

Frequently Asked Questions: FAFSA

What is the FAFSA?

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the form that students fill-out to apply for financial aid. In order to award grants, such as the Pell Grant and federal student loans, the government assesses the information that is included on the FAFSA form.

How long will it take me to fill-out the FAFSA?

According to fafsa.gov, filing your FAFSA online takes on average 21 minutes.

Why do I need to complete the FAFSA?

All colleges and universities recommend completing the FAFSA. In addition to being the foundation document for federal and state grants and students loans, it's also required for internal scholarships and work study programs.

If I don't think I qualify for financial aid, do I still need to fill-out the FAFSA?

Fill-out the FAFSA even if you think your family earns too little or too much. Filing is free and you might be surprised how much you are awarded in grants and scholarships from government or your college of choice.

How do I complete the FAFSA Form?

The Free FAFSA form can be completed online, free of charge. Starting in the spring of 2015, students and parents are required to use an *FSA ID* instead of a FAFSA pin. You may create FSA ID anytime by going to the following website: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/fsaid>

How do I fill out the FAFSA online?

The step-by-step process for completing the FAFSA can be followed easily by going to the following website: www.fafsa.ed.gov

Is FAFSA free?

Yes. As you look for FAFSA information online, be aware that there are a number of sites that will try to "SELL" their services to help you complete the FAFSA. FREE FAFSA help is available in the Capital Region.

Visit www.capitalareacan.org/calendar regularly for event updates. You can also complete the FAFSA at no charge by visiting the Department of Education website at: www.fafsa.ed.gov.

What do I need to complete the FAFSA?

Things you will need to complete the FAFSA include:

- Your Social Security number (it's important that you enter it correctly on the FAFSA!).
- Your parents' Social Security numbers if you are a dependent student.
- Your driver's license number if you have one.
- Your Alien Registration Number if you are not a U.S. citizen.
- **Federal tax information or tax returns** including IRS W-2 information for you (and your spouse, if you are married), and for your parents if you are a dependent student.
NOTE: You may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.
- Records of your untaxed income, such as child support received, interest income, and veterans non-education benefits, for you, and for your parents if you are dependent student.
- Information on cash, savings and checking account balances, investments, including stocks and bonds and real estate, but not including the home in which you live; and business and farm assets for you, and for your parents if you are a dependent student.

When should I complete the FAFSA?

The FAFSA form should be completed AS SOON AS POSSIBLE after January 1st of the year for which you are requesting financial aid. Financial aid is awarded on a FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE basis. Therefore it is crucial to submit the FAFSA in a timely manner. While many colleges and universities set priority deadlines as early as February, March 1 is Michigan's deadline for priority consideration for State aid. State awards are based on the first college listed on the FAFSA.

When can I get some help in complete the FAFSA?

Be sure to look for FAFSA workshops being offered at your school and your community. A list of current dates is available at <http://www.capitalareacan.org/calendar>.

What if my parents refuse to complete the financial portion of the FAFSA?

Sometimes parents are hesitant to give out their financial information. Sometimes parents are not available to provide financial information.

If your parents are hesitating, please let them know that you would not be eligible for many scholarships, subsidized loans or grants both public and private that you do not have to repay without their information.

If your parents are not available to provide financial information, you do have some options. You will need the help of a Financial Aid Officer who works at the college you plan to attend. This is a big decision as you will need to pick the college you are going to attend BEFORE you fill out your financial aid paperwork. Talk to your guidance counselor or college adviser to help you document your situation.

If your parents refuse to provide their financial information, you will need them to provide a written and signed statement confirming their refusal to provide their financial information. If your parents won't or are unable to sign this statement, you'll need the signature of a third party such as a teacher, counselor or the court. With this statement, the Financial Aid Officer at the college that you've chosen can determine your situation and decide what financial aid you would be eligible for. Have more questions about parent participation in the financial aid process? Visit

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/resources/parents>

How do I qualify for the Michigan Competitive Scholarship?

MCS program is available to undergraduate students pursuing their first degrees at an approved Michigan postsecondary institution. Students must demonstrate both financial need and merit. Eligible applicants must achieve a qualifying ACT score prior to entering college.

Applicants must file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Michigan's deadline for priority consideration of State aid is March 1. As a reminder, the state office does not know which college a student plans to attend; therefore, State aid awards are based on the first college listed on the FAFSA. For more information visit: http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/0,4636,7-128-60969_61016-274563--,00.html

Do I have to submit a FAFSA every year?

Yes. In order to receive your financial aid package to pay for tuition, books, room and board, ect., you need to submit a FAFSA each year.

After submitting the FAFSA, when will I know how much financial aid I will receive?

If you filed early before March 1, you will most likely receive a Financial Aid Award Notice from the college or university's financial aid office in the spring. Remember to always check your email and return forms in a timely fashion.