

all access

at EducationPlanner.org > Paying

FEATURING presents

YOUR TICKET
TO RIDE

the
deadline

N*HOW2FILE

FAFSA

REFERENCE GUIDE

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID



American Education Services

Helping You Be Next.

You may be unfamiliar with the college application and financial aid process. You may also have questions about how you can afford the cost of higher education. **If you want to go to college, AES can help you plan and pay for it.** We have the information and resources available to help you. We can help you apply for grants, scholarships, work-study and even borrow money wisely, if you need to.

The crucial first step in this process is filing the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. By doing so, you open the door to numerous student financial aid possibilities. Your FAFSA determines what aid you may qualify for including grants, scholarships and low-cost federal student loans.

At AES, because we believe in making education affordable, we do more than help students go to college.

WE GUARANTEE THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS, THINKERS AND DOERS.



American Education Services

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APPLYING

Tips for
parents & students

Tips for
parents & students

aesSuccess.org

1. What is the FAFSA?

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** is the first step in the financial aid process. You use it to apply for federal student financial aid, such as grants, loans and work-study.

You can electronically access the FAFSA at EducationPlanner.org, our award-winning college planning Website, or at fafsa.ed.gov. You can also submit a paper FAFSA.

REMEMBER TO **SCHEDULE YOUR ACT & SAT EXAMS EARLY.**

2. Why complete a FAFSA?

The only way to find out if you qualify for “**free money**” awards like **grants** and **scholarships**, as well as reduced-cost federal **student loans**, is to complete and submit a FAFSA.

The U.S. Department of Education uses the information provided on your FAFSA to determine your eligibility for federal student financial assistance. Many states and schools also use the FAFSA data to award student aid. **There is no charge to complete and submit a FAFSA**, whether you file electronically or choose to send a paper FAFSA form.

VISIT EDUCATIONPLANNER.ORG OR aesSUCCESS.ORG TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON HIGHER EDUCATION.

Tips for
parents & students

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3. Where can I obtain the FAFSA?

The electronic version can be accessed at EducationPlanner.org or fafsa.ed.gov. You may request a paper FAFSA by calling the U.S. Department of Education at **1.800.433.3243**.

BEWARE OF SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS! – IT’S NOT FREE IF YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR IT!

4. What do I need to complete the FAFSA?

- Your **Social Security** number
- Your **driver’s license number**, if you have one
- Your **W-2** forms
- Your federal **income tax** return
- Your current **bank statements** and records of stocks, bonds, and other investments
- Your records of **other untaxed income** received such as Social Security, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or veteran’s benefits
- Your **business or farm records**, if applicable
- Your **alien registration number** if you are not a U.S. citizen
- If you are a dependent student, you will also need:
 - Your **parent(s)’ Social Security number**
 - Your **parent(s)’ income** and financial records (as listed above)

Use income records for the calendar year prior to the academic year for which you are applying for financial aid. For example, use 2007 income information to complete the 2008-2009 FAFSA. However, if you haven’t completed your taxes yet, use estimated figures so you don’t miss a filing deadline. You can correct with actual data later.

VISIT THE TOP SCHOOLS OF YOUR CHOICE OR TAKE A VIRTUAL ONLINE TOUR.

5. Who can help me fill out the FAFSA?

Your high school counselor or the Financial Aid Office of the school you plan to attend can provide assistance. You can also get **toll-free help** by calling the [Federal Student Aid Information Center \(FSAIC\)](#) at the telephone number(s) listed below.

1.800.4.FED-AID (1.800.433.3243)

(TTY 1.800.730.8913)

ACCESS THE AWARD ANALYZER AT [EDUCATIONPLANNER.ORG](#) TO HELP YOU DETERMINE WHICH PACKAGE BEST MEETS YOUR NEEDS.

6. Why fill out the FAFSA online?

- Fewer errors than paper applicants
- Faster processing
- FAFSA on the Web has built-in help to guide you through the application process
- The schools you list on your FAFSA online application will receive your processed information faster

Visit [EducationPlanner.org](#) or [fafsa.ed.gov](#).

ATTEND **FINANCIAL AID NIGHTS**.

7. What is a PIN and why do I need one?

The **PIN** is your **Personal Identification Number** and serves as your electronic signature, which allows access to your personal information in various U.S. Department of Education systems. **This number does not change.** Each year that you apply for financial aid, you can use your PIN to access and electronically sign your FAFSA. To obtain a PIN, you can apply at the U.S. Department of Education's PIN site, [pin.ed.gov](#). **Both the student and one parent must obtain a PIN.**

SEARCH FOR **"FREE MONEY"** AWARDS LIKE GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS FIRST. [EDUCATIONPLANNER.ORG](#) HAS ONE OF THE LARGEST FREE SCHOLARSHIP DATABASES WITH NEARLY 1.8 MILLION AWARDS.

8. What are the deadlines for applying?

You must complete a new FAFSA form each year.

Apply as early as possible after January 1 of the calendar year in which you plan to attend college. Deadlines for aid from your state, from your school, and from private sources tend to be much earlier than deadlines for federal aid. To ensure that the financial aid package your school offers you contains aid from as many sources as possible, **apply as soon as you can after January 1.**

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR VARIOUS FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS, YOU SHOULD **CHECK THE FAFSA DEADLINE** WITH THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL YOU PLAN TO ATTEND.

11. What types of aid are available to students who file the FAFSA?

Federal Pell Grants - Money awarded that does not have to be paid back. Awarded based on “financial need,” a standard formula established by Congress.

State Grants - Money awarded by some states that does not have to be paid back. Most state grants are awarded to students based on financial need; however, some programs are merit-based.

Other Grants/Scholarships - Money awarded that does not have to be paid back. Ask the Financial Aid Office of the school you plan to attend about what grants/scholarships they may offer.

There are many types of grants and scholarships available. Access the Scholarship Search feature at EducationPlanner.org.

Work-Study Program - Students earn money through employment on or off-campus to help pay for their education expenses.

Student Loans - Money that has to be repaid with interest. Repayment takes place after you have graduated or cease to be enrolled at least half-time.

BE CAREFUL IF APPLYING FOR STUDENT CREDIT CARDS. OVERWHELMING STUDENT CREDIT CARD DEBT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DERAIL YOUR FUTURE PLANS.

12. Can I receive federal student aid if I am enrolled less than full-time?

Yes, students enrolled half-time are eligible for most types of federal student aid. Some state-sponsored programs require full-time enrollment.

DEVELOP A BUDGET FOR YOURSELF WHILE AT SCHOOL AND STICK TO IT.

FINANCIAL NEED

13. What is included in the cost of attendance at a college or career school?!

The costs typically include:

- Tuition & Fees
- Room & Board
- Books
- Personal Expenses
- Transportation

Other allowances may be made for students with disabilities, dependent care, study abroad programs, or other special circumstances.

LOOK INTO WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS THAT ALLOW YOU TO EARN MONEY TOWARD YOUR SCHOOL EXPENSES.

14. What is financial need?

COA - EFC = Your financial need

Cost of Attendance (COA)

Includes: tuition, fees, room, board, books, and supplies and personal expenses associated with attendance (transportation, etc.)

Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

The calculated amount the family can reasonably be expected to contribute toward the cost of attendance as determined by federal guidelines.

This is NOT the amount the student or parent must ultimately pay the institution for actual charges.

For more information, see your high school counselor or financial aid officer of the school you plan to attend.

TO SAVE MONEY, BUY USED TEXTBOOKS OR BORROW TEXTBOOKS FROM ANOTHER STUDENT.

15. How do I know if I am an independent student?

A student is considered independent of his/her parents if he or she meets one or more of the following criteria:

- The student is at least **24 years old** by December 31 of the year prior to the academic year for which aid is being sought
- The student is an **orphan** or ward of the court or was a ward of the court until he or she reached age 18
- The student is currently serving on **active duty** in the U.S. Armed Forces or is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces
- The student is working on a **master's** or **doctoral** degree
- The student is **married**
- The student has legal **dependents** other than a spouse, for whom the student provides more than half the support

If a student does not meet any of the above criteria, the student is considered dependent on his/her parents and the parent information must be provided on the FAFSA.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FREE OR INEXPENSIVE ENTERTAINMENT **EVENTS ON CAMPUS.**

Tips for
parents & students

Tips for
parents & students

16. My parents separated four months ago. I live with my mother. My parents filed a joint tax return and claimed me as an exemption. Do I report both their incomes, or just my mother's?

Report only your mother's income and asset information because you lived with her the most **during the past 12 months**. Use a W-2 Form or other record(s) to determine her share of the income reported and taxes paid on the tax return.

STAY AWAY FROM CONVENIENCE MARKETS AS ITEMS COST TWO, THREE AND SOMETIMES FOUR TIMES AS MUCH AS A FULL-SERVICE GROCERY STORE.

17. How does a family decide who should be counted in the household size?

Anyone in the immediate family, regardless of age, **who receives more than half of their support from a dependent student's parents** or from an independent student and spouse may be counted in the household size, even if that person does not reside in the house, as of the date the FAFSA is signed. Any other person who resides in your household and receives more than half of their support from your parents may also be counted, as long as the support is expected to continue through the end of the school year. An unborn child who will be born during the award year may also be counted in the household size.

BUDGET – TRACK EXPENSES FOR A MONTH AND LOOK FOR WAYS TO CUT BACK AND SAVE MONEY.

Tips for
parents & students

18. If my parents are divorced, whose information do I need?

Use the information of the parent with **whom you lived the most during the past year**. It does not make a difference which parent claims you as a dependent for tax purposes. If you did not live with either parent or lived the same amount of time with each parent, **the parental information must be provided by the parent from whom you received the most financial support** or the parent from whom you received the most support the last time support was given.

COMPARISON SHOP – BRAND NAMES ARE NICE, BUT GENERIC PRODUCTS ARE OFTEN SIMILAR AND LESS EXPENSIVE.

19. I live with relatives who have not legally adopted me and I do not meet the other criteria to be considered an independent student. My parents do not provide financial support. How do I answer the questions about parental income and assets?

Leave the parental items blank and contact the Financial Aid Office at the school you plan to attend before you attempt to complete the FAFSA. They may be able to make a decision so that you are considered an independent student.

USE E-MAIL INSTEAD OF CALLING LONG DISTANCE, OR BUY PRE-PAID CALLING CARDS.

20. My natural parents divorced and I live with my mother who has remarried. Should I include my stepfather's income and assets?

Yes, the family unit with whom you reside must provide their financial data on the FAFSA. This information includes that of your stepparent.

IF YOU HAVE A STUDENT CREDIT CARD, BE SURE YOU ARE ABLE TO **PAY THE ENTIRE AMOUNT YOU CHARGED EACH MONTH** INSTEAD. PAYING THE MINIMUM DOES VERY LITTLE TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OWED BECAUSE THE CREDIT CARD COMPANIES CALCULATE THE MONTHLY PAYMENTS TO COVER THE MONTHLY INTEREST AND JUST A SMALL FRACTION OF YOUR PRINCIPAL.

Resources

- aesSuccess.org
- EducationPlanner.org
- fafsa.ed.gov
- pin.ed.gov
- sss.gov
- Federal Student Aid Information Center: (FSAIC) 1.800.4.FED-AID (1.800.433.3243) TTY 1.800.730.8913
- YouCanDealWithIt.com

AES helps students and families from every walk of life afford higher education, because we believe in the potential of everyone who wants to learn.

AES offers a comprehensive student aid service, which means that we're there for you all the way. Starting from the time you apply for a loan, we deliver the funds, stay with you through the academic years and guide you through successful repayment.

In making an education affordable, we do more than help you go to college. We guarantee the next generation of leaders, thinkers and doers.

aesSuccess.org



American Education Services

Be Next.

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