

FAFSA® Tip Sheet

Filing the FAFSA & Getting Financial Aid



\$ The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) is the most important application you must complete in order to qualify for almost all types of financial aid. Federal and state aid, local programs, and private grants and scholarships all use the FAFSA!



How to Apply

Visit StudentAid.gov/fafsa to complete and submit your application for FREE.



FAQs

Why complete a FAFSA?

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) uses the information provided on your FAFSA to determine your eligibility for aid from federal student financial assistance programs. In Pennsylvania, the FAFSA also helps determine your PA State Grant eligibility. Schools even use FAFSA data to award their own financial aid.

What are the deadlines?

Financial aid deadlines vary by school, state, program of study, and more. **File your FAFSA at the earliest application deadline** for any school you want to attend to ensure you're considered for all financial aid programs. Check with your school for details.

You must complete a new FAFSA Application each year. **For PA State Grant applicants, the FAFSA deadlines are:**

- **MAY 1**—For students attending colleges, universities, and college-transferable programs (excluding community colleges) and for all renewal students
- **AUGUST 1**—If you plan to enroll in a community college, a business, trade, or technical school, a hospital school of nursing, an open-admission institution, or a non-transferable 2-year program

What is the Federal Aid Direct Data Exchange Tool?

All students and contributors must provide consent to have their federal tax information transferred directly into the FAFSA form via the Federal Aid Direct Data Exchange. A contributor refers to anyone who is asked to provide information on a student's FAFSA form.

NOTE: Even if students or contributors don't have a Social Security number, didn't file taxes, or filed taxes outside of the U.S., they still need to provide consent.

What do I need to file my FAFSA?

- Your Federal Student Aid Account (FSA ID)*
- Your Social Security number
- Your alien registration number, if you are not a U.S. citizen
- Your W-2 forms
- Records of child support payments, including the total amount received for the last complete calendar year
- Your federal income tax return and schedules from the prior-prior year (For example, if completing the 2024-25 FAFSA, use 2022 income tax return information.)
- Your current bank statements and records of stocks, bonds, 529 plans, and other investments.
- A personal email address (not a school email address)

If you are a dependent student, you will also need:

- Your parent or spouse's (contributor's) Social Security number

NOTE: A contributor can be a student, student's spouse, biological or adoptive parent, or stepparent who provides information on the applicant's FAFSA.

- Your contributor's income and financial records (as listed above)

* What is a Federal Student Aid account username and password?

When you create an account at StudentAid.gov/fsa-id the username and password (FSA ID) you create will be used to log in to and sign the FAFSA. If you are a dependent student, both you and all contributors must have their own FSA ID with a username and password.

Remember to Use the Correct Tax Information

If you plan to attend college from	You can submit the FAFSA from	Using income & tax information from
July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024	October 1, 2022–June 30, 2024	2021
July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025	December 2023–June 30, 2025	2022
July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026	October 1, 2024–June 30, 2026	2023

Note the Schools You Have Applied To

For federal student aid purposes, the order in which you list your schools on the FAFSA does not matter. However, PA State Grant awards will be made for the first college listed on the FAFSA form.

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

To change the schools listed on the FAFSA, log in to [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov), or call 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) TTY (Hearing Impaired) 1-800-730-8913

File Your PA State Grant Application

The easiest way to file your PA State Grant application is right from the link on your FAFSA confirmation page. If you miss this link, you will need to wait approximately 3–4 days after your FAFSA is submitted and apply at pheaa.org.

Once Your FAFSA is Processed

You will be notified that your FAFSA has been processed and you can view or print your FAFSA Submission Summary from your My FAFSA page. You may receive an email with a link to My FAFSA after your FAFSA has been processed or you can log in to My FAFSA at [StudentAid.gov/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/fafsa). Check your FAFSA Submission Summary for any errors. If you find mistakes, you will need to make necessary corrections online within My FAFSA at [StudentAid.gov/fafsa](https://studentaid.gov/fafsa), or by mail on your paper FAFSA Submission Summary.

Your FAFSA will be shared with any schools you listed on it and with PHEAA, to determine eligibility for the PA State Grant. Schools send out financial aid eligibility notifications to students once they're accepted. Your school may also require you to fill out additional forms for their school-specific programs. Contact your postsecondary schools for more information about financial aid eligibility.

Did Your Circumstances Change?

Contact the financial aid department at your school for help if your financial situation suddenly changed (such as high medical expenses not covered by insurance, divorce, or separation) or your family's income is less this year than what you reported on the FAFSA. **You can also contact PA State Grant staff for help reporting changes in your financial situation at 1-800-692-7392 (TTY: Dial 711, for hearing impaired).**

→ To learn more about the financial aid process, visit pheaa.org.