information using *FAFSA on the Web*. Any student with a PIN can access his or her data online, whether the student applied electronically or on paper. At *FAFSA on the Web*, the student clicks on "Make Corrections to a Processed FAFSA."

*FAFSA on the Web* allows the student to change all data elements except the SSN. The PIN the student uses to access the data acts as an electronic signature, so there is no need for the student to send a signature page to the CPS. If a dependent student changes information about his or her parent(s), one of those parents must sign electronically using the parent's own PIN or must sign a signature page.

A student who did not provide an e-mail address on the FAFSA will be able to add it at *FAFSA on the Web* and will then receive an e-mail with a link to the online SAR information. The e-mailed link arrives within one to five days; the paper SAR takes up to two weeks. The student's corrections also will be sent to the school on an *Institutional Student Information Record*.

If a student makes changes that don't require the CPS to perform a data match, the changes will be made immediately, and the student can view the online SAR information immediately.

The student should speak to the school's financial aid office directly if there will be a significant change in the family's income for the present year or other special circumstances that cannot be reported on the FAFSA or SAR.

### Dependency Status and Overrides

Most students entering a postsecondary school straight from high school are considered financially dependent on their parents. This means their parents must provide information on the FAFSA (see Part 3 of this handbook). In unusual circumstances, a student who would normally be considered dependent can be considered independent. Page 20 of this handbook explains how a student without access to parental information can fill out the FAFSA.

The financial aid administrator at a school can make a special determination of independence and override the student's dependency status on the FAFSA. Students who believe that they have compelling and unique reasons to be considered independent should contact the financial aid office at the school they are planning to attend. (See the box on page 28 for more information.)

**Note:**

*Students should be aware that the school is not required to perform dependency overrides, and if the financial aid administrator determines that an override is not appropriate, the decision cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.*



## Dependency Overrides and Special Circumstances

Dependency status is determined by specific criteria and can be changed by a financial aid administrator (FAA) only in unusual circumstances. A student cannot be determined to be independent just because

- the parents don't want to provide information on the FAFSA due to privacy concerns;
- the parents don't feel it's their responsibility to provide financial assistance for college;
- the parents no longer claim the student as a dependent on their taxes; or
- the student no longer lives at home.

The student should contact the FAA at his or her college to discuss dependency status if he or she

- has no contact with the parents and does not know where they are (and the student has not been adopted by someone else);
- has left home due to an abusive situation; or
- is older than 21 but not yet 24, is unaccompanied (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian), and is either homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless.

### Note:

See "Filling Out the FAFSA Without Access to Parental Information" on page 20 if you are working with a student who cannot provide parental information.

In special circumstances, the FAA may choose to make adjustments to certain items on the FAFSA to account for financial difficulties. The student should contact the FAA at his or her college to discuss special circumstances if

- the family has unusually large medical bills or nursing home expenses that are not covered by insurance;
- the family is paying unusually high elementary or secondary school tuition or dependent care expenses; or
- the student or a parent has recently lost his or her job.

The lists above are examples and are not to be taken as complete and definitive. An FAA is required to assess situations on a case-by-case basis and then make a decision whether to make adjustments to the FAFSA based upon special circumstances that the student can appropriately document.

The best thing you can do to help a student who believes he or she should be considered independent or who has special financial circumstances is to encourage the student to gather as much written evidence as possible and to provide it to the financial aid office at the school he or she plans to attend. Documentation to support a request for independent status could include a letter from a third party (such as a member of the clergy) who knows the student's situation. Special financial circumstances might be demonstrated with items such as medical or child care bills or with proof of the loss of employment of a family member.

Please make it clear to students that the FAA is not required to adjust dependency status or financial elements on the FAFSA. The FAA's decision is final and cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education.

*To help students understand dependency status and whose information to report on the FAFSA, give them copies of "Am I Dependent or Independent?" and "Who Is My 'Parent' When I Fill Out the FAFSA?" from Appendix E of this handbook.*

## Adding a School

If a student wants to make his or her FAFSA information available to an additional school after filing the FAFSA, the student can select "Add or Delete a School Code" at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and then use his or her PIN to sign in, or the student can use the paper SAR to add the new school.

Alternatively, the student may call the FSAIC to add the school or may give the school permission to add itself.

In these cases, the student will need to provide his or her DRN from the SAR.

### Note:

*No more than 10 schools may be listed on the student's FAFSA at one time. (The paper FAFSA has space for only four schools, while FAFSA on the Web allows 10 to be listed.) When a new school code overwrites a previous school code, the school removed from the list will not have automatic access to any new information.*



## 2010–11 Deadlines

Here are some important deadlines and timeframes for the 2010–11 application cycle for students and schools. At the time this book was published, most of these dates were not finalized, and the official dates are scheduled to be announced in July 2010. For further information after July 2010, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center (see inside front cover of this handbook) or consult our *Information for Financial Aid Professionals* site at [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov).

A 2010–11 FAFSA must be submitted to the application processor no earlier than Jan. 1, 2010, and received no later than June 30, 2011.

### Note:

*State-imposed deadlines for state-funded aid appear on both FAFSA on the Web and the paper FAFSA. Schools may have their own deadlines for federal campus-based and school financial aid.*

The following actions are expected to have a deadline in mid-September 2011:

- corrections made and received by the Central Processing System
- signature pages signed and received by the Central Processing System
- duplicate *Student Aid Reports* (SARs) requested

The following actions are expected to have deadlines in late September 2011:

- the school receives the SAR or *Institutional Student Information Record* (deadline is the late September date or the date the student is no longer enrolled for that award year, whichever is earlier)
- verification of the student's information is completed (deadline is the late September date or 120 days after the student's last day of enrollment, whichever is earlier)

Verification is considered complete for Federal Pell Grants when the school receives a valid SAR, *SAR Acknowledgement*, or *Institutional Student Information Record* on which all information used to calculate the EFC is correct. Therefore, although a student has 120 days or until the September 2011 deadline to provide documentation, the student also must have any corrections processed by this deadline. Note that the disbursement of funds from certain programs may be restricted to shorter periods.

### DID YOU KNOW ...

The *College Preparation Checklist* is now your go-to publication for students of all ages, including college-bound adults. The newly expanded checklist explains how to prepare academically and financially for postsecondary education, starting in elementary school. Sections for parents guide them as they support their children. Readers also will find basic information about federal student aid; finding scholarships; *FAFSA4caster*; and what to do at FAFSA filing time. We recommend that high school students use the checklist to learn what to do, and use [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) to browse in-depth federal aid information when they need it. Order the checklist at [www.FSAPubs.gov](http://www.FSAPubs.gov) or download it at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/collprep](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/collprep).





# PART 3:

## Completing the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*

**A**s mentioned in Part 2 of this handbook, if a student wishes to receive federal student aid to attend a postsecondary school, he or she must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>). Many states and schools also rely on the FAFSA to award their state and institutional student aid funds.

3

Please be sure your students understand that a student does not have to pay to have the FAFSA completed or processed. If the student is asked to pay a fee, he or she should consider what other services are being offered and remember that free advice on student aid is widely available. Encourage students to consult a high school or TRIO counselor, a college financial aid administrator (FAA), or the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) (see inside front cover of this handbook) before considering paying for advice or an application service.

A student can complete and submit the FAFSA electronically through *FAFSA on the Web*<sup>SM</sup> (see Part 2 of this handbook) at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

A student also can submit the FAFSA electronically by asking the FAA at the school to transmit the information on his or her behalf. Not all schools have this capability.

If neither of these options is available, a student can complete a PDF or paper FAFSA (see page 22) and mail it to the address specified on that version of the FAFSA.

The PDF FAFSA will be online at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov) in January 2010.

Comments to improve the FAFSA may be sent to [fafsa.comments@ed.gov](mailto:fafsa.comments@ed.gov) or to

U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202-4700

### Pointers for Completing the FAFSA

The paper FAFSA for 2010–11 is white, blue, and purple. Blue sections are for students to complete; purple sections are for parents to complete.

The *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* is available for applicants who want to fill out the FAFSA online but prefer to jot down their answers on paper first.



## FAFSA Help

To avoid mistakes and delays in processing, it is crucial that students and parents carefully read and follow all directions on the FAFSA. Help with the application is available via live, one-on-one online “chat” with a customer service representative as the student completes *FAFSA on the Web* at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). The student should click on the “live help” icon to access this feature. Students who fill out the paper form may call the Federal Student Aid Information Center for help (see inside front cover of this handbook).

If you’re working with a student and just need to check out how to answer a specific question, you need *Completing the FAFSA* at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/completefafsa](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/completefafsa). *Completing the FAFSA* offers a full discussion of each question on the FAFSA, following the order of the questions on the paper application. Use it online or download it in PDF—whichever is easiest for you.

The FAFSA guidance below follows the order of sections on the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* but also indicates where questions are found on the paper version of the application. This information should help you answer questions that students and parents might have about the FAFSA.

An image of the worksheet appears in Appendix A of this handbook. You can find the worksheet in PDF at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/worksheet](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/worksheet).

### Note: NEW

*The FAFSA on the Web Worksheet has been shortened this year. The wording of most items has been simplified; and several items considered to be self-explanatory have been deleted. Part 3 of this handbook focuses on items that might be interpreted in different ways and those for which additional clarification might be of use. We discuss many of the worksheet items as well as some questions that do not appear on the worksheet but can be found on the paper and online applications.*

*\*We recognize that some of you may be assisting students who are completing a paper FAFSA; so we have indicated the question numbers from the paper form next to each question below.*

## Section 1: Student Information

**Purpose:** Section 1 collects information used to track and identify a student (name, Social Security number [SSN], and so on) as well as other information that affects a student’s basic eligibility for federal (or state and some institutional) student aid. For instance, a student must report citizenship status because he or she must be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen (see Glossary) to receive federal student aid.

**Student’s last name (Q1)** Because the U.S. Department of Education (ED) matches the student’s name and SSN with the Social Security Administration (SSA), the name here (as well as the first name) should match the name on the student’s Social Security card. Otherwise, the student will be told there was an inconsistency during processing, thereby slowing the application and aid awarding process for the student.

**Social Security number (Q8)** A student must have an SSN to apply for federal student aid. If the student submits a FAFSA without an SSN, the FAFSA will be returned to the student unprocessed. To get an SSN, or to determine a student’s SSN if the card has been lost, the student must contact the local Social Security office. For additional information (in English and Spanish), call the SSA at **1-800-772-1213** (TTY: **1-800-325-0778**).

*Exception:* A student from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau is not required to have an SSN. The student should enter 888 in the SSN field, and the Central Processing System (CPS) will assign the remaining six digits to create an identification number that will remain valid for the entire award year.

The student should be very careful when entering his or her SSN. Although the SSN can be corrected after the *Student Aid Report* is produced, the number originally entered will always be used as the student’s ID and is likely to cause confusion and extra work for the financial aid administrator (FAA) if it doesn’t match the student’s





SSN. (If a student submits an erroneous SSN, he or she should check with the FAA to determine whether to file a new original FAFSA using the correct SSN.)

**Paper FAFSA Question 18** asks, “What is your state of legal residence?” This information is used in the EFC calculation to determine the appropriate allowance for state and other taxes paid by that state’s residents. It also indicates which state agency should receive the student’s FAFSA information. (Many state agencies use the FAFSA to award state-based student aid.)

Different states have different definitions of legal residence; if the student is unsure, he or she should contact the financial aid office at a school in his or her state.

### **Student Aid Eligibility Drug Convictions (Q23)**

A student with drug convictions loses federal student aid eligibility only if the student committed the offense while receiving federal student aid. **If the student has been convicted, he or she is not necessarily ineligible for aid.** A student with a conviction will complete some screening questions online or will receive a worksheet through the mail to determine whether the conviction affects the student’s eligibility for federal student aid in the upcoming award year. Students with convictions should still complete and submit the FAFSA because even if they are ineligible for federal student aid, they may still be eligible for state or institutional aid. Many states and schools use the data supplied by the FAFSA to determine students’ eligibility for aid from those entities. **A student must respond to this question before he or she can be awarded funds from the federal student aid programs.**

**Highest school your father completed (Q24); Highest school your mother completed (Q25)** Some state agencies use this information to award grants and scholarships. “Father” and “mother” in these questions mean the student’s birth parents or adoptive parents, but not stepparents or foster parents. Note that this definition of parents is unique to this question. All other questions use the definition given in Section 3 of the worksheet and on pages 6 and 9 of the paper FAFSA.

**Paper FAFSA Question 26** asks, “When you begin college in the 2010–11 school year, what will be your high school completion status?” See page 8 of this handbook if you are helping a homeschooled student complete the FAFSA.

**Paper FAFSA Question 28** asks, “When you begin the 2010–11 school year, what will be your grade level?” This question helps determine the award amount under some state grant programs and establishes how much money the student may borrow under federal loan limits. It will also be used to determine whether a student is potentially eligible for the Academic Competitiveness Grant or the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant.

**Paper FAFSA Question 30** asks, “When you begin the 2010–11 school year, what do you expect your enrollment status to be?” The student should answer based on the school he or she is most likely to attend. The notes accompanying the question define “full-time,” “half-time,” and the other terms used in this question.

**Paper FAFSA Question 31** asks, “In addition to grants, are you interested in being considered for work-study or student loans?” If a student isn’t sure about wanting loans or work-study, he or she should indicate interest in these programs. Here’s why: Most institutions have limited Federal Perkins and Federal Work-Study funds. If a student indicates no interest in these programs early in the application process, there might not be any remaining unawarded funds later if the student changes his or her mind. By indicating interest on the initial application, the student will be considered for all types of aid that are available. **Also, indicating interest in loans and work-study will not adversely affect the student’s eligibility for grants.** At a later date, the student can decline any awarded aid he or she does not want. (Note that accepting any of this aid does not commit the student to military or other government service.)

**Paper FAFSA Question 32** asks, “Are you planning to complete course work necessary to become an elementary or secondary school teacher, either now or in the future?” This question is part of the process of determining eligibility for the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant. If an applicant answers Yes, he or she will receive either online or paper information about the TEACH Grant, depending on whether he or she provides a valid e-mail address.



## Section 2: Student Dependency Status

**Purpose:** The items in this section determine whether a student is a dependent student or an independent student for purposes of calculating the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). If the student indicates that any of these criteria applies to him or her, he or she is classified as an independent student, even if the student is still living with his or her parents. If the student is not living with his or her parents but does not meet any of the criteria, the student is dependent and must include his or her parents' information on the FAFSA. See page 20 if you are working with a student who has no access to his or her parents or whose parents refuse to provide their information on the FAFSA.

A school's financial aid administrator (FAA) has the authority to override a student's dependency status on the initial application or on the *Student Aid Report* if the FAA decides that a dependent student should be considered an independent student. The FAA's decision is final and cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education. For more information regarding dependency overrides, see the box on page 28.

**I am serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces (Q49)** "Active duty" means active duty for purposes other than training. Note that a National Guard or Reserves enlistee who is called to active duty in the U.S. armed forces for other than state or training purposes is considered to be on active duty.

**The "age 13" criteria (deceased parents, dependent/ward of the court, foster care) (Q53)** The precise wording in the FAFSA itself is, "At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?" If the student's last surviving parent dies after the FAFSA has been filed, the student must update this question using the methods described on page 27 of this handbook for updating information.

**I am a veteran of the U.S. armed forces (Q50)** See "Am I Dependent or Independent?" in Appendix E of this handbook for the FAFSA's definition of a veteran. If the student indicates that he or she is a veteran, his or her name is submitted for a database match with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

**I am currently or I was an emancipated minor (Q54)** The applicant's status must have been determined by a court in his or her state of legal residence. Note that the court order must be in effect on the date the student signs the FAFSA. Alternatively, if the student is considered an adult by his or her state, the court order must have been in effect up until the date the student became an adult.

**I have children and I provide more than half of their support (Q51)** The applicant must provide that support between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011. This item does apply to a student (male or female) whose unborn child will be born before the end of the award year and will be provided more than 50 percent support by the student.

**I am currently or I was in legal guardianship (Q55)** As with the question about emancipated minors, the court order must be in effect on the date the student signs the FAFSA (or must have been in effect immediately prior to the student becoming an adult).

**I am homeless or I am at risk of being homeless** *FAFSA on the Web* will ask the applicant, "Are you homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?" If the applicant responds "No," then the three questions on homelessness (below) will not be presented, thus saving the applicant time. The paper FAFSA shows all three questions in full:

- **At any time on or after July 1, 2009, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless? (Q56)**
- **At any time on or after July 1, 2009, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless? (Q57)**



- **At any time on or after July 1, 2009, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? (Q58)**

The applicant should carefully read the FAFSA instructions for these questions. The instructions include definitions for “homeless,” “unaccompanied,” and “youth.” If a student does not have a determination from one of the specified officials but believes he or she is an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or at risk of being homeless, the student should contact the financial aid office at the school he or she plans to attend.

A student who meets any of the criteria in Section 2 of the worksheet skips Section 3 and goes to Section 4. A student who does not meet any of the criteria continues with Section 3.

## Section 3: Parent Information

**Purpose:** These items collect information about the student’s parents, their income and taxes, and their household. The income and tax items collect information on the “base year.” The base year for applicants for 2010–11 is the 2009 calendar year. Line references to the 2009 federal tax forms from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) are provided. If you are working with families who complete Puerto Rico tax returns, you can consult the “quick reference” document in the FAFSA Information section of [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov). The quick reference will tell you which lines on the IRS forms relate to which lines on the Puerto Rico forms.

### Note:

*A portion—and only a portion—of the parents’ income and assets is included in the Expected Family Contribution as being available for the student’s educational costs.*

Before completing Section 3, the student should understand who is considered a parent for purposes of the FAFSA. For your convenience, Appendix E of this handbook contains a fact sheet titled, “Who Is My ‘Parent’ When I Fill Out the FAFSA?” We encourage you to use it as a reference and to photocopy it for distribution to students.

Many students have questions about the parental information section of the FAFSA because they do not consider their parent(s) to be their primary source of support. Perhaps the student lives with another relative and is no longer in touch with his or her parents, or perhaps he or she left home due to an abusive situation and has been self-supporting for years. In cases such as these, the student should contact the financial aid administrator (FAA) at the school he or she plans to attend. If the student reports a (nonparent) relative’s information or simply leaves this section blank, processing of his or her student aid could be delayed. Please remind the student that any decision made by the FAA regarding dependency status is final and cannot be appealed to the U.S. Department of Education (ED). (See pages 20–21 and 27–28 for more information about dependency status, special circumstances, and submitting the FAFSA without parental information.)

**Parents’ Social Security numbers (SSNs), names, and dates of birth (Q61–68)** A dependent student’s application will be rejected if there is not at least one parent’s SSN, last name, first initial, and date of birth.

**Check here if your [father/mother] is a dislocated worker (Q83)** A dislocated worker usually is someone who has been laid off; but see the glossary in Appendix D of this handbook for the full FAFSA definition. Dislocated worker status can contribute to eligibility for an automatic-zero Expected Family Contribution (EFC) or for the Simplified Needs Test (see page 36).

**Paper FAFSA Question 70** asks, “What is your parents’ state of legal residence?” Students whose parents do not live in the U.S. should enter “FC” (foreign country) for this question.

**In 2008 or 2009, did anyone in your parents’ household receive [benefits from any of the federal benefits programs listed]? (Q75–79)** This information is taken into account when the CPS determines whether the applicant is eligible for the automatic-zero EFC or for the Simplified Needs Test (described on page 36). Please let students and parents know that answering these questions will not reduce eligibility for federal student aid or for other federal benefits.



**Paper FAFSA Question 82** asks, “If your parents have filed or will file a 1040, were they eligible to file a 1040A or 1040EZ?” The Central Processing System (CPS) uses this information to identify who is eligible for the automatic-zero EFC or for the Simplified Needs Test (see below).

### The Simplified Needs Test

The CPS will automatically calculate a simplified EFC for a student who meets certain income and tax-filing requirements. Family assets are not used in the simplified EFC calculation. However, even if the asset information isn't taken into account in calculating the EFC, some states and schools require this information for their own programs. A student who uses *FAFSA on the Web* will be asked whether he or she wants to skip certain questions on the application. A student without access to *FAFSA on the Web* should complete the entire paper application. The CPS will make the adjustment (omitting certain items from the EFC calculation) for the applicant if appropriate.

**Income, taxes, and exemptions (Q84–88)** Each item gives the line reference to the 2009 IRS tax forms.

#### Note:

*ED does not require that a family file the IRS tax forms before completing the FAFSA. Students and parents who have not yet filed their tax forms when they complete the FAFSA should estimate amounts as accurately as possible, correcting the information if necessary once the tax forms are filed. Information on correcting FAFSA data is on page 27 of this handbook. Information on automatically transferring tax data from the IRS to the FAFSA is on page 20.*

If the family files a foreign tax return, the applicant should convert the value of the foreign income and taxes paid into U.S. dollars, using the exchange rate in effect at the time he or she completes the FAFSA. The applicant can find exchange rates at [www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h10/Current](http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h10/Current).

**Paper FAFSA Question 73** asks, “How many people are in your parents' household?” The applicant should include the people listed in the notes accompanying the question. Additionally, the parents' unborn child may be included if that child will be born on or before June 30, 2010.

**Paper FAFSA Question 74** asks, “How many people in your parents' household will be college students between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011?” The student should count himself or herself, even if he or she will attend college less than half-time in 2010–11. However, others in the parents' household may be included only if they will attend at least half-time in 2010–11 in a program leading to a degree or certificate. Furthermore, they must be attending a postsecondary institution that is eligible to participate in ED's federal student aid programs. Parents may not be included in the number in college.

**Paper FAFSA Questions 89–91** collect information on the parents' assets. It is important for applicants to read the instructions and notes for these questions; both the paper FAFSA and *FAFSA on the Web* specify certain items to include and not to include. For instance, one exclusion from assets is a small business, owned and controlled by the student's family, that has 100 or fewer full-time or full-time-equivalent employees. Refer to “What Information Do I Need When I Fill Out the FAFSA?” in Appendix E of this handbook to determine what documents the student should gather in preparation for filling out the application.

#### Note:

*Dependent students should report all qualified educational benefits or education savings accounts—i.e., Coverdell savings accounts, 529 college savings plans, 529 prepaid tuition plans, and the refund value of state prepaid tuition plans—owned either by the student or by the parents (for any member of the family) as assets of the parents.*

If an independent student or spouse is the owner, the amount of the account must be reported on the FAFSA as an asset of the student/spouse.

**The checklist at the bottom of Section 3** asks about parents' additional financial information and untaxed income. (**Q92 and Q93**) This section of the FAFSA collects information about the parents' untaxed income and benefits as well as amounts that will be excluded



from income when the EFC is calculated. It is important to review these items carefully when completing the application, even if the family may have just a few of these items to report.

One of the items in this section (Question 92e on the paper FAFSA) asks for the amount of combat pay or special combat pay received. Special combat pay is pay received by a member of the U.S. armed forces because of exposure to a hazardous situation. The parent should enter the amount that was taxable and included in the Adjusted Gross Income.

## Section 4: Student Information

Most of Section 4 asks for the same information about the student as Section 3 asks about the parents. Therefore, we will cover only those questions for which additional clarification is appropriate.

**Paper FAFSA Question 94** asks, “How many people are in your household?” The applicant should include the people listed in the note accompanying the question. Additionally, the student’s unborn child may be counted if that child will be born on or before June 30, 2011, and the student will provide more than half of the child’s support.

**Paper FAFSA Question 95** asks, “How many people in your (and your spouse’s) household will be college students between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011?” The student should count himself or herself. The student may include others in the household only if they will attend at least half-time in 2010–11. Furthermore, they must be attending a postsecondary institution that is eligible to participate in the federal student aid programs.

## Colleges to Receive Information (Paper FAFSA Step Six)

**Purpose:** These questions collect information about which postsecondary schools the student is interested in attending. The Central Processing System (CPS) will send the student’s information to each school listed.

**Federal School Codes and corresponding housing plan (Q102)** These questions ask the student to list schools the student is interested in attending. The paper

and PDF versions of the FAFSA allow the applicant to list four schools. *FAFSA on the Web* has space for 10 schools and allows the student to search for the school by name or by federal school code (see below). For each school, the student indicates whether he or she expects to live on campus, off campus, or with his or her parent(s), because housing costs are part of the cost of attendance to be determined by the school and, therefore, affect the amount of financial aid that the student can receive at that school.

To find out whether a school participates in the federal student aid programs, a student can search for the school on the federal school codes list at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or call the Federal Student Aid Information Center (see inside front cover of this handbook). If the student wants information sent to more than 10 schools, he or she will have to wait until the FAFSA is processed before changing the schools listed. Part 2 of this handbook describes how a student can add or change schools on the list.

### Note:

*The CPS will send data to no more than 10 schools at a time for one student. For example, if a student originally listed 10 schools on the application, then replaced some or all 10 schools with new schools, then updated or corrected information on the Student Aid Report or FAFSA on the Web, only the remaining set of schools would automatically receive the updated or corrected data.*

### Important Note:

*If the student or his or her family paid a fee for someone to fill out the FAFSA or to advise the student on how to fill it out, that person is considered a “preparer” and must complete Questions 105–107.*

### DID YOU KNOW ...

**At the back of this handbook, we’ve provided a series of handouts on perforated pages for you to copy and distribute. The handouts cover topics from reasons to go to college, to myths about student aid, to identity theft. Check out Appendix E for the full selection.**





# APPENDIX A:

## 2010–11 FAFSA on the Web Worksheet

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*The FAFSA on the Web Worksheet is designed for applicants who want a preview of the questions they'll be asked on the online application and perhaps wish to jot down their answers on paper before applying online. The order of questions on the worksheet follows that of FAFSA on the Web<sup>SM</sup>, which differs from the paper FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>. Therefore, to avoid confusion, we strongly recommend that students not use paper FAFSAs to prepare for FAFSA on the Web.*

*The worksheet is available in PDF at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/worksheet](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/worksheet) for downloading and printing—or you might choose to e-mail it directly to your students. For information about ordering hard copies of the worksheet, see “Ordering Publications and Videos” on page 48.*

*Feedback about the worksheet is welcome at [fotworksheets@ed.gov](mailto:fotworksheets@ed.gov).*

**Note:**

*The worksheet is not an application and cannot be submitted to the FAFSA processor. A student without access to the Internet should use an official paper FAFSA. To see what the 2010–11 FAFSA looks like, visit [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).*

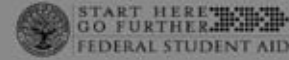








2010–2011  
FAFSA ON THE WEB WORKSHEET  
[www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)



## DO NOT MAIL THIS WORKSHEET.

You must complete and submit a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) to apply for federal student aid and to apply for most state and college aid. Applying online with *FAFSA on the Web* at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) is faster and easier than using a paper FAFSA.

This worksheet has been designed to provide a preview of the questions that you may be asked on *FAFSA on the Web*. Write down notes to help you easily complete your FAFSA anytime after January 1, 2010.

See the table to the right for state deadlines. Check with your high school counselor or your college's financial aid administrator about other deadlines.

- **This Worksheet is optional and should only be completed if you plan to use FAFSA on the Web.**
- Sections in purple are for parent information.
- **This Worksheet does not include all the questions from the FAFSA. The questions that are included are ordered as they appear on FAFSA on the Web. When you are online you may be able to skip some questions based on your answers to earlier questions.**

### Apply Faster—Sign your FAFSA with a Federal Student Aid PIN.

If you do not have a PIN, you can apply for one at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). Your PIN allows you to electronically sign when you submit your FAFSA. If you are providing parent information, one parent must also sign your FAFSA. To sign electronically, your parent should also apply for a PIN.

You do not have to pay to get help or submit your FAFSA. Submit your FAFSA for **free** online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Federal Student Aid provides **free** help online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) or you can call 1-800-4-FED-AID. TTY users (hearing impaired) may call 1-800-730-8913.

#### NOTES:

#### STATE AID DEADLINES

Check with your financial aid administrator for these states and territories:

AL, AS \*, AZ, CO, FM \*, GA, GU \*, HI \*, MH \*, MP \*, NC, NE, NM, NV \*, PR, PW \*, SD \*, TX \*, UT, VA \*, VI \*, VT \*, WA, WI and WY \*.

**Pay attention to the symbols that may be listed after your state deadline.**

AK	April 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
AR	Academic Challenge - June 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) Workforce Grant - Contact the financial aid office. Higher Education Opportunity Grant - June 1, 2010 (fall term) ( <i>date received</i> ) - November 1, 2010 (spring term) ( <i>date received</i> )
CA	Initial awards - March 2, 2010 + * Additional community college awards - September 2, 2010 ( <i>date postmarked</i> ) + *
CT	February 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) # *
DC	June 30, 2010 ( <i>date received by state</i> ) # *
DE	April 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
FL	May 15, 2010 ( <i>date processed</i> )
IA	July 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
ID	Opportunity Grant - March 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) # *
IL	As soon as possible after 1/1/2010. Awards made until funds are depleted.
IN	March 10, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
KS	April 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) # *
KY	March 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) #
LA	July 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
MA	May 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) #
MD	March 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
ME	May 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
MI	March 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
MN	30 days after term starts ( <i>date received</i> )
MO	April 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) #
MS	MTAG and MESG Grants - September 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) # HELP Scholarship - March 31, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) #
MT	March 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) #
ND	March 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
NH	May 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
NJ	2009-2010 Tuition Aid Grant recipients - June 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) All other applicants - October 1, 2010, fall & spring terms ( <i>date received</i> ) - March 1, 2011, spring term only ( <i>date received</i> )
NY	May 1, 2011 ( <i>date received</i> ) + *
OH	October 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> )
OK	April 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) #
OR	OSAC Scholarship - March 1, 2010 Oregon Opportunity Grant - Contact the financial aid office.
PA	All 2009-2010 State Grant recipients & all non-2009-2010 State Grant recipients in degree program - May 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) * All other applicants - August 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) *
RI	March 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) #
SC	Tuition Grants - June 30, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) SC Commission on Higher Education - no deadline
TN	State Grant - February 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) # State Lottery - September 1, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) #
WV	April 15, 2010 ( <i>date received</i> ) # *

# For priority consideration, submit application by date specified.

+ Applicants encouraged to obtain proof of mailing.

\* Additional form may be required.

STATE AID DEADLINES





SECTION 1 - STUDENT INFORMATION

After you are online, you can add up to ten colleges on your FAFSA. The colleges will receive the information from your processed FAFSA.

Student's Last Name	First Name	Social Security Number
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<b>Student Citizenship Status</b> (check one of the following)													
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. citizen (U.S. national)	<input type="checkbox"/> Neither citizen nor eligible noncitizen												
<input type="checkbox"/> Eligible noncitizen (Enter your Alien Registration Number in the box to the right.)	<b>Your Alien Registration Number</b>												
<p><b>Generally, you are an eligible noncitizen if you are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A permanent U.S. resident with a Permanent Resident Card (I-551); or</li> <li>• A conditional permanent resident (I-551C); or</li> <li>• The holder of an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from the Department of Homeland Security showing any of the following designations: "Refugee," "Asylum Granted," "Parolee" (I-94 confirms paroled for a minimum of one year and status has not expired), "Victim of human trafficking," T-Visa holder (T-1, T-2, T-3, etc.) or "Cuban-Haitian Entrant."</li> </ul>													
<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; text-align: center;">A</td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>		A											
A													

<b>Student Marital Status</b> (check one of the following)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Married or remarried	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced or widowed
<b>You will be asked to provide information about your spouse if you are married or remarried.</b>			

<b>Selective Service Registration</b> If you are male and 25 or younger, you can use the FAFSA to register with Selective Service.
---

<b>Student Aid Eligibility Drug Convictions</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> I have never attended college	<input type="checkbox"/> I have never received federal student aid	<input type="checkbox"/> I have never had a drug conviction
<b>If you did not check any of these boxes, you will be asked more questions online.</b>		

<b>Highest school your father completed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle school/Jr. high	<input type="checkbox"/> College or beyond
	<input type="checkbox"/> High school	<input type="checkbox"/> Other/unknown
<b>Highest school your mother completed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle school/Jr. high	<input type="checkbox"/> College or beyond
	<input type="checkbox"/> High school	<input type="checkbox"/> Other/unknown

SECTION 2 - STUDENT DEPENDENCY STATUS

If you can check ANY of the following boxes, you will not have to provide parental information. Skip to page 4. If you check NONE of the following boxes, you will be asked to provide parental information. Go to the next page.

<input type="checkbox"/> I was born before January 1, 1987	<input type="checkbox"/> I am married	<input type="checkbox"/> I will be working on a master's or doctorate program (e.g., MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate)	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/> I am a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/> I have children and I provide more than half of their support	
<input type="checkbox"/> Since I turned age 13, both of my parents were deceased	<input type="checkbox"/> I was in foster care since turning age 13	<input type="checkbox"/> I have dependents (other than children or my spouse) who live with me and I provide more than half of their support	
<input type="checkbox"/> I was a dependent or ward of the court since turning age 13	<input type="checkbox"/> I am currently or I was an emancipated minor	<input type="checkbox"/> I am currently or I was in legal guardianship	<input type="checkbox"/> I am homeless or I am at risk of being homeless

<b>NOTES:</b>
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**SECTION 3 - PARENT INFORMATION**

**Who is considered a parent?** "Parent" refers to a biological or adoptive parent. Grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, older siblings, and uncles or aunts are **not** considered parents on this form unless they have legally adopted you. In case of divorce or separation, give information about the parent you lived with most in the last 12 months. If you did not live with one parent more than the other, give information about the parent who provided you the most financial support during the last 12 months or during the most recent year you received support. If your divorced or widowed parent has remarried, also provide information about your stepparent.

**Providing your father's information? You will need:**

- Father's/Stepfather's Social Security Number
- Father's/Stepfather's name
- Father's/Stepfather's date of birth
- Check here if your father/stepfather is a dislocated worker

**Providing your mother's information? You will need:**

- Mother's/Stepmother's Social Security Number
- Mother's/Stepmother's name
- Mother's/Stepmother's date of birth
- Check here if your mother/stepmother is a dislocated worker

**Did your parents file or will they file a 2009 income tax return?**

- My parents have already completed a tax return
- My parents will file, but have not yet completed a tax return
- My parents are not going to file an income tax return

**Your parents will need their tax returns and/or W-2 forms to complete the FAFSA.**

**What was your parents' adjusted gross income for 2009?**

Skip this question if your parents did not file taxes. Adjusted gross income is on IRS Form 1040—Line 37; 1040A—line 21; or 1040EZ—line 4.

\$

The following questions ask about earnings (wages, salaries, tips, etc.) in 2009. Answer the questions whether or not a tax return was filed. This information may be on the W-2 forms, or on the IRS Form 1040—Line 7 + 12 + 18 + Box 14 of IRS Schedule K-1 (Form 1065); 1040A—line 7; or 1040EZ—line 1

**How much did your father/stepfather earn from working in 2009?**

\$

**How much did your mother/stepmother earn from working in 2009?**

\$

**In 2008 or 2009, did anyone in your parents' household receive:**

- Supplemental Security Income
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Food Stamps
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Free or Reduced Price School Lunch

Note: Food Stamps and TANF may have a different name in your state. Call 1-800-4-FED-AID to find out the name of the state's program.

**Did your parents have any of the following items in 2009?**

Check all that apply. Once online, you may be asked to report amounts paid or received by your parents.

**Additional Financial Information**

- Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits
- Child support paid
- Taxable earnings from work-study, assistantships or fellowships
- Grant and scholarship aid reported to the IRS
- Combat pay or special combat pay
- Cooperative education program earnings

**Untaxed Income**

- Payments to tax-deferred pension and savings plans
- Child support received
- IRA deductions and payments to self-employed SEP, SIMPLE and Keogh
- Tax exempt interest income
- Untaxed portions of IRA distributions
- Untaxed portions of pensions
- Housing, food and other living allowances paid to members of the military, clergy and others
- Veterans noneducation benefits
- Other untaxed income not reported, such as workers' compensation or disability

**Your parents may be asked to provide more information about their assets.**

**Your parents may need to report the net worth of their current businesses and/or investment farms.**

**NOTES:**





SECTION 4 - STUDENT INFORMATION

**Did you file or will you file a 2009 income tax return?**

- I have already completed my tax return
- I will file, but I have not completed my tax return
- I'm not going to file an income tax return

**You will need your tax returns and/or W-2 forms to complete the FAFSA.**

**What was your (and spouse's) adjusted gross income for 2009?**

Skip this question if you or your spouse did not file taxes. Adjusted gross income is on IRS Form 1040—Line 37; 1040A—line 21; or 1040EZ—line 4.

\$

The following questions ask about earnings (wages, salaries, tips, etc.) in 2009. Answer the questions whether or not a tax return was filed. This information may be on the W-2 forms, or on the IRS Form 1040—Line 7 + 12 + 18 + Box 14 of IRS Schedule K-1 (Form 1065); 1040A—line 7; or 1040EZ—line 1.

**How much did you earn from working in 2009?**

- Check here if you are a dislocated worker

\$

**How much did your spouse earn from working in 2009?**

- Check here if your spouse is a dislocated worker

\$

**In 2008 or 2009, did anyone in your household receive:**

- Supplemental Security Income
- Food Stamps
- Free or Reduced Price School Lunch
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Note: Food Stamps and TANF may have a different name in your state. Call 1-800-4-FED-AID to find out the name of the state's program.

**Did you or your spouse have any of the following items in 2009?**

Check all that apply. Once online you may be asked to report amounts paid or received.

**Additional Financial Information**

- Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits
- Child support paid
- Taxable earnings from work-study, assistantships or fellowships
- Grant and scholarship aid reported to the IRS
- Combat pay or special combat pay
- Cooperative education program earnings

**Untaxed Income**

- Payments to tax-deferred pension and savings plans
- Child support received
- IRA deductions and payments to self-employed SEP, SIMPLE and Keogh
- Tax exempt interest income
- Untaxed portions of IRA distributions

- Untaxed portions of pensions
- Housing, food and other living allowances paid to members of the military, clergy and others
- Veterans noneducation benefits
- Other untaxed income not reported, such as workers' compensation or disability
- Money received or paid on your behalf

**You may be asked to provide more information about your (and spouse's) assets. You may need to report the net worth of current businesses and/or investment farms.**

**NOTES:**

**Do not mail this Worksheet. Go to [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) to complete and submit your application.**

For more information on federal student aid, visit [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov). You can also talk with your college's financial aid office about other types of student aid that may be available.



# APPENDIX B:

## Sources of Additional Information

### Telephone Help: The Federal Student Aid Information Center

For information on any federal student aid program discussed in this handbook, you or your students may call the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC):

**1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**—a toll-free number

**319-337-5665**—for those (e.g., international callers) without access to the toll-free number

TTY: **1-800-730-8913**—a toll-free number for the hearing impaired

The FSAIC helps callers by

- helping complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>),
- resetting the student's *FAFSA on the Web*<sup>SM</sup> password if the student forgets it,
- explaining the *Student Aid Report* (SAR) produced from the FAFSA and how to make corrections,
- checking on the processing status of the FAFSA,
- changing the student's address or the schools that receive the student's information (the student will need the Data Release Number [DRN] from his or her SAR or *SAR Acknowledgement*),
- explaining who is eligible for federal student aid,
- explaining how federal student aid is awarded and paid, and
- mailing requested publications.

The FSAIC is NOT able to

- make policy,

- expedite the federal student aid application process,
- discuss a student's federal student aid file with an unauthorized person, or
- influence an individual school's financial aid policies.

#### DID YOU KNOW ...

Identity theft is a growing problem. Typical ways a student becomes a victim include leaving personal information lying around the dorm room or failing to shred credit card offers before throwing them away. We at the U.S. Department of Education have worked hard to ensure that information sent over our Web sites is secure. However, students should do their part as well. Make your students aware of the problem and how to keep their information safe: Turn to Appendix E of this handbook and photocopy and distribute the handout titled "Student Aid and Identity Theft: Safeguard Your Student Aid Information."

## Useful Web Sites

### Sites for Students

#### Student Aid on the Web

Our Web site, Student Aid on the Web, offers college-bound students and their families a single source of free information on choosing a career, selecting a school, and identifying resources to pay for school. Comprehensive career and college search tools provide career choices and a list of postsecondary schools based on the user's interests and preferences. Another popular tool is the free scholarship



search. With the feature “My FSA,” the user can create a personalized folder to record interests, career and college search results, and any relevant personal information. The user can then track his or her progress in the college planning and application process, prepopulate fields on the FAFSA and *FAFSA4caster*, and compare award letters from schools. Students can access My FSA at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/myfsa](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/myfsa).

## Other Student Sites

- **College.gov**—This new site provides relevant, comprehensive information about applying to, attending, and graduating from college. This “how-to” site features first-person accounts of students who overcame challenges such as peer pressure, lack of family support, and financial barriers. Young people who may not have considered higher education a viable option will be engaged, informed, and inspired. The site will constantly be enhanced with interactive tools and social networking capabilities to ensure that it is never out of date or out of answers.
- *FAFSA on the Web*—The official online application is at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- PIN site—Students can apply for the personal identification number needed to sign the online FAFSA at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).
- Federal school codes (to be entered on the FAFSA) can be found at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- Early awareness page on Student Aid on the Web—A resource for students in middle school and junior high. It explains why students should consider college, how to prepare academically, and how to pay for college. The text is at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/early](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/early).
- *College Navigator* allows the student to search for more than 7,000 colleges and universities by name, location, program, degree offerings, or a combination of criteria. It is at [www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator](http://www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator).
- **students.gov**—The site has a multitude of links to help students plan for their education and find financial aid. Included are links to state financial aid sources and to federal government agencies that provide funds for college. The site is at [www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov).
- Education and training for individuals with disabilities—try these sites:
  - Vocational rehabilitation state agency list at [www.ed.gov/erod/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_id=svr](http://www.ed.gov/erod/org_list.cfm?category_id=svr)
  - Information about educational and other assistance at [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov)
- Tax Information for Students—Has federal income tax credit information and other useful information for students at [www.irs.gov/individuals/students/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/individuals/students/index.html).
- AmeriCorps—Details about a variety of national service options and how students can earn financial awards to be used for education are at [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org).
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services financial aid for college or professional school is described at [www.hhs.gov/grants](http://www.hhs.gov/grants).
- GI Bill benefits—The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offers extensive information about education benefits for veterans and their families at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov). These programs are detailed at these VA sites:
  - Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty: [www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch30/ch30\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch30/ch30_pamphlet.pdf)
  - Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve: [www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch1606/ch1606\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch1606/ch1606_pamphlet.pdf)
  - Dependents’ Educational Assistance Program (DEA): [www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch35/ch35\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch35/ch35_pamphlet.pdf)
  - Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP): [www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch32/ch32\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch32/ch32_pamphlet.pdf)
  - Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP): [www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch1607/ch1607\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch1607/ch1607_pamphlet.pdf)
  - Post-9/11 GI Bill: [www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch33/ch33\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/ch33/ch33_pamphlet.pdf)
- U.S. Army loan repayment program—Visit [www.goarmy.com/benefits/education.jsp](http://www.goarmy.com/benefits/education.jsp).
- Navy education programs—Visit [www.navy.com/benefits/education](http://www.navy.com/benefits/education).



- Air Force education programs—Visit [www.airforce.com/opportunities/enlisted/education](http://www.airforce.com/opportunities/enlisted/education) or [www.airforce.com/opportunities/officer/education](http://www.airforce.com/opportunities/officer/education).
- Marine Corps education programs—Visit [www.marines.com/main/index/quality\\_citizens/benefit\\_of\\_services/education](http://www.marines.com/main/index/quality_citizens/benefit_of_services/education).
- State higher education agencies—A list is at [www.ed.gov/erod/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_cd=sgt](http://www.ed.gov/erod/org_list.cfm?category_cd=sgt).
- Scholarship scam avoidance—A student considering using a for-fee scholarship advice service can research the company on the Better Business Bureau Web site at [www.bbb.com](http://www.bbb.com).
- Scholarship scam complaints—A student who has been a victim of financial aid fraud should complain to all of the following entities:
  - The Better Business Bureau at [www.bbb.com](http://www.bbb.com)
  - The Federal Trade Commission at [www.ftc.gov/scholarshipcams](http://www.ftc.gov/scholarshipcams)
  - The U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General at [www.ed.gov/misused](http://www.ed.gov/misused)
  - The U.S. Postal Inspection Service Fraud Complaint Unit (if the company’s offer arrived by mail) at <http://postalinspectors.uspis.gov>
  - A state attorney general’s office, which will be listed at [www.naag.org](http://www.naag.org)
- Selective Service System—Draft registration and information about Selective Service is available at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov).
- *Occupational Outlook Handbook*—An encyclopedia of careers describing a range of occupations. Students can learn what to expect from a job, including the nature of the work, training needed, and earnings. A free search is at [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco).
- FAFSA demonstration site—Allows counselors to increase their own understanding of *FAFSA on the Web* and to show it to students and parents before they apply. When you visit the site, you will be prompted for a user name. Enter **eddemo**. The password is **fafsatest**. The site is at <http://fafsademo.test.ed.gov>.
- FSA COACH is a comprehensive introductory Web-based course that teaches the concepts and procedures involved in managing the federal student aid programs. To access FSA COACH, go to [www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/fsacoach](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/fsacoach). (The URL is case-sensitive.)
- FSAPubs—Provides counselors a single order point for all Federal Student Aid publications, offering single or bulk orders. See “Free Informational Materials” on page 48 for more information. FSAPubs is at [www.FSAPubs.gov](http://www.FSAPubs.gov).
- TRIO program information—The TRIO programs help prepare disadvantaged students for successful entry into, retention in, and completion of postsecondary education. TRIO information is at [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html).
- GEAR UP information—GEAR UP is an early-intervention initiative designed to encourage low-income students to have high expectations, stay in school, study hard, and take the right courses to prepare for college. Learn more about GEAR UP at [www.ed.gov/gearup](http://www.ed.gov/gearup).
- Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP)—A library of federal student aid information, geared toward college financial aid administrators. High school, TRIO, and GEAR UP counselors who regularly help students apply for aid might find the *Federal Student Aid Handbook* particularly useful, especially in finding detailed information about student eligibility criteria. IFAP is at [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov).

## Sites for Counselors and Mentors

- FSA for Counselors—Provides federal student aid information especially for middle school, high school, and TRIO counselors. Offers access to publications, including a PDF of the *Federal School Code List*; training information; announcements; a PowerPoint financial aid presentation; and ways to promote federal student aid and college access. Visit the site at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).

### DID YOU KNOW ...

If you work with Spanish-speaking students or parents and need to produce written informational materials for them, you can access an English-Spanish glossary of terms. The glossary, developed by a consortium of higher education organizations, aims to promote greater consistency in the vocabulary used in Spanish-language materials about higher education. You can access the glossary at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).



## Sites for Parents

- The Parent page at Student Aid on the Web includes information on saving for college, borrowing for college, and tax benefits for education. The page is at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/parent](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/parent).
- College.gov's page for parents tells the parent how to support his or her child as they figure out together whether the child should or can go to college. Parents can access the page at [www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov) by clicking on "parents/family."
- *Managing the Price of College* shows how families in various income groups manage to pay for college. This online resource is at [www.ed.gov/pubs/collegecosts](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/collegecosts).
- The College Savings Plans Network provides a guide to state college savings plans and prepaid tuition programs and their tax implications at [www.collegesavings.org](http://www.collegesavings.org).
- The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans has a bilingual site with information for parents on college preparation. Send your students' parents to [www.yesican.gov](http://www.yesican.gov) or [www.yosipuedo.gov](http://www.yosipuedo.gov).
- The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute has created a site with sections for high school students, college students, and parents. The parent section is available in both English and Spanish and includes information on planning for the child's education. Free publications for students and parents can be ordered from the site: [www.chciyouth.gov](http://www.chciyouth.gov).

## Free Informational Materials

### Ordering Publications and Videos

Each year, the *Counselors and Mentors Handbook* is shipped automatically to high schools, TRIO programs, and GEAR UP programs on the Federal Student Aid mailing list. We no longer ship other items automatically. Instead, you must order the quantity you need.

The publications listed below are available for counselors and mentors to order at the Federal Student Aid Publications Ordering System (FSAPubs) Web site at [www.FSAPubs.gov](http://www.FSAPubs.gov).

At the site, you will be asked for your ML (mailing list) number, which you can find on the mailing label of any shipment you receive from FSAPubs. If you don't know your ML number, call **1-800-394-7084** to find out what it is. If you do not have Internet access, you may call that same number to place orders for publications.

Students may order publications for themselves at [www.edpubs.gov](http://www.edpubs.gov) or by contacting the Federal Student Aid Information Center:

FSAIC  
P.O. Box 84  
Washington, DC 20044

**1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**

**TTY: 1-800-730-8913**

Number for inquirers without access to the toll-free number: **319-337-5665**

### Publications and Videos for Counselors

- The *Counselors and Mentors Handbook* is available on FSAPubs so you can order additional copies for your colleagues. Note that there will usually be a limit of 10 copies; if you need more than 10 copies, please e-mail [orders@FSAPubs.gov](mailto:orders@FSAPubs.gov) with your request. The handbook also is available in PDF (in English and Spanish versions) at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).
- *Start Here, Go Further With Federal Student Aid: Money for Education Beyond High School* is a video program split into two parts. The student and parent part explains the federal student aid programs and application process. The counselor and mentor part provides tips on planning a financial aid night, using the counselor Web site, and ordering publications. Each school or organization may order one copy (in DVD or VHS) from FSAPubs. (The English DVD is out of stock.)





You may make copies. We also encourage you to link to the online version of the program via [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/video](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/video).

The video was produced in 2007 and has not been updated due to budgetary constraints. The video does not include the complete list of current dependency status questions but does provide a good introduction to the federal student aid programs and application process. If you plan to show the video to students, we recommend you give them the handout titled “Am I Dependent or Independent?” (available in Appendix E of this handbook).

- *Empiece aquí, y llegará lejos: Dinero para los estudios superiores (Start Here, Go Further: Money for Higher Education)* is a Spanish-language video program following a high school student, his mother, and his cousin as they learn about federal student aid. Order a DVD or VHS tape from FSAPubs or view the program online at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/video](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/video).

- *Save Your Money, Save Your Identity*—A brochure (in English or Spanish) with tips on avoiding scholarship fraud and identity theft and finding free information about financial aid.
- *Federal Student Aid bookmark*—Tells students to visit [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) for information about paying for college and to access the FAFSA. This bookmark, with English text on one side and Spanish on the other, is available only in hard copy (not in PDF). Also available in Braille.
- *Your Federal Student Loans*—A booklet providing detailed information about federal student loans, from deciding how much to borrow to repaying successfully. Available in Braille.
- *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet*—A preapplication worksheet for those who are more comfortable preparing their FAFSA responses on paper before entering them on *FAFSA on the Web*. Available in English, Spanish, and Braille.

## Publications for Students

The following student publications are available in hard copy from FSAPubs or (unless otherwise indicated) online at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs):

- *College Preparation Checklist*—A document (in English, Spanish, and Braille) listing what to do to prepare for college. **NEW** Sections for elementary and secondary school students and their parents, as well as adult students, explain how to prepare academically and financially. Brief information about federal student aid, the FAFSA, and looking for scholarships is also included. References to Web sites direct students and parents to more detailed discussions of the topics in the checklist. Recommended as the foundation publication for your students.
- *Funding Education Beyond High School: The Guide to Federal Student Aid*—A booklet, available in English, Spanish, and Braille, providing a comprehensive description of the federal student aid programs and how to apply for them. Recommended for students and parents who need in-depth information about the federal student aid programs.





# APPENDIX C:

## Directory of State Agencies

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Listed below for each state are the agencies responsible for administering state financial aid programs. You should encourage students to apply for any available state aid as well as federal aid and private scholarships. There also is a list of state education agency contact information at [www.ed.gov/erod/org\\_list.cfm?category\\_cd=sgt](http://www.ed.gov/erod/org_list.cfm?category_cd=sgt).

### Alabama

Alabama Commission on Higher Education  
Toll-free: 1-800-960-7773  
Web site: [www.ache.state.al.us](http://www.ache.state.al.us)

### Alaska

Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education  
Toll-free: 1-800-441-2962  
Web site: [www.alaskaadvantage.state.ak.us](http://www.alaskaadvantage.state.ak.us)

### Arizona

Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education  
Phone: 602-258-2435  
Web site: [www.azhighered.org](http://www.azhighered.org)

### Arkansas

Arkansas Department of Higher Education  
Toll-free: 1-800-54-STUDY (1-800-547-8839)  
Web site: [www.adhe.edu/students/pages/students.aspx#1](http://www.adhe.edu/students/pages/students.aspx#1)

### California

California Student Aid Commission  
Toll-free: 1-888-224-7268  
Web site: [www.csac.ca.gov](http://www.csac.ca.gov)

### Colorado

Colorado Department of Higher Education  
Phone: call individual colleges  
Web site: <http://higher.colorado.gov/finance/financialaid>

### Connecticut

Connecticut Department of Higher Education  
Phone: 860-947-1855  
Web site: [www.ctdhe.org](http://www.ctdhe.org)

### Delaware

Delaware Higher Education Commission  
Toll-free: 1-800-292-7935  
Web site: [www.doe.state.de.us/high-ed](http://www.doe.state.de.us/high-ed)

### District of Columbia

Office of the State Superintendent of Education  
Phone: 202-727-2824  
Web site: [www.seo.dc.gov](http://www.seo.dc.gov)

### Florida

Office of Student Financial Assistance,  
Florida Department of Education  
Toll-free: 1-888-827-2004  
Web site: [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org)

### Georgia

Georgia Student Finance Commission  
Toll-free: 1-800-505-4732  
Web site: [www.gsfc.org](http://www.gsfc.org)

### Hawaii

University of Hawaii System  
Phone: 808-956-7251  
Web site: [www.hawaii.edu/admissions/aid.html](http://www.hawaii.edu/admissions/aid.html)

### Idaho

Idaho State Board of Education  
Phone: 208-332-1574  
Web site: [www.boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships](http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov/scholarships)

### Illinois

Illinois Student Assistance Commission  
Toll-free: 1-800-899-4722  
Web site: [www.collegezone.com](http://www.collegezone.com)





## Indiana

State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana  
Toll-free: **1-888-528-4719**  
Web site: [www.in.gov/ssaci](http://www.in.gov/ssaci)

## Iowa

Iowa College Student Aid Commission  
Toll-free in state: **1-877-272-4456**  
Phone (out of state): **515-725-3400**  
Web site: [www.iowacollegeaid.org](http://www.iowacollegeaid.org)

## Kansas

Kansas Board of Regents  
Phone: **785-296-3421**  
Web site: [www.kansasregents.org](http://www.kansasregents.org)

## Kentucky

Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority  
Toll-free: **1-800-928-8926**  
Web site: [www.kheaa.com](http://www.kheaa.com)

## Louisiana

Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance  
Toll-free: **1-800-259-5626**  
Web site: [www.osfa.state.la.us](http://www.osfa.state.la.us)

## Maine

Finance Authority of Maine  
Toll-free: **1-800-228-3734**  
Web site: [www.famemaine.com](http://www.famemaine.com)

## Maryland

Maryland Higher Education Commission  
Toll-free: **1-800-974-1024**  
Web site: [www.mhec.state.md.us](http://www.mhec.state.md.us)

## Massachusetts

Massachusetts Board of Higher Education,  
Office of Student Financial Assistance  
Phone: **617-727-9420**  
Web site: [www.osfa.mass.edu](http://www.osfa.mass.edu)

## Michigan

Student Financial Services Bureau  
Toll-free: **1-800-642-5626, ext. 37054**  
Web site: [www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid](http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid)

## Minnesota

Minnesota Office of Higher Education  
Toll-free: **1-800-657-3866**  
Web site: [www.ohe.state.mn.us](http://www.ohe.state.mn.us)

## Mississippi

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning  
Toll-free: **1-800-327-2980**  
Web site: [www.mississippi.edu/riseupms/financialaid-state.php](http://www.mississippi.edu/riseupms/financialaid-state.php)

## Missouri

Missouri Department of Higher Education  
Toll-free: **1-800-473-6757**  
Web site: [www.dhe.mo.gov](http://www.dhe.mo.gov)

## Montana

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education  
Toll-free: **1-800-537-7508**  
Web site: [www.mgslp.state.mt.us](http://www.mgslp.state.mt.us)

## Nebraska

Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary  
Education  
Phone: **402-471-0032**  
Web site: [www.ccpe.state.ne.us](http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us)

## Nevada

Office of the State Treasurer  
Toll-free: **1-888-477-2667**  
Web site: [www.nevadatreasurer.gov](http://www.nevadatreasurer.gov)

## New Hampshire

New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission  
Phone: **603-271-2555**  
Web site: [www.nh.gov/postsecondary/financial/index.html](http://www.nh.gov/postsecondary/financial/index.html)

## New Jersey

New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority  
Toll-free: **1-800-792-8670**  
Web site: [www.hesaa.org](http://www.hesaa.org)

## New Mexico

New Mexico Higher Education Department  
Toll-free: **1-800-279-9777**  
Web site: [www.hed.state.nm.us](http://www.hed.state.nm.us)

## New York

New York State Higher Education Services Corporation  
Toll-free: **1-888-697-4372**  
Web site: [www.hesc.org](http://www.hesc.org)

## North Carolina

College Foundation of North Carolina  
Toll-free: **1-866-866-2362**  
Web site: [www.cfnc.org](http://www.cfnc.org)



## North Dakota

North Dakota University System  
Phone: 701-328-2960  
Web site: [www.ndus.edu](http://www.ndus.edu)

## Ohio

Ohio Board of Regents  
Toll-free: 1-888-833-1133 (for information specifically about Ohio programs)  
Toll-free: 1-877-428-8246 (for information about other sources of financial aid)  
Web site: [www.regents.ohio.gov/sgs/index.php](http://www.regents.ohio.gov/sgs/index.php)

## Oklahoma

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
Toll-free: 1-800-858-1840  
Web site: [www.okhighered.org](http://www.okhighered.org)

## Oregon

Oregon Student Assistance Commission  
Phone: 541-687-7400  
Toll-free: 1-800-452-8807  
Web site: [www.osac.state.or.us](http://www.osac.state.or.us)

## Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency  
Toll-free: 1-800-692-7392  
Web site: [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org)

## Rhode Island

Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority  
Toll-free: 1-800-922-9855  
Web site: [www.riheaa.org/borrowers](http://www.riheaa.org/borrowers)

## South Carolina

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education  
Toll-free: 803-737-2260  
Web site: [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov)

## South Dakota

South Dakota Board of Regents  
Phone: 605-773-3455  
Web site: [www.sdbor.edu/student/prospective](http://www.sdbor.edu/student/prospective)

## Tennessee

Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation  
Toll-free: 1-800-342-1663  
Web site: [www.collegepaystn.com](http://www.collegepaystn.com)

## Texas

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;  
Texas Financial Aid Information Center  
Toll-free: 1-888-311-8881  
Web site: [www.collegefortexans.com](http://www.collegefortexans.com)

## Utah

Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority  
Toll-free: 1-877-336-7378  
Web site: [www.uheaa.org](http://www.uheaa.org)

## Vermont

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
Toll-free: 1-800-642-3177  
Web site: [www.vsac.org](http://www.vsac.org)

## Virginia

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia  
Toll-free: 1-877-516-0138  
Web site: [www.schev.edu](http://www.schev.edu)

## Washington

Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board  
Toll-free: 1-888-535-0747  
Web site: [www.hecb.wa.gov](http://www.hecb.wa.gov)

## West Virginia

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Toll-free: 1-888-825-5707  
Web site: [www.hepc.wvnet.edu](http://www.hepc.wvnet.edu)

## Wisconsin

Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board  
Phone: 608-267-2206  
Web site: [www.heab.wisconsin.gov](http://www.heab.wisconsin.gov)

## Wyoming

Wyoming Department of Education  
Phone: 307-777-7690  
Web site: [www.k12.wy.us/grants.asp](http://www.k12.wy.us/grants.asp)





## U.S. Territories

### American Samoa

American Samoa Community College

Phone: 011-684-699-9155

Web site: [www.ascc.as](http://www.ascc.as)

### Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Northern Marianas College Financial Aid Office

Phone: 011-670-234-5498

Web site: [www.nmcnet.edu](http://www.nmcnet.edu)

### Federated States of Micronesia

Federated States of Micronesia Department of Education

Phone: 011-691-320-2609

Web site: [www.literacynet.org/micronesia/doe.html](http://www.literacynet.org/micronesia/doe.html)

### Guam

University of Guam

Phone: 011-671-735-2288

Web site: [www.uog.edu](http://www.uog.edu)

### Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education

Phone: 787-641-7100

Web site: [www.ces.gobierno.pr](http://www.ces.gobierno.pr)

### Republic of Palau

Republic of Palau Ministry of Education

Phone: 011-680-488-2471

Web site: [www.palaumoe.net](http://www.palaumoe.net)

### Republic of the Marshall Islands

Marshall Islands Scholarship Grant and Loan Board

Phone: 011-692-625-5770

Web site: [www.rmischolarship.net](http://www.rmischolarship.net)

### Virgin Islands

Virgin Islands Department of Education

Phone: 340-774-0100

Web site: [www.doe.vi](http://www.doe.vi)



# APPENDIX D:

## Glossary

**Agreement to Serve.** An agreement under which a student receiving a TEACH Grant commits to the specific obligation to teach for four complete years in a designated high-need field at a low-income elementary or secondary school within eight years of completing or ceasing enrollment in a TEACH-Grant-eligible program.

**automatic-zero Expected Family Contribution (EFC).**

Low-income applicants who file simplified tax returns (1040A, 1040EZ) or receive benefits from Supplemental Security Income; Food Stamps; Free or Reduced-Price Lunch; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) will receive an EFC of zero and do not need to supply income or asset information on the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>).

**award year.** The time beginning on July 1 of one year and extending to June 30 of the next year. Funding for federal grants and campus-based programs is provided on the basis of the award year—for example, a student is paid out of funds designated for a particular award year, such as the 2010–11 award year.

**base year.** For analyzing student financial need, the base year is the calendar year preceding the award year. For instance, 2009 is the base year used for the 2010–11 award year. The *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) uses family income from the base year because it is more accurate and easier to verify than projected-year income.

**campus-based programs.** The term that applies to three federal student aid programs administered on campus by eligible institutions of postsecondary education. These programs are

- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) Program,

- Federal Perkins Loan Program, and
- Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program.

**Central Processing System (CPS).** The processing facility for the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA). The CPS

- receives student information,
- calculates a student's official Expected Family Contribution (EFC),
- performs several eligibility database matches,
- produces *Student Aid Reports* (SARs) and *SAR Acknowledgements*, and
- produces *Institutional Student Information Records* (ISIRs).

**citizen/eligible noncitizen.** To receive federal student aid, a student must be a

- U.S. citizen,
- U.S. national (includes natives of American Samoa or Swain's Island), or
- U.S. permanent resident who has an I-151, I-551, or I-551C (Alien Registration Receipt Card).

If a student is not in one of these categories, he or she must have an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) indicating

- “Refugee,”
- “Asylum Granted,”
- “Cuban-Haitian Entrant (Status Pending),”
- “Conditional Entrant” (valid only if issued before April 1, 1980), or
- “Paroled” (must be paroled for at least one year).



A student also may qualify as an eligible noncitizen if he or she holds a T-visa (for victims of human trafficking), or if his or her parent holds a T-1 visa. Please inform the student that the school he or she plans to attend will ask to see the visa and/or certification letter from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

If a student has only a “Notice of Approval to Apply for Permanent Residence” (I-171 or I-464), he or she is not eligible for federal student aid.

If a student is in the U.S. on an F-1 or F-2 student visa, or on a J-1 or J-2 exchange-visitor visa only, he or she can’t get federal student aid. Also, persons with G series visas (pertaining to international organizations) are not eligible for federal student aid.

Citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau are eligible only for certain federal student aid programs. These applicants should check with their schools’ financial aid administrators for more information.

For more information about eligible noncitizen status, contact a college financial aid administrator or refer to the *Student Eligibility* volume of the *Federal Student Aid Handbook* at [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov).

**consolidation loan.** A loan that combines multiple federal student loans into a single loan with one monthly payment. Consolidation loans are available through the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program and the Direct Loan Program. Both allow the borrower to combine different types and amounts of federal student loans to simplify repayment. A consolidation loan pays off the existing loans; the borrower then repays the consolidation loan.

**cost of attendance (COA).** A student’s COA at a postsecondary institution includes

- tuition and fees,
- room and board expenses while attending school,
- allowances for books and supplies (including a reasonable allowance [as determined by the school] for renting or purchasing a personal computer),

- transportation,
- loan fees for federal student loans (if applicable),
- dependent-care costs,
- costs related to a disability, and
- other miscellaneous expenses.

In addition, reasonable costs for a study-abroad program and costs associated with a student’s employment as part of a cooperative education program may be included. The COA is determined by the school, within guidelines established by federal law. The COA is compared to a student’s Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to determine the student’s need for aid ( $COA - EFC = \text{student’s financial need}$ ).

**default.** Failure to repay a loan according to the terms of the promissory note. There can be serious legal consequences for student-loan defaulters.

**default rate.** A percentage calculated each year for a postsecondary school on the basis of the number of former students who have defaulted on Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program and/or Direct Loan Program loans received while attending that school.

**dislocated worker.** In general, a person may be considered a dislocated worker if he or she

- is receiving unemployment benefits due to being laid off or losing a job and is unlikely to return to a previous occupation;
- has been laid off or received a layoff notice from a job;
- was self-employed but is now unemployed due to economic conditions or natural disaster; or
- is a displaced homemaker. A displaced homemaker is generally a person who previously provided unpaid services to the family (e.g., a stay-at-home mother or father), is no longer supported by the husband or wife, is unemployed or underemployed, and is having trouble finding or upgrading employment.

**eligible program.** A course of study that requires a certain minimum number of hours of instruction and period of time and that leads to a degree or certificate at a school participating in one or more of the federal student aid programs described in this handbook. Generally, to get student aid, a student must be enrolled in an eligible program.





**Expected Family Contribution (EFC).** Calculated using a formula established by Congress; an index used to determine how much need-based federal student aid a student may receive. It appears on the *Student Aid Report (SAR)*, *SAR Acknowledgement*, and *Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR)*. For an early estimate of a student's EFC, he or she can use *FAFSA4caster* at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov).

**Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFEL<sup>SM</sup> Program).** The Federal Stafford Loan (subsidized and unsubsidized), Federal PLUS Loan (for parents or graduate or professional students), and Federal Consolidation Loan programs. Funds for these programs are provided by private lenders; the loans are guaranteed by the federal government.

**federal student aid programs.** Programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education:

- Federal Pell Grants
- Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG)
- National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grants (National SMART Grants)
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG)
- Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants
- Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants
- Federal Work-Study (FWS)
- Federal Perkins Loans
- Federal Direct Stafford Loans (both subsidized and unsubsidized)
- Federal Direct PLUS Loans (for parents or graduate/professional students)
- Federal Direct Consolidation Loans
- Federal Stafford Loans (both subsidized and unsubsidized)
- Federal PLUS Loans (for parents or graduate/professional students)
- Federal Consolidation Loans
- Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) Program grants
- Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program (Byrd Program) scholarships

**financial need.** The difference between a student's cost of attendance (COA) at a school and the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). (COA – EFC = student's financial need.)

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).** An application completed and filed by a student who wishes to receive federal student aid. The application collects household and financial information used by the federal government to calculate the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to postsecondary education costs.

**Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR).** An electronic record for schools that contains a student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC), as calculated by the Central Processing System, as well as all the financial and other data submitted by the student on the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*. See also *Student Aid Report (SAR)*.

**need.** See financial need.

**need analysis.** The process of analyzing household and financial information on a student's financial aid application and calculating an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to determine the student's need for financial aid for postsecondary education costs.

**overaward.** Generally, any amount of federal student aid awarded that exceeds a student's financial need.

**overpayment.** Any payment of a federal grant or Federal Perkins Loan that exceeds the amount for which a student was eligible. An overpayment may be the result of an overaward, an error in the cost of attendance (COA) or Expected Family Contribution (EFC), or a student not meeting other eligibility criteria, such as citizenship or enrollment in an eligible program.

**promissory note.** A binding legal document that a borrower signs to get a loan. By signing this note, a borrower promises to repay the loan, with interest, in specified installments. The promissory note also includes any information about

- grace periods,
- deferment or cancellation provisions, and
- a borrower's rights and responsibilities with respect to that loan.



**SAR Acknowledgement.** A federal “output” document, similar to the SAR, that the Central Processing System sends to a student who does not provide a valid e-mail address when he or she files the FAFSA through *FAFSA on the Web*<sup>SM</sup>, files through a postsecondary school, or makes changes at *FAFSA on the Web*. See also *Student Aid Report* (SAR).

**satisfactory academic progress.** Standards set by a school to determine whether a student is moving toward graduation at a rate acceptable to the school. A student must make satisfactory academic progress to be eligible for federal student aid. Also known as SAP.

**school.** A postsecondary educational institution, such as a college, university, or career school. In this handbook, the term “school” refers to such an institution, not to a high school, unless otherwise indicated.

**Simplified Needs Test.** The Simplified Needs Test excludes assets from the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculation for low- to moderate-income families who file simplified tax returns (1040A, 1040EZ) or receive benefits from any of these programs: Supplemental Security Income, Food Stamps, Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

**Student Aid Report (SAR).** A federal “output” document sent to a student by the Central Processing System. The SAR contains financial and other information reported by the student on the FAFSA. A student receives a paper SAR if he or she files a paper FAFSA and does not provide a valid e-mail address. The student receives a link to online SAR information if he or she provides a valid e-mail address on the FAFSA. The student’s Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is included on the SAR. All information reported on the SAR also is sent to schools the student listed on the FAFSA. See also *Institutional Student Information Record* and *SAR Acknowledgement*.

**subsidized loan.** Awarded to a student on the basis of financial need. The federal government pays the borrower’s accrued interest during some significant periods, such as when the student is in school, thereby “subsidizing” the loan.

**unsubsidized loan.** Is not need based; the borrower is responsible for accrued interest throughout the life of the loan.

**verification.** A procedure through which a school checks the information a student reported on the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA), usually by requesting a copy of signed tax returns filed by the student and, if applicable, the student’s parent(s) or spouse. Schools must verify information about students selected for verification by the Central Processing System, following procedures established by federal regulations. The processor places an asterisk next to the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) on SARs and *SAR Acknowledgements* and flags *Institutional Student Information Records* to identify students selected for verification. Many schools also select certain other students for verification in addition to those selected by the central processor.

**William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program**<sup>SM</sup> (**Direct Loan Program**<sup>SM</sup>). Federal Direct Stafford Loans (Direct Subsidized Loans), Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford/Ford Loans (Direct Unsubsidized Loans), Federal Direct PLUS Loans (for parents and graduate/professional students), and Federal Direct Consolidation Loans. Funds for these programs are lent to student and parent borrowers by the federal government through schools that participate in the program.



# APPENDIX E:

## Handouts

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The handouts on the perforated pages in this appendix may be distributed to provide basic information about student aid and postsecondary education opportunities.

These handouts (and others) also can be found in PDF—in both English and Spanish—on the Student Aid on the Web publications page at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs).

### Handout topics:

- Federal Student Aid at a Glance
- Steps to Federal Student Aid
- Myths About Financial Aid
- Why Go to College?
- Choosing a Career
- Choose a School Carefully
- Need Training for a Job?
- What Is a Federal Student Aid PIN and Why Do I Need One?
- What Information Do I Need When I Fill Out the FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>?
- What's So Great About Doing the FAFSA Online?
- Am I Dependent or Independent?
- Who Is My "Parent" When I Fill Out the FAFSA?
- How Your Financial Aid Administrator Can Help You
- Don't Get Scammed on Your Way to College!
- Be an Informed Consumer ...
- Why Get a Federal Student Loan?
- Got a Federal Student Loan? Be a Responsible Borrower!
- Student Aid and Identity Theft
- Military Scholarships
- Academic Competitiveness Grant and National SMART Grant
- TEACH Grant Program
- College.gov





# Federal Student Aid at a Glance

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## WHAT is federal student aid?

Federal student aid comes from the federal government—the U.S. Department of Education. It's money that helps a student pay for educational expenses at a postsecondary school (e.g., college, vocational school, graduate school).

Federal student aid covers expenses such as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Aid also can help pay for a computer and for dependent care.

There are three categories of federal student aid: grants, work-study, and loans. Check with your school to find out which programs your school participates in.

## WHO gets federal student aid?

Our most basic eligibility requirements are that you must

- demonstrate financial need,
- be a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen,
- have a valid Social Security number,
- register (if you haven't already) with Selective Service, if you're a male between the ages of 18 and 25,
- maintain satisfactory academic progress in postsecondary school, and
- show you're qualified to obtain a postsecondary education by
  - having a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate;
  - passing an approved ability-to-benefit test (if you don't have a diploma or GED, a school can administer a test to determine whether you can benefit from the education offered at that school);
  - completing six credit hours or equivalent course work toward a degree or certificate;
  - meeting other federally approved standards your state establishes; or
  - completing a high school education in a homeschool setting approved under state law.

## HOW do you apply for federal student aid?

### 1. Complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>).

For *FAFSA on the Web*<sup>SM</sup>, go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Using *FAFSA on the Web* is faster and easier than using paper.

If you need a paper FAFSA, you can get one from

- our Web site at [www.FederalStudentAid.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.gov/pubs) (download a PDF),
- our ED Pubs Web site at [www.edpubs.gov](http://www.edpubs.gov), or
- our Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

**You can apply beginning Jan. 1, 2010; you have until June 30, 2011, to submit your FAFSA. But you need to apply early!** Schools and states often use FAFSA information to award nonfederal aid. Their deadlines are usually early in the year. You can find state deadlines at *FAFSA on the Web* or on the paper FAFSA. Check with the schools you're interested in for their deadlines.

### 2. Review your *Student Aid Report* (SAR).

After you apply, you'll receive a *Student Aid Report*, or SAR. Your SAR contains the information reported on your FAFSA and usually includes your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is an index used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Review your SAR information and make any corrections or changes, if necessary. The school(s) you list on your FAFSA will get your SAR data electronically.

### 3. Contact the school(s) you might attend.

Make sure the financial aid office at each school you're interested in has all the information needed to determine your eligibility. If you're eligible, each school's financial aid office will send you an award letter showing the amount and types of aid (from all sources) the school will offer you. You can compare award letters from the schools to which you applied and see what aid you can receive from each school.



## Federal Student Aid Programs

Program	Type of Aid	Program Details	Annual Amount
Federal Pell Grant	Grant: does not have to be repaid	Available almost exclusively to undergraduates; student may receive up to 2 consecutive maximum awards in a year if attending school year-round	2009–10: \$609–\$5,350
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	Grant: does not have to be repaid	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need; Federal Pell Grant recipients take priority; funds depend on availability at school	\$100–\$4,000
Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)	Grant: does not have to be repaid	For Pell-eligible students enrolled at least half-time in 1st or 2nd year of study or in certificate program of at least 1 year at degree-granting school  1st year: must have completed rigorous secondary school program of study; graduated from high school after Jan. 1, 2006; not have been enrolled in ACG-eligible program except as part of a dual enrollment program  2nd year: must have completed rigorous secondary school program of study; graduated from high school after Jan. 1, 2005; have at least 3.0 cumulative GPA at end of 1st year postsecondary study	1st year: Up to \$750  2nd year: Up to \$1,300
National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant)	Grant: does not have to be repaid	For Pell-eligible students enrolled at least half-time in 3rd or 4th year (or 5th year of a 5-year program) majoring in certain subject areas with at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA	Up to \$4,000
Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant	Grant: does not have to be repaid unless student fails to carry out service obligation, in which case student must repay TEACH Grant as Direct Unsubsidized Loan with interest accrued from date grant was disbursed	For undergraduate, postbaccalaureate, and graduate students who are/will be taking course work necessary to become elementary or secondary teacher; recipient must sign Agreement to Serve saying they will teach full-time in designated teacher shortage area for 4 complete years (within 8 years of completing academic program) at elementary or secondary school serving children from low-income families	Up to \$4,000 a year; total amount may not exceed \$16,000  Graduate student: Total amount may not exceed \$8,000
Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant	Grant: does not have to be repaid	For students who are not Pell-eligible; whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after 9/11/01; and who, at the time of the parent's or guardian's death, were less than 24 years old or were enrolled at least part-time at an institution of higher education	Maximum is same as Pell maximum; payment adjusted for less-than-full-time study
Federal Work-Study	Money earned while attending school; does not have to be repaid	For undergraduate and graduate students; jobs can be on campus or off campus; students are paid at least federal minimum wage	No annual minimum or maximum amounts
Federal Perkins Loan	Loan: must be repaid	For undergraduate and graduate students; must be repaid to school that made the loan; 5% rate	Undergraduate students: up to \$5,500; graduate and professional students: up to \$8,000
Subsidized Direct* or FFEL <sup>SM**</sup> Stafford Loan	Loan: must be repaid	Subsidized: U.S. Department of Education pays interest while borrower is in school and during grace and deferment periods; student must be attending at least half-time and have financial need; fixed rate (set annually) for new borrowers	\$3,500–\$8,500, depending on grade level
Unsubsidized Direct* or FFEL** Stafford Loan	Loan: must be repaid	Unsubsidized: Borrower responsible for all interest; student must be at least half-time; financial need not required; fixed rate (set annually) for new borrowers	\$5,500–\$20,500 (less any subsidized amounts received for same period), depending on grade level and dependency status
Direct* or FFEL** PLUS Loan	Loan: must be repaid	For parents of dependent undergraduate students and for graduate and professional students; students must be enrolled at least half-time; financial need not required  Unsubsidized: Borrower responsible for all interest	Maximum amount is cost of attendance minus any other financial aid student receives; no minimum amount

\*This type of loan is from the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program<sup>SM</sup>. The loan is known as a Federal Direct Stafford (or PLUS) Loan.

\*\*This type of loan is from the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program. The loan is known as a FFEL (or Federal) Stafford (or PLUS) Loan.



# Steps to Federal Student Aid

STEP

1

Get free information and help from your school counselor, the financial aid office at the college or career school you plan to attend, or the U.S. Department of Education at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) or 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243). Free help is available any time during the application process. You should never have to pay for help.



STEP

2

Get a Federal Student Aid PIN, a personal identification number. A PIN lets you apply, "sign" your online *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>), make corrections to your application information and more—so keep it safe. Go to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) to get one.



STEP

3

Collect the documents needed to apply, including income tax returns and W-2 forms (and other records of income). A full list of what you need is at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Tax return not completed at the time you apply? Estimate the tax information, apply, and correct information later.



STEP

4

Complete the FAFSA between Jan. 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011 (no exceptions to either date!). BUT, apply as soon as possible after Jan. 1 to meet school and state aid deadlines (see note at bottom of page). Apply online at *FAFSA on the Web*<sup>SM</sup> (the faster and easier way) by going to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). If you don't already have your PIN, you can get it when you complete the online FAFSA.

STEP

5

The U.S. Department of Education will send you your *Student Aid Report* (SAR)—the result of your FAFSA. Review your SAR and, if necessary, make changes or corrections and submit your SAR for reprocessing. Your complete, correct SAR will contain your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)—the number used to determine your federal student aid eligibility.



STEP

6

The college or trade school that you plan to attend might request additional information from you. Be sure to respond by any deadlines, or you might not receive federal student aid.



STEP

7

**All applicants:** The college or trade school will tell you how much aid you can get at that school. Contact the financial aid office if you have any questions about the aid being offered. **First-time applicants:** Review award letters from schools to compare amounts and types of aid being offered. Decide which school to attend based on a combination of (a) how well the school suits your needs and (b) its affordability after all aid is taken into account.

**Note:** You also might be able to get financial aid from your state government, your school, or a private scholarship. Research nonfederal aid early (ideally, start in the spring of your junior year of high school). You can find a free scholarship search at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship). Be sure to meet all application deadlines!



# Myths About Financial Aid

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**“I’m not going to bother filling out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* because ...”**

**“... my parents make too much money, so I won’t qualify for aid.”**

**Reality:** There is no income cut-off to qualify for federal student aid. Many factors besides income—from the size of your family to the age of your older parent—are taken into account. Your eligibility is determined by a mathematical formula, not by your parents’ income alone. And remember: when you fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>), you’re also automatically applying for funds from your state, and possibly from your school as well. In fact, some schools won’t even consider you for any of their scholarships until you’ve submitted a FAFSA. Don’t make assumptions about what you’ll get—fill out the application and find out.

**“... only students with good grades get financial aid.”**

**Reality:** While a high grade point average will help a student get into a good school and may help with academic scholarships, most of the federal student aid programs do not take a student’s grades into consideration. Provided a student maintains satisfactory academic progress in his or her program of study, federal student aid will help a student with an average academic record complete his or her education.

**“... you have to be a minority to get financial aid.”**

**Reality:** Funds from federal student aid programs are awarded on the basis of financial need, not on the basis of race. The FAFSA doesn’t even collect this kind of information about an applicant.

**“... the form is too hard to fill out.”**

**Reality:** The FAFSA is easier than ever, especially if you fill it out online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). There are detailed instructions for every question, and the form walks you through step by step, asking only the questions that apply to you. If you need help, you can access real-time, private online chat with a customer service representative. If you’re filling out the paper FAFSA, you can get help from a high school counselor, from the financial aid office at the school you plan to attend, or from our toll-free number: **1-800-4-FED-AID**. And remember, the FAFSA and all these sources of advice are FREE.

For more information about federal student aid, see [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) or call the Federal Student Aid Information Center:

**1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**

**TTY: 1-800-730-8913**

For inquirers without access to the toll-free number: **319-337-5665**





# Why Go to College? (How about ... to get a good job!)

## Can't I get a good job now?

Yes, maybe you could, but statistics are against you. Check out the earnings and unemployment rates for people 25 years and older with different levels of education:

Unemployment rate in 2008	Level of education completed	Mean (average) earnings in 2008
9.0%	Less than a high school diploma	\$27,872
5.7%	High school graduate, no college	\$39,780
5.1%	Some college, no degree	\$45,968
3.7%	Associate degree	\$47,320
2.8%	Bachelor's degree	\$68,172
2.4%	Master's degree	\$81,536
2.0%	Doctoral degree	\$99,892
1.7%	Professional degree	\$106,756

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, unpublished tables, 2009.

Sometimes it's hard to stay in school if you think you need to be working to earn money. But if you finish high school and go on to college, you'll have a wider variety of jobs to choose from, and you'll earn more—especially in the long run.

## But I don't know what career to go into!

If you can't decide what to do, talk to your school counselor or visit [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/myfsa](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/myfsa) to fill out an interest inventory called the Career Finder. Based on your answers, the questionnaire will provide a list of careers that fit your interests. You can then use the college search tool on our site to find schools offering courses of study appropriate to your career choice.

## Doesn't college cost a lot of money?

Think of college as an investment: you spend money now so you can earn more later. And the U.S. Department of Education will help you pay for your education. Take a look at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov) for information about our federal student aid programs. The site also has a free scholarship search. Still have questions? Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**.



# Choosing a Career

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## Making the choices that are right for you

A first step in deciding what to do after high school is to talk with your school counselor or a teacher for advice. Ask your counselor about taking an aptitude test or interest inventory to find your strengths, weaknesses, and interests to discover potential career choices that are right for you. You can access a free self-assessment called the Career Finder at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/myfsa](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/myfsa).

### 1. Learn about yourself.

- **Values**—What is important to you?
- **Interests**—What appeals to you?
- **Aptitude**—What are you good at?

### 2. Talk to people.

Once you've narrowed your career choices, talk to people who are working in that field or, if possible, find a part-time or volunteer job in that field.

It's helpful to ask questions such as, "What's good and bad about this job?" and "How did you learn your trade?"

There are many sources of career and job outlook information available—go to your school library, public library, or school counselor.

### 3. Consider how much training you will need for the career you're interested in.

- **High school diploma:** cashier, receptionist, retail salesperson, security guard, waiter, or waitress
- **Special career training:** auto service technician, cosmetologist, police officer, truck driver
- **College degree:** accountant, engineer, forensic science technician, graphic designer, nurse, pilot, teacher, public relations specialist
- **Graduate degree:** college professor, doctor, dentist, lawyer, veterinarian, research scientist, architect

For information about specific careers, see the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* at [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco) or in a library.

For information about financial aid for college or career school, see [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov).



# Choose a School Carefully

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## Going to school is a lifetime investment

Statistics show that getting training after high school will help you get a better-paying job doing work you like. But going to school is a big investment. You're investing your time. Chances are you'll also have to invest your own money or take out a student loan to go to school. So you need to be sure that you're choosing the right school.

### 1. Visit our Web site.

Go to [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/choosing](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/choosing). You'll find a tool that lets you search for a school based on its location, size, degree offerings, and other factors. Just enter your choices, and the search tool will tell you which schools fit your preferences.

### 2. Talk to your counselor.

Counselors can help you focus on your needs and goals, and they have information about different types of schools. Your counselor also can help you collect or prepare application materials.

### 3. Shop around.

Contact more than one school. If your area has a community college, check the school's Web site or call the admissions office to find out what kinds of training the college offers. If you're looking for vocational training, check the Internet—or the Yellow Pages under "Schools"—to find options. You also should check the Better Business Bureau ([www.bbb.com](http://www.bbb.com)), your state higher education agency, or the consumer-protection division of your state attorney general's office to find out whether there have been any complaints about the school.

### 4. Visit the school.

Contact the school and schedule a visit, preferably while classes are being taught. Get a feel for the school; make sure you're comfortable with the facilities, the equipment, the teachers, and the students.

### 5. Don't be afraid to ask!

A good school will be happy to answer your questions about its programs. Ask the school about its students: How many graduate? How many get jobs because of the training they received? What kind of job placement services does the school offer?

### 6. Check the cost.

Make sure the school gives you a clear statement of its tuition and fees. Remember that any financial aid you get will be applied first to paying the school's tuition and fees. If there's any money left over, the school will give it to you to help you pay for things such as food and rent. Call the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Information Center's toll-free number (**1-800-4-FED-AID**) if you have any questions about your financial aid at the school. You also can access our Web site at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov).



# Need Training for a Job?

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## Before you sign up for a vocational school or correspondence course:

### 1. Define your goals.

Do you want to learn a skill, prepare for a test, get a job, or get a license or certification?

### 2. Comparison shop.

Look at the choices. Which schools offer the best combination of affordable fees and a solid education? Does on-the-job training, a community college program, an online course, or a vocational school make the most sense? Your high school counselor can help you find answers to those questions.

### 3. Do a background check.

Ask employers you might want to work for what they think about the school. Talk to recent graduates to ask about their experience at the school. Visit the school when class is in session. Stick around to talk to current students. Contact the agency that licenses or accredits the school to see whether it meets required standards. Check with your local Better Business Bureau (or visit [www.bbb.com](http://www.bbb.com)) to find out whether there have been any complaints about the school.

## Important Points:

**Take your time.** Don't sign a contract until you've read it ... and understood it. Ask questions about repayment terms, refund and cancellation policies, and finding a job after you finish the course. What happens if you have to quit before you finish? It's a good idea to ask someone you trust to read and evaluate the forms, too.

**If you're unhappy** with the school or program you chose—or if you think you were misled—complain. To whom? The agency that licenses or accredits the school, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Better Business Bureau.

For further information about choosing a vocational school, access the Consumer Protection area of the Federal Trade Commission's Web site at [www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/products/pro13.pdf](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/products/pro13.pdf).



# What Is a Federal Student Aid PIN and Why Do I Need One?

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Your Federal Student Aid PIN is the personal identification number you use when you visit certain U.S. Department of Education Web sites. When you type in your PIN at these sites, you are saying either “Yes, it’s really me—please show me the personal information about me on this site” or “Please accept my PIN as my signature on this online form.”

## For example, you can use your PIN to

- sign your online *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>) at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov);
- review what federal student aid you have received in the past by visiting the National Student Loan Data System at [www.nslds.ed.gov](http://www.nslds.ed.gov);
- sign certain federal student loan contracts online;
- find out whether your FAFSA has been processed at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov); or
- correct information you reported on your FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

Visit [www.pin.ed.gov/pin\\_uses.htm](http://www.pin.ed.gov/pin_uses.htm) for more ways you can use your PIN.

## How do I get a PIN?

Go to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) and provide a few pieces of information such as your name, address, and Social Security number (see checklist).

You will be given the option of creating your own PIN or having the site create one for you. If the site creates one for you, you can choose to have your PIN displayed immediately on the screen. Otherwise, you can request that your PIN be mailed to you, or you can choose to receive an e-mail that will give you the link to a site where you can access your PIN. We won’t send your PIN to you in the e-mail itself for security reasons. Instead, we’ll ask you for some personal information to identify yourself before we show you your PIN.

## What else do I need to know about my PIN?

Keep your PIN in a safe place or memorize it. Never tell anyone else your PIN, even if they are helping you fill out the FAFSA. Remember, your PIN is your signature. Protect it!

One of your parents might need a PIN as well. If you need to provide information about your parents on the FAFSA, one of your parents will have to sign the application. He or she can sign electronically with his or her own PIN. Not sure whether you will need to put your parents’ information on the FAFSA? Check out “Am I Dependent or Independent?” at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs) or call **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**.

You can use your PIN again next year. Your PIN (and your parent’s PIN) will not expire at the end of the school year, and you can continue to use it in the future to renew your FAFSA, sign loan contracts, etc. If your parent has more than one child in college, that parent can use the same PIN to sign FAFSAs for every child.

### PIN Checklist

Here’s what you need to get your PIN:

- your Social Security number
- your full and correct last name
- your full and correct first name
- your middle initial
- your date of birth
- your street address
- your e-mail address (optional)



# What Information Do I Need When I Fill Out the FAFSA?

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## Here's a checklist!

You should have the following information and documents with you as you fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>):

- Your Social Security number
- Your parents' Social Security numbers if you are providing parental information\*
- Your driver's license number if you have one
- Your Alien Registration Number if you are not a U.S. citizen
- Federal tax information or tax returns including IRS W-2 information, for yourself and spouse, if you are married, and for your parents if you are providing parental information
  - If you have not yet filed an income tax return, complete and submit the FAFSA using estimated tax information
  - Use income records for the year prior to the academic year for which you are applying: for instance, if you are filling out the 2010–11 FAFSA, you will need 2009 tax information
- Records of your untaxed income, such as child support received, interest income, and veterans noneducation benefits, for yourself, and for your parents if you are providing parental information
- Information on cash; savings and checking account balances; investments, including real estate but not including the home in which you live; and business and farm assets for yourself, and for your parents if you are providing parent information

\* *Not sure whether you will need to put your parents' information on the FAFSA? Check out "Am I Dependent or Independent?" at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs) or call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).*



# What's So Great About Doing the FAFSA<sup>SM</sup> Online?

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The *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>) is available to fill out online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). The site is known as *FAFSA on the Web*<sup>SM</sup>. You should use *FAFSA on the Web* instead of a paper FAFSA because:

## It's quick.

- You'll get your results as much as three weeks faster than someone who uses the paper FAFSA. Speed is important when schools are awarding limited financial aid resources.
- You have instant access to an estimated Expected Family Contribution.
- You can answer questions that help determine whether you will receive an Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG). The paper FAFSA doesn't ask those questions, so paper filers who might be eligible for an ACG have an extra step in the process.

## It's easy.

- *FAFSA on the Web* has detailed help screens for every question.
- You can get live, private online help from a customer service representative.
- Based on your answers to certain questions, *FAFSA on the Web* skips lots of questions that don't apply to you. If you fill out the paper FAFSA, you'll have to read all those questions and figure out whether they are relevant to you.

## It's accurate.

- *FAFSA on the Web* notices when you've supplied answers that contradict each other, and it gives you the chance to correct your mistakes before submitting the information.
- Because of the online help and the fact that *FAFSA on the Web* checks for contradictory answers, your online application is less likely than a paper FAFSA to be delayed by the need for corrections.

## It's safe.

- *FAFSA on the Web* uses encryption, which means the information you send to the site is turned into code so that anyone attempting to access your information will not be able to read it.

## Okay, I believe you! What do I do now?

- Get a personal identification number called a PIN at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).
- Find out what documents you need using the checklist in "What Information Do I Need When I Fill Out the FAFSA?" at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs).
- Fill out the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/worksheet](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/worksheet) (this step is optional; the worksheet was designed for students who feel more comfortable filling something out on paper before going online to enter their application information).
- Fill out the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- Keep an eye on your e-mail inbox for a response and further instructions.



# Am I Dependent or Independent?

When I fill out the 2010–11 *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>)*, will I have to provide information about my parents?

## It depends. Answer these questions:

Were you born before Jan. 1, 1987?	Yes	No
Are you married? (Answer "Yes" if you are separated but not divorced.)	Yes	No
At the beginning of the 2010–11 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctorate degree program (such as an M.A., M.B.A., M.D., J.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., or graduate certificate, etc.)?	Yes	No
Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training? (If you are a National Guard or Reserves enlistee, are you on active duty for other than state or training purposes?)	Yes	No
Are you a veteran of the U.S. armed forces?*	Yes	No
Do you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011?	Yes	No
Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2011?	Yes	No
At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a ward or dependent of the court?	Yes	No
Has it been decided by a court in your state of legal residence that you are an emancipated minor or that you are in a legal guardianship?	Yes	No
At any time on or after July 1, 2009, were you determined to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless, as determined by (a) your high school or district homeless liaison or (b) the director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development?	Yes	No
At any time on or after July 1, 2009, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?	Yes	No

\* Answer **No** (you are not a veteran) if you (1) have never engaged in active duty in the U.S. armed forces, (2) are currently a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) student or a cadet or midshipman at a service academy, or (3) are a National Guard or Reserves enlistee activated only for state or training purposes, or (4) were engaged in active duty in the U.S. armed forces but released under dishonorable conditions. Also answer No if you are currently serving in the U.S. armed forces and will continue to serve through June 30, 2011.

Answer **Yes** (you are a veteran) if you (1) have engaged in active duty in the U.S. armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard) or are a National Guard or Reserves enlistee who was called to active duty for other than state or training purposes, or were a cadet or midshipman at one of the service academies **and** (2) were released under a condition other than dishonorable. Also answer Yes if you are not a veteran now but will be one by June 30, 2011.

**Did you answer Yes to any of the questions?** If so, then for federal student aid purposes, you're considered to be an independent student and do not have to provide information about your parents on the FAFSA.

**Did you answer No to every question?** If so, then for federal student aid purposes, you're considered to be a dependent student, and you must provide information about your parents on the FAFSA. Not sure who counts as your parent? See the instructions on the FAFSA or check out "Who Is My 'Parent' When I Fill Out the FAFSA?" at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs).

If you have no contact with your parents and don't know where they live, you should discuss your situation with the financial aid office at the college or career school you plan to attend. The financial aid administrator will help you figure out what to do next.

**Fill out the FAFSA at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).**





# Who Is My “Parent” When I Fill Out the FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>?

Maybe you know you’re considered a dependent student\* by the FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>, and you’re supposed to put information about your parents on the application. But what if your parents are divorced? Remarried? What if you live with your sister? Here’s some information that might help:

- If your parents are living and married to each other, answer the questions about them.
- If your parents are living together and are not married but meet the criteria in your state for a common-law marriage, answer the questions about both of them. If your state does not consider them to be married, fill out the parental information as if they are divorced. (See below.)
- If your parent is widowed or single, answer the questions about that parent. If your widowed parent is remarried as of the day you sign the FAFSA, answer the questions about that parent and the person whom your parent married (your stepparent).
- If your parents are divorced or separated, answer the questions about the parent with whom you lived more during the past 12 months.
  - If you lived the same amount of time with each parent, give answers about the parent who provided more financial support during the past 12 months or during the most recent year that you actually received support from a parent. If this parent is remarried as of today, answer the questions on the FAFSA about that parent and the person whom your parent married (your stepparent).
- The following people are not your parents unless they have adopted you: grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, older brothers or sisters, and uncles or aunts.

**EXCEPTION:** The FAFSA asks about your parents’ education level. For these two questions, your parents are considered to be your birth parents or adoptive parents—your stepparent is not your parent in these questions.

## What if my parents are worried about providing their private information on the FAFSA?

Their information is safe with us. We recommend you fill out your FAFSA online, where your information is put into special code before it’s sent over the Internet to our processor. Also, we won’t share your FAFSA information with anyone except the schools you tell us you want to attend (so they can use the information to award financial aid to you) and a few federal government agencies (so they can check to be sure you’ve reported your information accurately).

## What if I don’t live with my parents?

You still must answer the questions about them if you’re considered a dependent student.

## What if my parents aren’t going to help me pay for college and refuse to provide information for my FAFSA?

You can’t be considered independent of your parents just because they refuse to help you with this process. If you do not provide their information on the FAFSA, the application will be considered “rejected,” and you might not be able to receive any federal student aid. The most you would be able to get (depending on what the financial aid administrator at your college decides) would be a loan called an unsubsidized loan. The FAFSA will tell you what to do if you are in this situation. You also will need to speak to the financial aid administrator at the college or trade school you plan to attend.

## What if I have no contact with my parents?

If you don’t know where your parents live, or you’ve left home due to an abusive situation, fill out the FAFSA and then immediately get in touch with the financial aid office at the college or trade school you plan to attend. The financial aid administrator will tell you what to do next. Don’t put this off or you might miss financial aid deadlines!

*\* To find out whether you are a dependent student, see “Am I Dependent or Independent?” at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/pubs) or call 1-800-4-FED-AID.*



# How Your Financial Aid Administrator Can Help You

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## What's a financial aid administrator?

A financial aid administrator works at a college or career school to help the school's students apply for, receive and—in many cases—learn how to repay their student aid.

## When should I first contact my financial aid administrator?

While researching the school before applying, be sure to find out what types of financial aid are available at that school. Your research should include a visit to the financial aid office's Web site. Later, as you prepare to apply for aid at that school, the financial aid administrator will be able to answer your questions about the process.

## What questions can my financial aid administrator answer for me?

- What financial aid can I apply for through my school and through my state education agency?
- What are the financial aid application deadlines at my school?
- How do I fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>)?
- Do I have to include my parents' information on the FAFSA?
- I went to a Web site that I thought was the FAFSA site, but it asked for my credit card number. Do I need to pay to fill out the FAFSA?
- What am I supposed to do with my *Student Aid Report*?
- What is verification, what documents must I provide and when, and why was I chosen in the first place?
- When will I find out how much aid I've been awarded?
- What are all these different kinds of aid my school has awarded me?
- What if I'm not awarded enough money to pay for all my school-related expenses?

If you have any other questions or concerns about the financial aid process, contact the financial aid office at your school. Your financial aid administrator is there to help you.



# Don't Get Scammed on Your Way to College!

Financial aid scams are a hot topic these days. You should be aware of the tactics companies use to convince students to buy their services. Here are some of the most common claims students are hearing:

**"If you use our services, you're guaranteed to get at least \$3,000 in student aid for college, or we'll give you your money back."**

This claim doesn't mean anything. Most students are eligible for at least \$3,500 in unsubsidized student loans anyway—and because a student loan is considered student aid, you won't be able to ask for a refund if that's all you're offered. No one can guarantee to get you a grant or scholarship. Remember, too, that refund guarantees often have conditions or strings attached. Get refund policies in writing.

**"Applying for aid is complicated. We're the only ones who can help you through the process and find all the aid for which you're eligible."**

Unlikely. There are many places to get free help applying for student aid. Check with your school counselor or college financial aid office for help filling out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>). Your school or college also can help you find scholarships. And be sure to try the free scholarship search at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship).

**"I'd like to offer you a scholarship [or grant]. All I need is your bank account information so the money can be deposited and a processing fee charged."**

Watch out! It's extremely rare for a legitimate organization to charge a processing fee for a scholarship. Some criminals imitate legitimate foundations, federal agencies, and corporations. They might even have official-sounding names to fool students. Don't give anyone your bank account or credit card information or your Social Security number (SSN) unless you initiated the contact and trust the company. Such personal identification information could be used to commit identity theft. If you've been contacted by someone claiming to be from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and asking for your SSN or bank account information, do not provide it. (ED does not make such calls.) Instead, immediately contact the agencies listed below.

To find out how to prevent or report a financial aid scam, visit or call:

#### Federal Trade Commission

[www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams](http://www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams)

1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)

(TTY for the hearing impaired: 1-866-653-4261)

#### U.S. Department of Education

Office of Inspector General Fraud Hotline

[www.ed.gov/misused](http://www.ed.gov/misused)

1-800-MIS-USED (1-800-647-8733)

[oig.hotline@ed.gov](mailto:oig.hotline@ed.gov)

For more ideas about where to find free information on student aid, visit Looking for Student Aid Without Getting Scammed at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/LSA](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/LSA).

### Don't Pay to Fill Out the FAFSA

The FAFSA is a free application.

Fill it out at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

Other sites will charge you.



# Be an Informed Consumer ...

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## ... when it comes to federal student aid

### Enrollment contracts

Read any school enrollment contract carefully before you sign it. The contract explains what the school will give you for your money. If a representative of the school promises you things that are not in the contract, such as help finding a job, ask that the promise be written into the contract and that it be signed and dated. A promise is usually not enforceable unless it is in writing.

### Tuition and fees

If you're enrolling in a **community college** or **four-year college**, you will probably get a tuition and fee bill before each term (semester or quarter) begins; a portion of your federal student aid will be paid each term. If you're enrolling at a **vocational school**, you usually will be charged tuition and fees for the entire educational program at the beginning. However, your federal student aid will usually be divided into at least two payments each year. Most schools use your financial aid to pay your tuition and fees. If there's any left over, the school must give it to you to help pay your living expenses.

### Loans

Even if you qualify for a full Federal Pell Grant (free aid), your cost of attendance might not be entirely covered. If other grant aid and work-study aren't available, check with your school about the types of loans you can get. Before you borrow, think about how you will afford to pay the money back. Either the school or the lender must give you a repayment schedule that explains how much your loan payments will be and when you have to start making the payments.

**Remember that you must pay back a loan, even if you drop out of school or don't find a job after you graduate.**

### Refund policy

It's important to find out whether you can get a refund from the school if you drop out before you get your degree or certificate. Every school that uses federal student aid must give you a copy of its refund policy if you request it. If you received financial aid and you withdraw, some or all of the money might have to be returned (by you or the school) to the source of the aid. Be sure to let the school know exactly when you plan to withdraw—it may reduce your debt.



# Why Get a Federal Student Loan?

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While every student wants free money in the form of scholarships and grants, not everyone can get enough free money to cover the entire cost of college or career school.

If you've filled out your FAFSA<sup>SM</sup> and your school has offered you federal student loans (your school might call them Stafford Loans, Direct Loans<sup>SM</sup>, FFEL<sup>SM</sup> Loans, or Perkins Loans), here are some things to consider:

- You don't have to start paying back your federal student loans until you graduate or stop attending school at least half-time. If you get a private loan, you'll probably have to start making payments right away.
- The interest rate on a federal student loan is almost always lower than that on a private loan—and much lower than that on a credit card!
- Students with greater financial need might qualify to have the government pay their interest while they are in school.
- You don't need a credit record to get a federal student loan.
- You don't need a cosigner to get a federal student loan.
- Federal student loans offer a variety of repayment plans, including one that bases monthly payments on the borrower's income.
- Some borrowers are able to have at least a portion of their loans forgiven if they work in certain jobs for which there is a high demand.

As you can see, a federal student loan is a much better option than a private loan or a credit card. However, do remember that you are responsible for repaying your loan, so don't borrow more than you need for school-related expenses. And if you find you're going to have trouble making your payments, be sure to get in touch with your lender as soon as possible to see what arrangements can be made.

For more information about the types of federal student loans, repayment options, and what happens if you don't make your payments on time, check out our guide called *Your Federal Student Loans*. Read the guide online at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/repayingpub](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/repayingpub) or order a copy of the booklet from 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).



# Got a Federal Student Loan?

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## Be a Responsible Borrower!

- A loan, unlike a grant, is borrowed money that must be repaid.
- You must repay your loan even if you didn't like the education you received or you can't find a job after you graduate.
- You must keep your lender informed of any changes in your name, address, telephone number, Social Security number, or school enrollment status.
- You must make payments on your loan even if you don't receive a bill or repayment notice. Billing statements are sent to you as a convenience, but you have to make payments even if you don't receive any reminders.
- You can prepay the whole loan or any part of it at any time without penalty. This means you are paying some of the loan before it's due.
- If you apply for deferment,\* forbearance,\* or consolidation,\* you must continue to make payments on your loan until you have been notified that your request has been processed and approved.
- Your student loan account balance and status will be reported to national credit bureaus on a regular basis. Just as failing to repay your loan can damage your credit rating, repaying your loan responsibly can help you establish a good credit rating.
- The consequences of defaulting (failing to pay according to your loan contract) on a federal student loan are severe and long lasting. For example, you might not be able to buy a car, and your federal income tax refund could be applied to your student loan balance instead of being sent to you.
- There are repayment options available to assist you if you're having trouble making payments.

Need more information? Check out *Your Federal Student Loans* at [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/repayingpub](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/repayingpub). If you don't have Internet access, call **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)** and ask for a copy of the book to be sent to you.

\* *Deferment and forbearance are ways of putting off or reducing loan payments. Consolidation means combining two or more federal student loans into a single loan. For details about these terms, read Your Federal Student Loans.*



# Student Aid and Identity Theft

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## Safeguard Your Student Aid Information

### How Does Identity Theft Happen?

Criminals use their access to personal data such as names, telephone numbers, Social Security numbers, and bank and credit card information. Using the stolen data, the criminal can fraudulently obtain credit cards, buy items over the Internet, and even establish cellular phone accounts. The Federal Trade Commission reports that identity theft consistently ranks as the agency's number one consumer complaint category.

### Reduce Your Risk

- Never give personal information over the phone, through the mail, or on the Internet unless you made the contact and are sure you know who you're dealing with.
- Before providing personal information to an organization, review its privacy policy. By completing, or even requesting a student loan application, you might be granting permission to that organization to access your personal information.
- Apply for federal student aid by filling out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>) at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- After completing the FAFSA electronically, remember to exit the application and close the browser.
- Keep your Federal Student Aid PIN in a secure place. (Get your PIN at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).)
- Don't reveal your PIN to anyone, even if that person is helping you fill out the FAFSA. The only time you should be using your PIN is when you are on secure U.S. Department of Education (ED) Web sites.
- Review your financial aid award documents and keep track of the amount of aid applied for and awarded.
- Shred charge receipts, copies of credit applications, checks and bank statements, and other documents with personal information if they are no longer needed.
- Keep your purse or wallet safe at all times; store it and other items containing personal information in a secure place at home, especially if you have roommates.

### How We Keep Your Information Safe

ED cares about the privacy of your personal information. The information you share with us via our secure Web sites (e.g., [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)) goes through a process called encryption. Encryption uses a mathematical formula to scramble your data into a format that is unreadable by anyone who might intercept it. This is how we do our part to keep your information safe—but you need to do yours as well.

### Report Identity Theft

If you become a victim of identity theft or suspect that your student information has been stolen, contact:

#### U.S. Department of Education

Office of Inspector General Hotline  
1-800-MIS-USED (1-800-647-8733)  
complain online: [www.ed.gov/misused](http://www.ed.gov/misused)

#### Federal Trade Commission

1-877-IDTHEFT (1-877-438-4338)  
complain online: [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft)

#### Social Security Administration

1-800-269-0271  
[www.ssa.gov/pubs/idtheft.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/idtheft.htm)

#### Equifax Credit Bureau

1-800-525-6285  
[www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

#### Experian Information Solutions

1-888-397-3742  
[www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)

#### TransUnion Credit Bureau

1-800-680-7289  
[www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)



# Military Scholarships

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**These scholarships are awarded on the basis of merit rather than financial need.**

## **Army Reserve Officer Training Corps**

Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) scholarships are offered at hundreds of colleges. Application packets, information about eligibility, and the telephone number of an ROTC advisor in your area are available from

### **College Army ROTC**

Telephone: **1-800-USA-ROTC (1-800-872-7682)**

Web site: [www.goarmy.com/rotc](http://www.goarmy.com/rotc)

## **Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps**

The Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) offers both two-year and four-year scholarships. For information and applications, contact

### **Naval Service Training Command**

Telephone: **1-800-NAV-ROTC (1-800-628-7682)**

Web site: <https://www.nrotc.navy.mil>

## **Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps**

The Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) college scholarship program targets students pursuing certain foreign language and technical degrees, although students entering a wide variety of majors may be accepted. Information about AFROTC scholarships is available from

### **College Scholarship Section**

Telephone: **1-866-4-AFROTC (1-866-423-7682)**

Web site: [www.afrotc.com](http://www.afrotc.com)





# Academic Competitiveness Grant and National SMART Grant

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## Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG)

During an eligible student's first year, the maximum ACG award is \$750; the maximum ACG award for a student's second year is \$1,300.

### ACG Requirements

To receive an ACG, a student must

- be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant during the same award year;
- be a first- or second-year undergraduate student enrolled at least half-time in a degree program or in a certificate program of at least one year in length at a two-year or four-year degree-granting institution;
- have completed a rigorous secondary school program of study; and
- if a first-year student
  - have completed secondary school after Jan. 1, 2006, and
  - not, while in high school, have been enrolled as a regular student in an ACG-eligible program except as part of a dual enrollment program
- if a second-year student
  - have completed secondary school after Jan. 1, 2005, and
  - have at least a 3.0 grade point average as of the end of his or her first academic year of undergraduate study.

These are not the only ACG requirements. For more details, including a list of recognized "rigorous" programs of secondary school study, visit the "Federal Financial Aid Programs" section at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov).

## National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant)

An eligible student may receive up to \$4,000 a year for his or her third and fourth academic years of undergraduate study.

### National SMART Grant Requirements

To receive a National SMART Grant, a student must

- be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant during the same award year;
- be enrolled at least half-time in the third or fourth year of an undergraduate degree or certificate program (or the fifth year of a five-year program) at a degree-granting institution;
- be pursuing a major (or, in some cases, equivalent course work) in physical, life, or computer sciences, mathematics, technology, engineering, or a critical foreign language as described in the "Federal Financial Aid Programs" section at [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov); and
- have at least a 3.0 grade point average as of the end of the student's second year and continue to maintain a 3.0 GPA which must be checked prior to the beginning of each payment period (e.g., semester).



# TEACH Grant Program

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The Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program provides grants of up to \$4,000 per year to students who intend to teach in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves students from low-income families.

## Conditions

In exchange for receiving a TEACH Grant, you must agree to serve as a full-time teacher in a high-need field in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves low-income students. As a recipient of a TEACH Grant, you must teach for at least four academic years within eight calendar years of completing the program of study for which you received a TEACH Grant. **IMPORTANT:** If you fail to complete this service obligation, all amounts of TEACH Grants that you received will be converted to a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan. You must then repay this loan to the U.S. Department of Education (ED). You will be charged interest from the date the grant was disbursed.

## Student Eligibility Requirements

To receive a TEACH Grant you must meet the following criteria:

- Complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>), although you do not have to demonstrate financial need.
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen.
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate, postbaccalaureate, or graduate student in a postsecondary institution that has chosen to participate in the TEACH Grant Program.
- Be enrolled in course work that is necessary to begin a career in teaching or plan to complete such course work. Such course work may include subject area courses (e.g., math courses for a student who intends to be a math teacher).
- Meet certain academic achievement requirements (generally, scoring above the 75th percentile on a college admissions test or maintaining a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25).
- Sign a TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve.

## High-Need Field

High-need fields are Bilingual Education and English Language Acquisition, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Reading Specialist, Science, Special Education, and other identified teacher shortage areas as of the time you receive the grant or as of the time you begin teaching in that field. Teacher subject shortage areas (not geographic areas) are listed in ED's annual *Teacher Shortage Area Nationwide Listing*. To access the listing, visit [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/pol/tsa.doc](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/pol/tsa.doc).

## Schools Serving Low-Income Students

Schools serving low-income students include any elementary or secondary school that is listed in ED's annual directory of designated low-income schools for teacher cancellation benefits. To access the directory, visit [www.tcli.ed.gov](http://www.tcli.ed.gov) and click on the "Search" button.

## TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve

Each year you receive a TEACH Grant, you must sign a TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve that will be available on an ED Web site. The Agreement to Serve specifies the conditions under which the grant will be awarded and the teaching service requirements. It also includes an acknowledgment by you that you understand that if you do not meet the teaching service requirements you must repay the grant as a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, with interest accrued from the date the grant funds were disbursed. The TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve will require the following:

- For each TEACH-Grant-eligible program for which you received TEACH Grant funds, you must serve as a full-time teacher for a total of at least four academic years within eight calendar years after you completed or withdrew from the academic program for which you received the TEACH Grant.
- You must perform the teaching service as a highly qualified teacher at a low-income school. The term "highly qualified teacher" is defined in Section 9101(23) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* or in Section 602(10) of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*.
- Your teaching service must be in a high-need field.
- You must comply with any other requirements that ED determines to be necessary.
- If you do not complete the required teaching service obligation, TEACH Grant funds you received will be converted to a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan that you must repay, with interest charged from the date of each TEACH Grant disbursement.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

If you receive a TEACH Grant but do not complete the required teaching service, as explained above, you will be required to repay the grants as a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan, with interest charged from the date of each TEACH Grant disbursement.

## Next Steps

If you are interested in learning more about the TEACH Grant Program, you should contact the financial aid office at the college where you will be enrolled to find out whether it participates in the TEACH Grant Program.





*The future belongs to the nation that best educates its citizens—and my fellow Americans, we have everything we need to be that nation.—President Barack Obama*

Everyone is college material. College.gov conveys that postsecondary education is an achievable goal for anyone, regardless of income, ethnicity, age or gender. This unique Web site motivates students with inspirational stories and information about planning, preparing and paying for college. With students' input and participation, College.gov was created for high school students and their families as a comprehensive online resource with the help and tools students need to get started.

### **Identifying the Benefits of More Education**

Millions of high school graduates are discouraged from pursuing education beyond high school. This has a significant impact on their future—and America's future economic prosperity. About 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs will require some postsecondary education. Without proper information and support, students may not realize the benefits of higher education, and the nation may never realize the benefits of their talents.

### **Expanding Accessible Information**

The Department of Education is committed to expanding the accessibility, affordability and accountability of higher education for more Americans. The Department listened to students and families from across the country who expressed the need for a single source to deliver accurate and trustworthy information about postsecondary education in a user-friendly way.

### **Focusing on Students**

The site has three main goals:

1. Create and inspire hope that college is possible;
2. Engage students by building a site that they can relate to; and
3. Inform, guide and activate students by giving them the tools and resources necessary to plan for and get to college.

### **Delivering Unique Features**

- Inspiring videos of college students sharing their stories and experiences as to how they overcame obstacles to achieve their college dreams
- Fresh design picked by students that boasts a non-government look-and-feel
- A feature which allows students to upload their own "I'm going" billboard to the home page
- An interactive tool for students to create an "I'm going" personalized roadmap which details the steps to take to get to college
- Content organized and presented in a way for students to easily find the answers to their higher education questions: Why Go? What to Do? and How to Pay?
- Links to valuable online resources, such as College Navigator (school search site), *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) and *FAFSA4caster*

[www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov)











## Abbreviations

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- **ACG:** Academic Competitiveness Grant
- **AFROTC:** Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps
- **CPS:** Central Processing System
- **DHS:** U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- **DRN:** Data Release Number
- **ED:** U.S. Department of Education
- **EFC:** Expected Family Contribution
- **FAA:** financial aid administrator
- **FAFSA<sup>SM</sup>:** *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*
- **FFEL<sup>SM</sup>:** Federal Family Education Loan
- **FSAIC:** Federal Student Aid Information Center
- **FSAPubs:** Federal Student Aid Publications Ordering System
- **FSEOG:** Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant
- **FTC:** Federal Trade Commission
- **FWS:** Federal Work-Study
- **GEAR UP:** Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs
- **GED:** General Educational Development [certificate]
- **HHS:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **IRS:** Internal Revenue Service
- **ISIR:** *Institutional Student Information Record*
- **LEAP:** Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership
- **NROTC:** Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps
- **NSLDS<sup>SM</sup>:** National Student Loan Data System<sup>SM</sup>
- **PIN:** personal identification number
- **PSAT/NMSQT:** Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test
- **ROTC:** Army Reserve Officer Training Corps
- **SAP:** satisfactory academic progress
- **SAR:** *Student Aid Report*
- **SMART:** Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (as in National SMART Grant)
- **SSA:** Social Security Administration
- **SSN:** Social Security number
- **TEACH:** Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (as in TEACH Grant)
- **TTY:** teletype
- **VA:** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



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[www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov)