


# FAFSA Cheat Sheet

## FSA ID *(Both student and contributor)*

**1** **VISIT THE WEBSITE *STUDENTAID.GOV*.**
On that page you'll want to click the tab that says 'Create Account'

**2** **ENTER EMAIL AND CREATE A USERNAME AND PASSWORD.**
- Make sure you have access to this email address in the future (school emails expire).
- Passwords must have between 8-30 characters, numbers, uppercase and lowercase letters, and special characters

**3** **ENTER NAME, SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, AND DATE OF BIRTH.**
Name and Social Security Number MUST appear as exactly the same as on your Social Security Card. Contributors do not need to have a SSN to create an FSA ID

**4** **ENTER MAILING ADDRESS** and decide if you want to opt-in for mobile phone account recovery (you can recover your information via your cell)

**5** **SELECT FOUR CHALLENGE QUESTIONS.**
- Pick questions that have answers that won't change.
- Ex. parent's birthday? name of first pet? Etc...

**6** **REVIEW, CONFIRM, and ACCEPT terms and conditions**

**7** **VERIFY YOUR FSA ID** by entering a code that is sent to your email. You will have to do this twice if you opted in for mobile account recovery

**8** Record FSA information on the FSA ID's below.
**Congrats, you're one step closer to going to college!**

| STUDENT | CONTRIBUTOR #1 | (CONTRIBUTOR #2) |
|---|---|---|
| Username | Username | Username |
| E-mail | E-mail | E-mail |
| Password | Password | Password |
| Backup Code | Backup Code | Backup Code |

- File this in a secure place. The FSA ID will be used your WHOLE college career since you will have to file a FAFSA every year while in college
- Both student AND contributors need an FSA ID.

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Part 2

# FAFSA Tips

*Tips and Tricks on filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to save time and avoid mistakes!*

**MAKE SURE YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT WEBSITE *STUDENTAID.GOV*.**
You should never be charged to fill out your FAFSA (it's a free application)!

**SELECT THE RIGHT SCHOOL YEAR WHEN STARTING THE FORM**
Select the 2026-2027 FAFSA if you are planning on starting in Fall 2026

**YOU WILL USE 2024 TAXES FOR THE 2026-27 FAFSA**

**BOTH THE STUDENT AND CONTRIBUTOR(S) NEED THEIR FSA IDS**
in order to sign the form

**USE THE IRS DATA RETRIEVAL TOOL, if you are able, in order to put in the tax information**

- Based on the tax form you filed with, you can pull your tax information directly from your taxes on to the FAFSA
- If you are not able to use this, you will have to manually input your taxes

**FOR MALE STUDENTS AGES 18-25, YOU NO LONGER HAVE TO BE REGISTERED FOR SELECTIVE SERVICE (THE DRAFT) IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID**
You can still choose to register using the FAFSA form if you would like

**BE CAREFUL YOU AREN'T PUTTING STUDENT INFORMATION IN THE PARENT SECTION AND VICE VERSA**

**SELECT YES FOR WORK STUDY**
Work study is where an on-campus job is built into your financial aid package to help you pay for books and other cost

**MAKE SURE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS MATCH UP PERFECTLY WITH WHAT IS ON YOUR TAX FORM**
Ex. if you typed in Street for your address on the taxes, make sure you spell it out on the FAFSA and not use abbreviation

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Part 2

# FAFSA Tips *cont.*

**ADD AS MANY SCHOOLS AS YOU THINK YOU MIGHT APPLY TO.**
You can make changes or add schools by logging back into the FAFSA with FSA ID. Students can add up to twenty (20) colleges, universities, trade schools, etc.

**CHOOSE 1 PARENT TO INCLUDE FOR THE PARENT INFO**
if parents are married and filed taxes jointly

- If parents are not married, choose the parent you stay with more than 50% of the time and a step-parent if they remarried
- If unsure, see: *studentaid.gov/fafsa-apply/parents*
- Not claimed as a dependent?
  See: *studentaid.gov/help-center/answers/article/independent-student*

**WATCH YOUR E-MAIL/MAIL** for schools requiring any additional documents for verification and your award letter!

**YES, YOU HAVE TO SUBMIT THE FAFSA *EVERY YEAR*!**
Make sure to fill out the FAFSA for every year you are in school to be considered for federal financial aid

**WHERE APPLICABLE, ENTER "0" FOR FINANCIAL INFORMATION**
instead of leaving a box blank.

**USE THE "CONTINUE" AND "PREVIOUS" BUTTONS ON THE WEBPAGE, NOT THE BACK AND FORWARD ARROWS ON YOUR WEB BROWSER**
Back and forward arrows will log out the user and you could lose information entered on previous web pages

**MAKE SURE YOU NAME MATCHES YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARD EXACTLY**

- If a parent's or student's name has a suffix, such as Jr. or III, include a space between the last name and the suffix.
- Make sure the name you enter when you create your FSA ID and on the FAFSA match what is on the social security cards.
- If your name(s) is too long to fit into the field, enter as many characters as you can into the field.

**MAKE SURE YOU ENTER THE CORRECT SSN**
Have the SS card in front of you when entering information. It is easy to think you remember the SSN but can easily make the error of entering a wrong number.

**MAKE SURE TO REVIEW YOUR FAFSA SUBMISSION SUMMARY!**
in case there are errors you need to correct.

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Part 3

# FAFSA Tips *(Parent/Contributor portion)*

***"Contributor" refers to anyone who is required to provide information on a student's FAFSA form, including the student, the student's spouse, a biological or adopted parent, or the parent's spouse. Being a contributor does not imply responsibility for the student's college costs.***

***If your student has already started the FAFSA process, you will fill out the parent portion of the FAFSA that they already started**

**A PARENT WILL NEED TO CREATE A FSAID (SEE PG.1)**
If unsure which parent needs to fill out the FAFSA, go to: *studentaid.gov/fafsa-apply/parents*

**GO TO *STUDENTAID.GOV*, AND SELECT "START NEW FORM"**

- If you're starting the FAFSA form on behalf of your child, select "Parent." If your child has already started the form and has invited you as a contributor, locate the invitation email and click "Accept Invitation"
- Then you will need to enter your student's name, social security number, and date of birth. If your child already has an FSA ID, make sure that it matches your child's "Personal Information" section

**WHEN ASKED, SELECT THE 2026-2027 FAFSA**

- If your student has already started the FAFSA, the form they began to fill out should appear
  - You and your student will be able to fill out the questions they did not complete
- If you are starting the FAFSA with your student, select the option to start a new FAFSA

**THE FAFSA IS FOR THE STUDENT**
so make sure all information you put in relates to the student, unless it specifically asks for the parent information

**THE IRS DATA RETRIEVAL TOOL WILL PULL YOUR 2024 TAXES**
directly from the IRS and put it on the FAFSA, both you and your student (if they filed in 2024) can use it

**REVIEW AND SIGN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS**
after completing and reviewing the parent section. For a FAFSA form to be considered complete, all contributors (including the student) must provide their information, consent and approval, and signature on the form