

As much as you may dread working on it, the FAFSA is one of those things that needs to be completed so that you can receive the funding you need for your graduate program.

Do not wait to hear if you have been accepted. Go ahead and apply. You can always turn down the money if you end up not needing it. But if you wait, you may not have the funding when you need it and may not be able to start your program.

The form is available on October 1st. The FAFSA website will work from your mobile devices and there is even an app you can use.

Take steps to organize before you start to make the process easier.

- Federal Student Aid ID Number
 - When filling out and submitting your FAFSA electronically, you'll need an [FSA ID](#) to sign the form. If you don't have one, you can create one here: <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/account-info>
 - If you are a dependent, then one parent should also apply for a FAFSA ID at the same site.
 - If you are applying to a graduate or professional school program, you will probably not be filing as a dependent.
 - [Are you a dependent?](https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/dependency-status.pdf) <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/dependency-status.pdf>
- If you are a man, 25 years or younger, you must be registered with the Selective Service to qualify for Federal student loans or grant programs.
 - Follow the guidelines on the [Selective Service System](#). <https://www.sss.gov/>
- Obtain the [FAFSA Web Worksheet](#) <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/2020-21-fafsa-worksheet.pdf>

Now you are ready to work.

Here are the other materials you will need to fill out your FAFSA.

- Your identification
 - Social Security Card
 - Driver's License
 - "Alien" Registration Card (your ARC) commonly known as your green card if you are not a U.S. citizen
- Most recent federal income tax returns and supporting income proof materials
Note: You don't have to wait if you don't have the most recent returns—you/your parents can estimate your income and other tax return information and then correct your application after you have completed your taxes.
 - W-2 forms
 - Note: [The IRS Data Retrieval Tool](#) can help you transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA form. More information is available here: <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/irs-offers-help-to-students-families-to-get-tax-information-for-student-financial-aid-applications>
 - Parents' income tax returns, W-2 forms, 1040 forms if you are a dependent (you are unless declared otherwise)
 - Records of other nontaxable income received such as welfare benefits, Social Security income, veteran's benefits, military or clergy allowances (if applicable)
 - Any additional applicable financial information such as taxable work-study, assistantships, fellowships, grants and scholarship aid reported to the IRS, combat pay, and cooperative education program earnings.
 - Records of any additional nontaxable income including child support received, veterans' non-education benefits, money received or paid on your behalf, etc.
 - Current bank and brokerage account statements, including records of stocks, bonds, mutual funds and other investments (if applicable).
 - Business or investment farm records (if applicable).

- Records relating to any unusual family financial circumstances. This can include anything that changed from last year or anything that separates your family from a “typical” family in terms of unusual marital situations, living situations, separations, etc. Examples include: high non-reimbursed medical and/or dental expenses, unusually high dependent care costs (e.g., for a special needs child or an elderly parent), death, Divorce, salary reductions, job loss and private K-12 tuition.
- Title IV Institution Codes for each school at which you are applying. You can get this code from the school or use [FinAid's Title IV School Code Database](https://www.finaid.org/fafsa/tiv.phtml) <https://www.finaid.org/fafsa/tiv.phtml>

Additional Tips & Resources

- Save copies of all of your completed FAFSA form, along with copies of all of the information you gathered to fill it out. Make sure to keep all documents in a safe place so that you can reference them if necessary. It is also a way to prove that you submitted the form on time!
- [FAFSA](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa) <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
- [Other FAFSA Resources](https://studentaid.gov/resources#fafsa) <https://studentaid.gov/resources#fafsa>
- [Purdue University Division of Financial Aid](https://www.purdue.edu/dfa/) <https://www.purdue.edu/dfa/>
- Association of American Medical College [Financial Aid Fact Sheets](https://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid/article/first-fact-sheets/)—even if you aren't applying to medical school, the AAMC has great financial information available here. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/financial-aid/article/first-fact-sheets/>
- If you are applying to law school, [AccessLex](https://www.accesslex.org/accesslex-center-education-and-financial-capability) has a wealth of financial information. You can even just call them up and ask them for some financial planning assistance. <https://www.accesslex.org/accesslex-center-education-and-financial-capability>
- Once admitted, contact establish a relationship with the financial aid office at the school where you will attend. They can be very helpful during your time in professional school.