



Preparing to Complete the FAFSA

Obtain an FSA ID:

1. Go to <https://fsaid.ed.gov>
2. Select "Create FSA ID".
3. Fill-in the required information, including birth date and social security number. Make sure the name you use here matches the name on your social security card.
4. **BOTH** student **and** parent need an FSA ID username and password.

What information will I need to complete the FAFSA?

1. FSA ID username and password for the student and parent,
2. One of the following:
 - a. FSA ID and password to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool*, OR
 - b. Income tax returns and W-2 forms for student and parents if available. (For example, **2020 income tax returns are used for 2022-2023 school year.**)
3. Balance of all checking and savings accounts for parents and students.
4. Balance of all investment accounts for parents and students.

*If you are married filed jointly, the IRS Data Retrieval Tool allows you to copy your e-filed tax return information directly into the FAFSA. This decreases your likelihood of being selected for verification.

Completing the FAFSA

1. Go to www.fafsa.gov
2. Click on "Start A New FAFSA". (Make sure click on the right school year.)
3. Enter the **STUDENT'S** FSA ID and password to log in. Create the SAVE KEY to start the application. **Sign with both student's and parent's e-signature** and finally **submit the application.**



I submitted my FAFSA. Now what?

1. You will receive a confirmation page immediately after submitting your FAFSA stating that your FAFSA has been submitted. This will provide you with an estimate of federal grant and federal loan awards.
2. You will receive a confirmation e-mail 3-5 days after submitting your FAFSA stating that your FAFSA has been processed. At this time, each college to which you submitted your FAFSA will receive your information and begin developing a financial aid award based on it.
3. If your and/or your parents' adjusted gross income or family circumstances have changed since filing your taxes two years ago, contact each of your college's financial aid departments to complete a "Special Circumstances Appeal."
 - a. Watch your e-mail for requests for verification from one or more of the colleges that accepted you. Complete all of the paperwork promptly and return to the colleges.
4. Watch for Financial Aid Award Letters from each of the colleges you added to your FAFSA. Most will appear on each college's student portal. If you need help deciphering these Award Letters, contact your College Now advisor at your school or in the Resource Center.



After completing the FAFSA, some students receive a notification from their college stating they need to complete a process called **Verification** before they can receive any Financial Aid. If that happens to you, do not panic! College Now is here to assist you through the process.

What is Verification?

Verification simply means you have been randomly selected to have your FAFSA reviewed by any college that received your FAFSA to ensure that the information is accurate. While it can seem like another overwhelming step on your journey to college, College Now Advisors can help you complete the process successfully.

How can I tell if I have been selected for Verification?

When you complete your FAFSA, you should be able to see a copy of your Student Aid Report (SAR) about 3-5 days later. As you look at your SAR, the first indicator that you are being verified appears by your EFC (Expected Family Contribution). If there is an asterisk just to the right of the numbers, then you have been selected for verification. Ex. EFC: 4000 *

Then, under the "Comments About Your Information" section, there will be a statement about verification. It may read, "Your FAFSA has been selected for a review process called verification. Your school has the authority to request copies of certain financial documents from you and your parent(s)."

What do I do to complete the Verification Process?

1. **Gather your documents – Keep copies of all your documents**
 - a. Tax information, including W2s – Request a Tax Return Transcript for both the student and parent(s) if you filed taxes. This can be requested electronically at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript>
 - b. Child support - if you indicated on your FAFSA you or a parent receives or pays child support, you may have to provide proof of those payments.
 - c. Proof of any federal benefits like unemployment, SNAP, etc.
 - d. Proof of enrollment for other college students in your home
 - e. Proof of dependency status. If you are an independent student, you may need to provide proof to that status. This could include documents like guardianship papers, court documents related to being a ward of the court or being in the foster care system, emancipation papers, parent(s) death certificates.
2. **Log in to the College Student Portal –** When a college notifies you that your FAFSA is being verified, you contact the Financial Aid Department for further instructions. Many times, these instructions can be found in your Student Portal. The worksheets, forms, and documents needed will be available to you there.
3. **Read and complete ALL forms carefully.** – Read each worksheet/form very carefully. Complete it as thoroughly as possible. Provide the college with all the proof requested.

4. **Return your Verification Materials to the College before the Deadline** – Read the forms to learn what method the college wants you to return the materials to them. Colleges will request the documents be returned by either: (1) uploading all documents onto the secure Student Portal, (2) returning all documents by mail, (3) returning all documents by FAX, or (4) emailing all documents to a person in the financial aid department. Often, colleges will not accept emailed documents. Be sure to send your documents to the college by their preferred method.
5. **Follow up with the Financial Aid Department** – Once you have returned your verification forms to the college, contact the Financial Aid Department to ensure that they have received all necessary forms. Ask the representative when you can expect your financial aid award letter. Review your financial aid award letter with your College Now Advisor. If you have any questions or concerns about your financial aid, contact the college’s financial aid department.

Links/resources:

- <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/review-and-correct> - How to Review and Correct Your FAFSA Application
- <https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/loans/student-loans/selected-fafsa-verification> - What to Do If You’re Selected for FAFSA Verification
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdmcW67u9yl> – FAFSA Verification