WESLEYAN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

# FAFSA QUICK START

A practical starting guide for students and families

## What is the FAFSA?

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the free federal form used to apply for federal student aid. States, colleges, and some private aid providers also use FAFSA information when determining financial aid.

### WHY COMPLETE IT

Submitting the FAFSA can open access to grants, scholarships, work-study, and federal student loans for college, career school, or trade school.

### A FAMILY PROCESS

The student and every required contributor complete and sign only their own sections. Each person uses a separate StudentAid.gov account.

## Create separate StudentAid.gov accounts

The student needs an account. Each required contributor - such as a parent, stepparent, or spouse - also needs their own account. Do not share usernames or passwords; each account acts as that person's legal electronic signature.

CREATE AN ACCOUNT

## Gather what your family may need

- The student's StudentAid.gov account and the email address for each required contributor.
- Federal income tax returns or tax records for the student and contributors, even when tax information transfers from the IRS.
- Records of child support received, if the FAFSA asks for them.
- Current records for cash, checking, savings, investments, and other reportable assets.
- A list of colleges, career schools, or trade schools the student is considering.
- Time for every required contributor to complete, consent to, and sign their own section.

### OFFICIAL FAFSA FORM

BEGIN THE FAFSA

studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa

### PLAN FOR SCHOOL DEADLINES

Federal, state, and college requirements and deadlines can differ. Check each college's financial-aid instructions directly.

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## A clear path through the FAFSA

Work in order, review carefully, and follow the directions inside the official FAFSA form.

1. **Create accounts**
   The student and each required contributor create and use their own StudentAid.gov account.
2. **Gather information**
   Have tax records, child-support records if applicable, asset information, and a school list available.
3. **Start the student's form**
   The student signs in, selects the correct FAFSA award year, and begins the student section.
4. **Complete the student sections**
   Answer each question as instructed and review the student's identity, circumstances, demographics, financials, and school information.
5. **Invite contributors**
   Enter the requested contributor email address. Each invited contributor completes and signs only their own section.
6. **Add colleges**
   List the schools being considered so they can receive FAFSA information. Schools may be added or removed later.
7. **Review, sign, and submit**
   Check responses and contributor status. The form cannot be submitted until all required sections and signatures are complete.
8. **Track and review**
   Check the form status, then review the FAFSA Submission Summary for accuracy, corrections, and next steps.

## After submitting

- Check the FAFSA status in the student's StudentAid.gov dashboard.
- Review all four areas of the FAFSA Submission Summary: Eligibility Overview, FAFSA Form Answers, School Information, and Next Steps.
- Make allowed corrections when needed and confirm that every intended college is listed.

## Follow up with each college

- Ask whether the college requires additional forms or documentation.
- Check the college's financial-aid deadlines and portal messages.
- Respond promptly to verification or correction requests.
- Remember: the FAFSA Submission Summary is not the college's final financial-aid offer.

**Official sources verified September 1, 2026**

Federal Student Aid - Student FAFSA steps

Federal Student Aid - After submitting

Federal Student Aid - FAFSA checklist

USA.gov - FAFSA overview

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