**Using Screen Reader Software With the Online FAFSA® Form**

The *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) site allows visually-impaired users to complete the FAFSA form using a browser and screen reader software.

There will be a banner at the top of the screen with your name, a save button, and the FAFSA menu. The FAFSA menu contain different options depending on where you are in the process, but it always contains options for “Help” and “View Status.”

Note: If you are on a mobile device, the save button will be under the FAFSA menu.

Below the banner is a progress indicator that may list up to five sections. The progress indicator will include different sections depending on your role on the FAFSA form. The progress indicator may include the following:

* Personal Circumstances
* Demographics
* Financials
* Colleges
* Signatures

## Answering FAFSA® Questions With a Screen Reader

Each page is designed to adapt to your browser and screen size. You may need to use the scroll bars to access all of the screen on smaller displays.

After the questions and response options, there are “Continue” and “Previous” buttons.

When you are ready to go to the next or previous page, use the “Continue” or “Previous” buttons. Questions on the online FAFSA form will vary depending on your answers to earlier questions. The “Continue” and “Previous” buttons will guide you to the correct page.

The online FAFSA form uses four types of responses for questions: radio buttons, text boxes, list boxes, and checkboxes.

Radio buttons are used to select one or more predefined responses.

Text boxes are used for questions that don’t have predefined responses, such as name, address, and income earned.

While these questions allow for free-form entry, only certain values are valid responses.

For example, only numbers are acceptable for the zip code question. If an invalid value is entered in a text answer box, an error message displays, and you’ll be taken back to the same page to fix the error. The screen focus will also be set to the question.

List boxes are used for questions where you must choose from a list of options.

These questions don’t allow for free-form entry. Only the values in the list may be selected.

For example, only valid states will be available for answers to the “State” question.

Checkboxes are used to select one or more predefined responses.

Help topics are accessed by selecting “Help Center” at the top of the screen or the question mark icon next to each question that display on pop-up windows. When you finish reading the help topic, close the pop-up window (Alt-F4), and the screen focus will return to the main browser window.

# Date of Legal Residency

Enter the month and year when you became a legal resident in the state you reported as your state of legal residence. If you were born in this state, enter the month and year you were born.

Enter or select the month in the “Month” field. Use the “mm” format if typing. For example, August should be entered as “08.”

Enter the year in the “Year” field in “yyyy” format. For example, enter “2015” instead of “15.”

Your state of legal residence will use this information to determine if you meet its criteria for state financial aid.

# How do I check the status of my FAFSA® form?

## 2024–25 FAFSA® Form

You can check the status of your 2024–25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form by

1. [logging in](https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/sign-in/landing) and
2. finding your application status in the Status Center under “My Activity,” which displays after you log in if you have already started or completed a FAFSA form.

The status of your FAFSA form will be one of the following:

* **Draft**: Your section of the FAFSA form is incomplete.
* **In Progress**: You provided your consent, approval, and signature to your section of the FAFSA form, but the FAFSA form has not been submitted yet.
* **In Review**: Your FAFSA form was submitted but hasn’t been processed yet.
* **Action Required**: You are missing your consent and approval or signature or the FAFSA form was processed, but a correction is required.
* **Processed**: Your application was processed successfully. No further action is needed.
* **Closed**: Your FAFSA form was never submitted and can no longer be submitted because the federal FAFSA deadline passed.

**Note**: If you submitted a paper 2024–25 FAFSA form, you can check the status of your form once we process it. We’ll begin processing paper 2024–25 forms in July.

To check the disbursement status of your federal student aid, contact your college’s or career school’s financial aid office.

# What is the FAFSA® form and why should I fill it out?

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form is an application for federal student aid. You need to complete the FAFSA form to apply for federal student aid such as federal grants, work-study funds, and loans. Completing and submitting the FAFSA form is free and easier than ever, and it gives you access to federal student aid—the largest source of aid— to help you pay for college or career/trade school.

In addition, many states and colleges use your FAFSA information to determine your eligibility for state and school aid. Some private aid providers may use your FAFSA information to determine whether you qualify for their aid.

# What information will I need to fill out a FAFSA® form?

You’ll need the following to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form:

**For those completing a 2024–25 FAFSA form, you need the following information:**

* Your Social Security Number
* Your A-Number (if you're not a U.S. citizen)
* Federal income tax returns, records of child support received; and your current balance of cash, savings, and checking accounts (**Note:** You must provide consent and approval to disclose your federal tax information to be eligible for federal student aid.)
* Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable), net worth of investments, businesses, and farms
* Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
* An [FSA ID](https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch) (account username and password) to log in to StudentAid.gov and start the FAFSA form electronically

# How long will it take to fill out the FAFSA® form?

Most people take less than an hour to complete and submit a new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. This includes [gathering any needed documents](https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out#gathering-the-documents-needed-to-apply) or data, completing and reviewing the application, and reading the important information on the "Confirmation" page. The student will receive the “Confirmation” page after they sign and submit their FAFSA form.

# Will I need my parents’ information? (2024–25)

If **any** of the following conditions apply to you (the student), then you are considered an independent student on the 2024–25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form, and your parent(s) won’t need to provide their information:

* You were born prior to the year 2001
* Your current marital status is married (not separated) or remarried
* When you begin the 2024–25 school year, your college grade level will be Master's or doctorate program (such as M.A., MBA, M.D., J.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)
* You’re currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training
* You’re a veteran of the U.S. armed forces
* You have children or other people (excluding their spouse) who live with you and receive more than half of their support from you now and between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025
* At any time since you turned 13, you were an orphan (no living biological or adoptive parent)
* At any time since you turned 13, you were a ward of the court
* At any time since you turned 13, you were in foster care
* You are or were a legally emancipated minor, as determined by a court in your state of residence
* You are or were in a legal guardianship with someone other than your parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in your state of residence
* At any time on or after July 1, 2023, you were unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless as determined by one of the following authorities.

**Authorities that can determine you were unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless include the following:**

* Director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness
* The student’s high school or school district homeless liaison or designee
* Director or designee of a project supported by a federal TRIO or GEAR UP program grant
* Financial aid administrator

If **none** of the above conditions apply, then you are considered a dependent student and generally **must** provide your [parents’](https://studentaid.gov/help/who-is-parent) information on your FAFSA form.

## If You’re Not Officially Designated Homeless or At-Risk of Being Homeless

If you do not have an official determination from an authority stating that you are unaccompanied and [homeless or at-risk of being homeless](https://studentaid.gov/2425/help/unaccompanied-homeless), but feel you qualify, speak with a financial aid administrator (FAA) at your chosen college or career school. An FAA can review your circumstances to determine if you qualify.

## Unusual Circumstances

If you have an [unusual circumstance](https://studentaid.gov/help/unusual-circumstances) that prevents you from providing parental information, you may still be able to submit your FAFSA form.

You may be experiencing unusual circumstances if you

* left home due to an abusive or threatening environment;
* are abandoned by or estranged from their parents, and have not been adopted;
* have refugee or asylee status and are separated from their parents, or their parents are displaced in a foreign country;
* are a victim of human trafficking;
* are incarcerated, or their parents are incarcerated and contact with the parents would pose a risk to the student; or
* are otherwise unable to contact or locate their parents, and have not been adopted.

If your circumstances resulted in not having a safe, stable place to live, you may be considered a homeless youth.

Learn about [how to apply for a Direct Unsubsidized Loan](https://studentaid.gov/2425/help/parent-unwilling-provide-information) if your parents are unwilling to provide their information, but you don’t have an unusual circumstance that prevents you from contacting or obtaining the parents’ information.