



Financial Aid Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for financial aid?

To apply for most financial aid, complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Colleges and universities use this form to determine federal, state and school aid. The FAFSA is available from high school counselors and the financial aid office at the college or university you want to attend. You can also apply online at www.fafsa.gov. (Undocumented students can apply for Minnesota state financial aid by completing the [MN Dream Act Application](#) instead of the FAFSA.)

Why should I complete the FAFSA when I know I won't qualify for aid?

Most student loan programs require the student to complete a FAFSA, and many colleges and universities use the FAFSA to award institutional grants and scholarships.

How much financial aid can I get?

It will depend on your and your parents' income, living expenses, assets and savings. This determines the *expected family contribution* (EFC), a calculation of how much you and your family can pay for your college education. The cost of attending the institution you select is another factor determining your financial aid. The amount of financial aid you are eligible to receive is the expected family contribution subtracted from the cost of attendance. This information is sent to the colleges and universities you are considering.

Each school will offer a tailored financial aid package to meet this financial need, and may include a combination of grants, scholarships, work study and loans. Don't rule out any school simply because of cost. Your financial aid eligibility increases as the cost of a school increases, but the expected family contribution stays the same:

Visit www.ohe.state.mn.us/estimator to calculate how much aid you may be eligible to receive.

Do families need to complete a separate FAFSA for each child?

Yes. However, the FAFSA on the Web allows you to transfer information from one child's FAFSA to another's if they apply within the same year.

If my parents are legally separated or divorced but filed taxes jointly this year, do I need to include their financial information on the FAFSA?

No. Only the parent with whom you resided the longest during the preceding 12 months should provide financial information. If you did not live with either parent or lived with both equally, then the parent who provided the most financial support should provide financial information on the FAFSA. If this particular parent has remarried, you must also report your stepparent's information.

What if my parents live together but were never married?

If your legal/adoptive parents live together but are not married, you will provide information about both parents on the FAFSA. If your legal/adoptive parent lives with a partner who is not your legal/adoptive parent, then you will provide information only for your legal/adoptive parent on the FAFSA.

My parents refuse to provide their tax information for the FAFSA. Can I still get financial aid?

Yes, but you will only be eligible for the unsubsidized Stafford Loan, which means you must pay interest while attending college. However, if your inability to obtain parental information is due to unusual circumstances (parental

imprisonment, abuse, abandonment, etc.), you should contact your college's financial aid office to ask about a dependency override, which will allow you to apply as an independent student.

If I plan to get married after filing the FAFSA, should I list my status as married?

No. Since the FAFSA is based on the information provided on the date it was completed, your marriage status would be "unmarried" if you complete the FAFSA before you get married.

Does the FAFSA consider me an independent student if I am expecting a child during the academic year for which I will receive financial aid?

Yes. Be sure, though, to include the child under household size.

Will a family's retirement assets decrease a student's financial aid eligibility?

It depends on the type of assets. Assets such as pensions, life insurance and individual retirement accounts (IRAs) aren't included in determining financial aid eligibility. The net value of your home isn't either. Other assets, such as savings accounts, 529 plans, certificates of deposit, stocks, mutual funds and other real estate are included. However, the formula used to calculate the expected family contribution (EFC) assumes families are saving for retirement and provides an "asset protection allowance" according to parental age and marital status. Families should not need to tap into retirement savings to pay for college.

I live with my foster parents and their children. Should I report them in parents' household size?

If you were in foster care at or after age 13, you can answer 'Yes' to the question in Section Three of the FAFSA that asks about being in foster care. You will automatically be considered an independent student, which means you will not have to provide parental information on the FAFSA.

I was born in the United States, but my parents are undocumented. Can I still apply for financial aid using the FAFSA?

Yes. Your parents should put all zeros for their Social Security numbers on the FAFSA and complete the parents' section.

Am I eligible for financial aid if I am not a U.S. citizen?

Yes, but you must meet one of the following criteria to be considered an eligible non-citizen:

- You are a U.S. permanent resident with an Alien Registration Card (I-551).
- You are a conditional permanent resident with an I-551C card.
- You have an Arrival Departure Record (I-94) from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) with any of the following designations:
 - refugee
 - asylum granted
 - parolee
 - Cuban-Haitian entrant
 - victim of human trafficking
 - holder of T-Visa

For other eligibility requirements, visit www.ohe.state.mn.us/paying. Click on **About Financial Aid** and then **Are You Eligible?** for federal and state aid eligibility information.