

FAFSA Help

More than half of all college students receive some form of financial aid, whether it is loans, grants, or even work-study. These funds are essential for most students as it is the only way for them to complete their college education. However in order to obtain these funds, every student must fill out a FAFSA, Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This form must be filled out for every year that the student attends college. This form can be overwhelming at first, however it does not have to be. Follow some of these tips and advice and you will soon be able to complete this application with your eyes closed.

DEADLINES

Even if you want to apply for grants or loans from your school, you still need to fill out the FAFSA. There are deadlines in place to make sure that your application gets reviewed in time for certain funds. If you miss this deadline, you can still submit your application, just be sure to work with your school's financial aid office to ensure that your request is reviewed for any remaining funds. You should also check with your state AND your school to verify their specific FAFSA deadlines.

PIN NUMBER

The FAFSA has come a long way in the past ten years. You can now file your application online and electronically sign your form with a pin number issued by the U.S. Department of Education. Filing electronically will speed up the submission of your application as it is then sent electronically from the Department of Education, directly to your school. If you do not have a pin number, then you can apply for one by visiting the FAFSA website.

DOCUMENTS NEEDED

In order to fill out the FAFSA you will need specific documents to ensure that you complete your application accurately. Use the checklist below to determine if you have all of the necessary materials to proceed with your application:

- W2 and/or Tax Forms- If you are a dependant student, you will need copies of this information from your parents. If you are an independent student, you can use your own tax information. If you are married, be prepared to enter your spouse's information. It is best to complete your tax return BEFORE filing your FAFSA; this will ensure you receive the correct amount of funds for the current year.
- Other Income- If you receive other income besides your employment, such as unemployment, Social Security, child support, etc., then be prepared to enter these amounts.
- Bank Statements- One of the questions on the FAFSA will ask you what the current account balance is in your bank account, so you should be prepared by having your most current bank statement or contacting your bank for your balance.
- SSN and Drivers License Number- If you do not have your social security number and driver's license number memorized, then have these documents ready as well.
- Assets- If you have any other assets or investments, you will need to know the current value of them so have these documents ready for reference.
- Non US Citizens- If you are not a U.S. Citizen, you will need to make sure you have your permanent resident ID Card.

Finally, check with your school for additional financial aid forms that they may specifically require. Some schools will require a separate packet of forms and may also require additional financial information to determine if you are eligible for any kind of state aid or maybe even specific funds from the school.