

# Steps to Filing for Financial Aid

## **1. Collect Documents**

Collect your income tax returns, Social Security numbers, W-2 form(s), and other records of income and assets. If you are under 24 years old, you will likely need your parents' information as well. It is helpful to fill out the 'FAFSA on the Web' worksheet first. You can get the worksheet at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). (See reverse side for more information about required documents.)

## **2. Get an FSA ID**

Students and one Parent should apply for an FSA ID, which will allow you to electronically "sign" Federal Student Aid documents. It will also allow you to make corrections to your application once it is filed and access your personal information online. If you are under 24 years old, it is likely **you and one of your parents will each need an FSA ID. You can apply for an FSA ID at [www.fsaaid.ed.gov](http://www.fsaaid.ed.gov).**

## **3. Complete the FAFSA**

Applying for federal student aid is free. You can apply by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) after October 1st for the following academic year. Apply online by going to [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Please note that the FAFSA needs to be completed for each year you will attend school. **If you are starting college in the fall 2021 semester, you will be filling out the 2021-2022 FAFSA form using prior-prior year tax return (2019).**

For free help in completing your FAFSA or to obtain a paper FAFSA you can call the **Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1 800-4-FED-AID (1 800-433-3243)**. For federal student financial aid information online you can go to [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)

## **IRS Data Retrieval Tool**

This tool allows you and your parents to access the IRS tax return information needed to complete the FAFSA and transfer it directly into your FAFSA from the IRS website (**must enter personal information exactly how it appears on the tax return**). It is available 1-2 weeks after you file your income tax return electronically. It is highly recommended that you use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool for several reasons:

- *It is the easiest way to provide your tax data.*
- *It is the best way to ensure that your information is accurate.*
- *You will not need to provide a copy of tax transcripts or returns to your college*

## **4. Link to TAP from the Web**

The TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) application is for New York State residents to apply for NY State financial aid. **After you complete the [FAFSA](#) online, you will be taken to a confirmation page. There, you will find a state application link. Click on the link and you will be directed to the [HESC](http://hesc.ny.gov) website ([hesc.ny.gov](http://hesc.ny.gov)) to apply for New York State-based financial aid.** If you fill out your FAFSA on paper or miss the link, you will receive an email from HESC with information on how to apply for TAP. The TAP customer service line is 888-697-4372.

## **5. Receive a Student Aid Report (SAR)**

A few days after you complete the FAFSA you will receive an email with a link to your Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR contains a summary of your FAFSA information and a calculation of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)-the number used to determine your federal student aid eligibility. Review your SAR to see if additional information or corrections are needed. You can also access your SAR and make corrections at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) using your FSA ID.

## **6. Verify Your Data**

The U.S. Department of Education selects a certain number of applicants for a verification process. If you are selected (will be indicated on your SAR) you will need to submit requested documents to the financial aid office of the college you will be attending in order to verify the data that you have supplied on your FAFSA.

## **7. Receive the Award Letter**

Once your financial aid applications are complete and you demonstrate financial need, the colleges that you have been accepted to will send you an award notification indicating the financial aid programs for which you qualify. If you are not eligible for need based financial aid, you can contact the financial aid office at your college to find out other options to finance your education.

**\*\*Please be advised that certain private colleges also require that you complete a CSS Profile through the College Board website@ [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). Please check your colleges for additional requirements and deadlines.**