

# 9 KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT APPLYING FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID



## 1. EVERYONE SHOULD FILL OUT THE FAFSA®

- There is no income cap.
- Most people qualify for some aid.
- Some scholarships and state aid require a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) too.



## 2. TIMING MATTERS

- The FAFSA comes out every year on October 1.
- Fill it out ASAP. Some schools award aid on a first-come, first-served basis.



## 3. BEWARE OF SCAMMERS

Only complete the FAFSA on [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov) and never pay to fill it out.

## 4. PREP YOUR COLLEGE LIST BEFORE FILLING OUT THE FAFSA

- You can list up to ten schools where you'd like your FAFSA information sent.
- If your list is longer, you can send your information to more schools when you get your Student Aid Report (SAR).
- Sending FAFSA info to schools is not a commitment to attend.
- Schools can't see where else you send your information.



## 5. USE THE IRS DATA RETRIEVAL TOOL

It automatically prefills your form with your tax info, which saves you time and avoids mistakes.

## 6. YOUR FSA ID IS SUPER IMPORTANT

You need it every year you apply for aid. Keep it in a safe spot.

## 7. IT'S UP TO YOU TO REVIEW YOUR SAR

- It comes within 3 to 5 days of submitting your FAFSA online.
- Correct any errors in your online account.

## 8. COMPARE YOUR AWARD LETTERS

- You may start receiving award letters as early as February.
- They can be confusing, so use an award letter comparison tool like [collegecovered.com/award-letter-tool/](https://collegecovered.com/award-letter-tool/) to see how much each school costs.



## 9. ASK IF YOU WANT (OR NEED) MORE AID

- There's no guarantee you'll be granted more aid, but there are two ways to request it:
  - **Appeal** if your financial situation has changed since you completed the FAFSA.
  - **Negotiate** if you need more aid and use other offers as leverage.
- Contact the school's financial aid office with any questions and to understand their process.



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