



HELPING YOUR CHILD APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Every year the federal government gives out millions of dollars in financial aid to college students. This aid can be a grant or a loan. A grant is money that does not have to be paid back. A loan is money that you do have to pay back after you graduate or stop attending school. Most states also have aid programs to help pay so students can finish college. In order to get state and federal student aid, you have to fill out a “Free Application for Federal Student Aid” (FAFSA). This application asks for income information from both parents (including stepparents) and students.

WHO CAN GET FEDERAL STUDENT AID?

To get Federal Student Aid the student must meet certain requirements. They must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Have a valid Social Security number (unless they are from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau)
- Register with the Selective Service if male, 18-25 years old. Go to www.sss.gov for more information.
- Have a high school diploma or GED or pass an exam approved by the Department of Education
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student working toward a degree or certificate in a program at a school that participates in the Federal Student Aid programs.
- Not have a drug conviction for an offense that happened while they were getting Federal Student Aid like grants, loans, or work-study. Unless the conviction was removed from their record.

Other requirements may apply. Contact the school’s financial aid office for more information.

MY CHILD IS AN ADULT, WHY DO I HAVE TO BE A PART OF THIS PROCESS?

Student Aid is given based on financial need. The federal government says that all students are dependents of their parents until the age of 24. Because of this rule, the Department of Education needs the income information for parents of all students under age 24 so that they can decide financial aid eligibility. But, if the student has already gotten a bachelor’s degree then they are not dependents. A child could also be seen as independent if they are under 24 and both parents are deceased or the student is a veteran or currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, or if the student is married.

For questions about dependency issues contact a financial aid administrator.



HOW IS MY PERSONAL INFORMATION USED?

Income information is used to figure out what kind and how much aid to give to the student. When you sign the form you are agreeing to let the government check on the information you give. They check by looking at you tax returns.

HOW IS FINANCIAL AID AWARDED?

The Department of Education looks at the income information in the FAFSA and makes a Student Aid Report (SAR). The SAR explains how much money they think the student and family should be able to put towards the cost of school. This amount is called the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC). Each college or university uses the EFC to decide how much financial aid to give to each student.

IF I FILL OUT A FAFSA DO I HAVE TO HELP MY CHILD PAY FOR SCHOOL?

No. Doing the FAFSA is helping the college or university figure out how much aid to give to your child. Financial aid is given to your child based on the EFC and money the family has. If your child needs more loans that need a co-signer, you can decide if you want to do that. If you decide to do it you have to do a separate application process. By signing the FAFSA, **you are not** authorizing any loans or financial obligations in your name.

WHAT IF MY CHILD DOES NOT LIVE WITH ME?

Parents still need to give information for FAFSA unless:

- The child has been declared a ward of the Court
- Another person has adopted the child

For more information:

- U.S. Department of Education at www.ed.gov
- Call 1-800-4 FED AID (1-800-433-3243)
- Get in touch with the financial aid office at your child's school
- Get in touch with a High School guidance counselor

