

FAFSA Tips



Get Organized!

Follow these steps to successfully file your FAFSA today!

Be Prepared! Gather your information before you begin to save time and energy. You will need:

- Student's, parent's and spouse's Social Security Number and birth date
- Student's driver's license number
- Records of money earned (i.e. W-2, 1099 and other income-related documents)
- Most recently completed tax return for student and parents (or student's spouse)
- Records of untaxed income (i.e. child support, veterans benefits, worker's compensation)
- Current bank and investment statements
- Business and farm records
- Alien registration or permanent resident card (if you are not a U.S. citizen)

Create a file. Keep a copy of the information you used to file your FAFSA this year. Items like the first two pages of your tax return, untaxed income records, and copies of your bank and investment statements may be requested by your college or university's financial aid office later on. The FAFSA is filed on an annual basis. By keeping these documents and a copy of your completed FAFSA in a file, you will be better prepared to file next year.

File the FAFSA no matter your financial situation. Even if you do not think you will qualify for need-based financial aid, you should still file the FAFSA. Many colleges require that you file the FAFSA to be considered for institutional aid. In addition, you are required to complete a FAFSA to be eligible for federal Stafford loans and completing the FAFSA does not obligate a student to accept any of the aid offered.

Never pay to file the FAFSA. You can file the FAFSA for free at www.fafsa.gov. Reputable resources, including Iowa College Aid, are available to help you for free.

Meet state and college deadlines. Many states, including Iowa, have a FAFSA filing deadline for state-funded scholarships, grants and work-study opportunities. To be eligible for several State of Iowa financial aid programs your FAFSA must be completed and received at the federal processing center prior to July 1, 2011 (earlier priority filing deadlines exist for certain programs). You also need to complete the Iowa Financial Aid Application, which can be accessed through the statewide community web portal, www.IHaveaPlanIowa.gov. Keep in mind, most colleges and universities have earlier FAFSA filing deadlines. Students should check with their college of choice to determine its priority deadline for financial aid and if additional documentation is required.

Double check information to avoid delays. Review your FAFSA information before you submit it for processing. Make sure the student's Social Security number and the parent's Social Security number are typed in the correct spaces. Mix-ups like these will cause processing delays. Electronically sign your FAFSA. The electronic application is not complete until both the student and parent electronically sign the FAFSA using their Federal Student Aid Personal Identification Numbers (PIN). You can apply for student and parent PINs while completing the FAFSA online, or you can go to the Federal Student Aid PIN website, www.pin.ed.gov, to obtain your PIN prior to starting the FAFSA.

For more information about filing the FAFSA and applying for financial aid, go to www.IowaCollegeAid.gov or contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456.