



Understanding the FAFSA

Counseling on Postsecondary Education (PSE) Opportunities involves preparing students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or the FAFSA. The FAFSA will need to be completed for anyone seeking financial aid for PSE. Before students can complete the FAFSA, they will need to gather the necessary documentation for the application. The chart below lists the potential documentation that may be requested during the application.

Student Documentation	Parent(s) Documentation for Dependent Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Security Number • Driver's License Number or State Identification Number • Alien Registration Number if you are not a U.S. Citizen • Federal Tax Information or Tax Returns • Records of Untaxed Income • Cash, Savings, and Checking Account Balances • Investments other than the home you live in • List of colleges or career schools you will be applying to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Security Number • Federal Tax Information or Tax Returns • Records of Untaxed Income • Cash, Savings, and Checking Account Balances • Investments other than the home you live in

Document Descriptions:

- **Social Security Number** – a unique number that every citizen of the United States is given for identification purposes
- **Driver's License Number or State Identification Number** – a specific identification number assigned to a driver or individual by the issuing state government agency
- **Alien Registration Number** – a specific identification number assigned to non-citizens of the United States
- **Tax Returns** – Government forms that report income, expenses, and other applicable tax information.
 - Forms that can be used to complete the FAFSA are W2s or IRS 140 documents
- **Record of Untaxed Income** – record or log of money received for a job or benefit that



was not taxed by the government.

- For example, a record detailing the amount of money received for mowing a neighbor's lawn during the summer that was not reported for taxes.
- **Checking and Savings Statements** – bank account statements where money is deposited and withdrawn
- **Investment Portfolios** – money invested for a profit or material results
 - Investments can include stocks or bonds, real-estate, trust funds, etc. For a complete list of investments please visit: <https://studentaid.gov/2122/help/students-investments>

Create an FSA ID:

A Federal Student Aid ID or FSA ID is a username and password that helps students and parents identify themselves electronically to access the Federal Student Aid websites. Creating an FSA ID provides a way for students to save their information and helps them with filling out the FAFSA each year.

An FSA ID is not required to complete the FAFSA form, but it is the fastest and most secure way to sign a FAFSA and get it processed. A student and their parent or guardian will need to have separate FSA ID numbers if the student is considered dependent.

Steps to creating an FSA ID:

- To create an FSA ID visit: <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>
- Know their social security number, mobile phone number, and email address
- Create their individual FSA ID using their own mobile phone number and email address
 - Please note, if the student is attempting to use their parent's information when creating an FSA ID, it will create an error
- Keep their FSA ID username and password secure to ensure that they are the only ones that can access their information

Options for Completing the FAFSA:

Students can decide which option would work best for them. The online or mobile app application is submitted for review immediately after being completed.

- Log on to the Federal Student Aid website to complete an online application: <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
- Fill out the FAFSA on the myStudentAid mobile app – available on iOS and Android
- Download and print the FAFSA PDF document from <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out>. Complete and mail in the document



- Request a print-out of the FAFSA PDF by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID. Complete and mail in the document

FAFSA Completion Deadlines:

FAFSA, states, and colleges all have deadlines of when the FAFSA will need to be completed. Below we discuss general deadlines. For the most accurate dates for FAFSA Completion Deadlines, please visit <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/fafsa-deadlines>.

- Federal FAFSA Deadline
 - Students can begin the application process on October 1st and it must be completed by June 30th for the fall semester of the next school year
 - Federal Student aid funds are limited, so encourage students to complete this application as soon as possible
- Tennessee FAFSA Deadlines
 - For state grants and the Tennessee Promise Scholarship, the application process opens October 1st and must be complete by February 1st for the fall semester of the next year
 - For Tennessee Education Lottery Programs, the application process opens on October 1st and much be completed by September 1st for the fall semester of the next year
- College Deadlines
 - Encourage students to talk with each college's financial aid department to ensure they meet any unique deadlines

Getting Help:

Educate students with additional options for getting assistance with the FAFSA. These include:

- High school counselor
- College's financial aid office
- FAFSA workshop with the community
- Federal Student Aid help number at 1-800-433-3243
- Live chat or email with the Federal Student Aid at <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/contact#all-aid-fsaic>