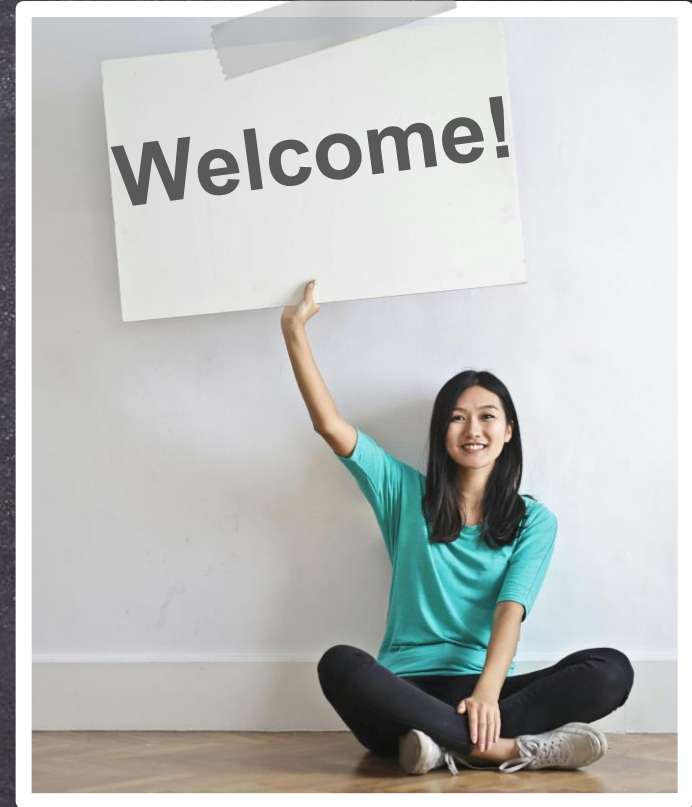


2025-2026 FAFSA Updates

Presented by:
CASFAA Financial Aid Administrators



What Will You Learn at this Workshop?

- ① Types and Sources of Financial Aid
- ② Creating a StudentAid.gov Account
- ③ Completing the 2025-26 FAFSA
- ④ Evaluating Aid Offers
- ⑤ How to Appeal for More Financial Aid
- ⑥ Resources and Helpful Tips

What We Know to Date About the 2025-26 Application Cycle



Anticipated
Opening
Date



Possible
Changes to
FAFSA
Questions



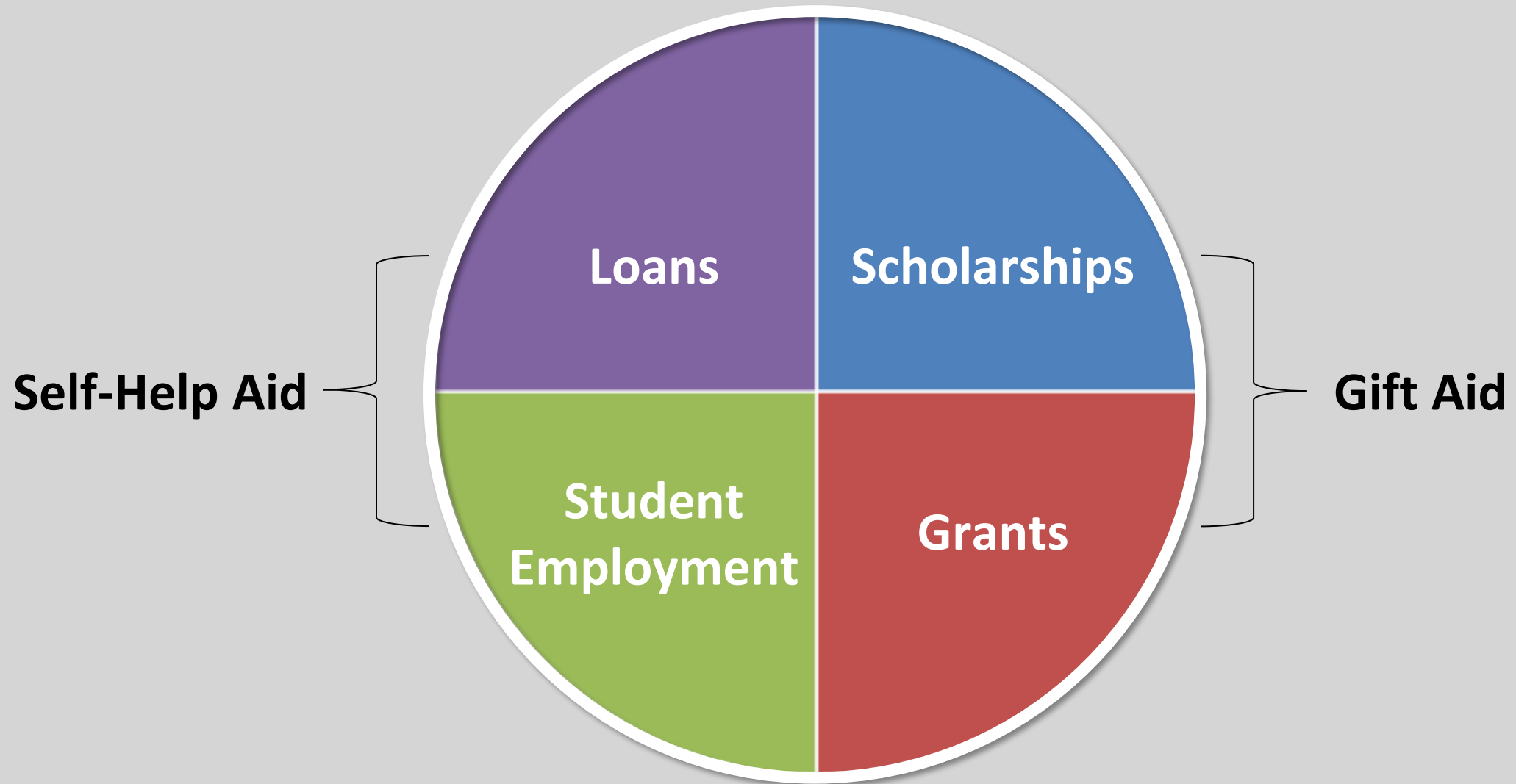
Mixed Status
Families –
Non-SSN
Contributor

1



Types of Financial Aid

Types of Financial Aid



Federal Student Financial Aid Programs

Program	Award Amount	Notes
Federal Pell Grant	Up to \$7,395	Lifetime Eligibility 600% (max)
FSEOG (grant)	Up to \$4,000	Priority to Pell eligible students
TEACH Grant	Up to \$3,772	Requires service contract; otherwise, converts to unsubsidized loan
Work Study	Varies by school	On- and off-campus employment
Direct Student Loan (Subsidized and Unsubsidized)	\$3,500 to \$12,500 (undergrad level)	Interest subsidy during periods of enrollment of at least half time for Subsidized Direct Loan
Parent PLUS Loan	Varies	Up to annual COA less any other financial aid

2



Creating a StudentAid.gov Account

Creating a StudentAid.gov Account

Also Called the FSA ID

Create an Account

Whether you're a student, parent, or borrower, you'll need to create your own account to apply for, receive, and manage your federal student aid.

[Get Started](#)

Already have an account? [Log In](#)

What You Can Do With Your Account

You must have an account to do the following:

- Fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form online
- Complete other online forms (such as the *Master Promissory Note*) required to receive aid
- Review the federal student aid you've received

What You'll Need

- Your Social Security number (if applicable)
- Your own email address

- 01** StudentAid.gov accounts are used to start, complete and sign a FAFSA
- 02** Dependent students need their contributor(s) to create their own StudentAid.gov account
 - Each person must use their own email
- 03** Even contributors who do not have a Social Security Number can and must obtain an FSA ID
- 04 Tip:** Use a personal, frequently checked email
 - Avoid temporary email addresses, such as school-assigned email addresses

Which of a Dependent Student's Parents Needs an FSA ID?

If parents are
married

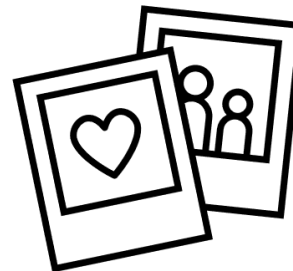
+ File taxes together
=
only one parent
needs an account

OR

+ DIDN'T file
taxes together
=
both parents
need accounts

If parents are
unmarried
+ living together

Both parents
need accounts



If parents are
divorced/separated
+ NOT living together

The parent who provided
more financial support
in the last 12 months
needs an account

OR

If that parent remarried
+ DIDN'T file taxes together
=
both the parent and step-
parent need accounts

FSA ID: Parent(s) without SSNs

- Majority of FSA ID creation process is similar to those with SSNs
- Identity verification is used for
 - Students from Freely Associated States
 - Parents without SSNs
- Users without SSNs must answer knowledge-based identity verification questions
 - If successful – FSA ID is available to use immediately
 - The contributor will need to manually enter their 2023 federal tax return information into the FAFSA



When Parents Live in Another Country

Known Problems

- StudentAid.gov account creation errors
- Difficult or impossible to call FSAIC to get a case number
- Acceptable ID may not look the same from another country



Some Workarounds

- Assistance available via FSA Live Chat on StudentAid.gov
- In account creation:
 - Use a 'period' or 'zero' or 'space' for street address or leave it blank and edit later
 - Skip the phone number



3



Completing the
2025-26 FAFSA

What is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?

Collects

Student and parent income, tax, assets, and household information

Determines

Eligibility for need-based student financial aid from:

- Federal government
- State government
- Most colleges and universities

Calculates

Student Aid Index (SAI), a measure of the family's financial strength

When and Where to File the FAFSA

File as soon as possible on or after October 1 to qualify for more grants, even before submitting college admissions applications



fafsa.gov

Dependency Status (Student Personal Circumstances)

Students under age 24 are dependent and must provide parent information, unless they answer “yes” to any one question in the Personal Circumstances section.

For the **2025-26 award year**, an independent student is one of the following:

- Born before January 1, 2002
- Married (but not separated)
- Graduate or professional student
- Veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces
- Member of the U.S. Armed Forces
- In a court-ordered legal guardianship
- Court-ordered emancipated minor
- Orphan or ward of the court
- In foster care
- Has legal dependents other than a spouse
- Emancipated minor
- Someone who is unaccompanied and homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless
naehcy.org
- Dependency override in unusual circumstances

What if Parents Won't Complete the FAFSA?

Parent information is required for dependent students **even if** the:

Student

- Is financially self-sufficient
- Isn't claimed on the parents' federal income tax returns
- Does not live with the parents

Parents

- Refuse to complete FAFSA
- Live in another country
- Are foreign citizens
- Are undocumented

What if Parents Won't Complete the FAFSA? [cont'd]

- If parent information is not provided, the most financial aid that the student can get is unsubsidized Federal Direct Loans unless the college financial aid administrator performs a dependency override
- Dependency overrides are rare and generally involve an involuntary dissolution of the family relationship, such as:
 - Both parents incarcerated or institutionalized
 - An abusive home environment
 - Abandonment
 - Parent whereabouts unknown
 - Death of the custodial parent

Which Year's Information is Reported?

Assets

Reported as of the date the FAFSA is filed

Based on the second previous tax year (the prior-prior year)

- Example: The 2025-26 FAFSA is based on income and tax information from 2023
 - Do not substitute 2024 income and tax information for 2023 income and tax information
 - If the family income has changed, file an appeal with the college financial aid office

2025-26 FAFSA

Family Size

Family size is based on federal tax information transferred directly from the IRS:

- Student
- Student's parents or student's spouse (if any)
- Dependents from applicable federal income tax return



Form 1040 Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service **2023** U.S. Individual Income Tax Return OMB No. 1545-0074 IRS Use Only—Do not write or staple in this space.

For the year Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2023, or other tax year beginning _____, 2023, ending _____, 20____. See separate instructions.

Your first name and middle initial _____ Last name _____ Your social security number _____

If joint return, spouse's first name and middle initial _____ Last name _____ Spouse's social security number _____

Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box, see instructions. _____ Apt. no. _____ Presidential Election Campaign
Check here if you, or your spouse if filing jointly, want \$3 to go to this fund. Checking a box below will not change your tax or refund.
☐ You ☐ Spouse

City, town, or post office. If you have a foreign address, also complete spaces below. _____ State _____ ZIP code _____

Foreign country name _____ Foreign province/state/country _____ Foreign postal code _____

Filing Status ☐ Single ☐ Head of household (HOH)
☐ Married filing jointly (even if only one had income)
☐ Married filing separately (MFS) ☐ Qualifying surviving spouse (QSS)
If you checked the MFS box, enter the name of your spouse. If you checked the HOH or QSS box, enter the child's name if the qualifying person is a child but not your dependent: _____

Digital Assets At any time during 2023, did you: (a) receive (as a reward, award, or payment for property or services); or (b) sell, exchange, or otherwise dispose of a digital asset (or a financial interest in a digital asset)? (See instructions.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

Standard Deduction **Someone can claim:** ☐ You as a dependent ☐ Your spouse as a dependent
☐ Spouse itemizes on a separate return or you were a dual-status alien

Age/Blindness **You:** ☐ Were born before January 2, 1959 ☐ Are blind **Spouse:** ☐ Was born before January 2, 1959 ☐ Is blind

Dependents (see instructions):

(1) First name	Last name	(2) Social security number	(3) Relationship to you	(4) Check the box if qualifies for (see instructions):	Child tax credit	Credit for other dependents
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If more than four dependents, see instructions and check here ☐

Applicants may update family size if it changed after filing the tax return

2025-26 FAFSA

Reportable Income

Taxable Income

Information imported from the IRS Direct Data Exchange (FA-DDX)

- AGI
- Income earned from work
- Taxes paid
- Education credits
- Net profit or loss from IRS Form 1040 Schedule C

Untaxed Income

- Tax-exempt interest income
- Untaxed portions of IRA distributions and pensions (excluding rollovers)
- IRA deductions and payments to self-employed SEP, SIMPLE, Keough, and other qualified retirement accounts
- Foreign earned income of U.S. citizens and permanent residents if exempt from taxation

2025-26 FAFSA

Reportable Assets



- Current:
 - Total of cash, savings and checking accounts
 - Net worth of investments, including real estate
 - Value of student's 529 account
 - Net worth of businesses and investment farms
- Annual child support received in the most recent completed calendar year

2025-26 FAFSA

School Selection

✓

✓

✓

4

5

Personal Circumstances

Demographics

Financials


Colleges

Signature

Where should we send the FAFSA® information?

Search and select colleges and career schools.

You can add up to 20 colleges and career schools to the FAFSA® form.

 0 out of 20 Schools Selected [View Selected Schools](#)

Search by School Name

Search by School Code

State

2025-26 FAFSA – What Happens Next?

FAFSA Submission Summary (formerly called Student Aid Report)

- After the student completes the online FAFSA®, a FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS) is sent to the student
 - An electronic FSS is sent if a student email address is provided
 - A paper summary is mailed if no student email address is provided
- An electronic copy of the data is sent to each college or university listed on the FAFSA
- Student should keep a copy of the FSS with other financial aid documents



Avoid Common Errors on the FSA ID and FAFSA

Read definitions carefully!

- **DO NOT** confuse student with parent or sibling information
- **DO NOT** switch child support *paid* with child support *received*
- **DO NOT** report value of qualified retirement plans or family home as assets
- **DO NOT** report 529 college savings plans based on the beneficiary instead of the owner
- **DOUBLE-CHECK** all basic demographic items: Name, Date of Birth, Social Security Number, E-mail address, Address, Zip code



4



Evaluating Aid Offers

Evaluating Aid Offers

- Compare financial aid offers based on the Net Price
 - Net Price is the difference between the total annual cost of attendance and the gift aid
- Beware of many gotchas
 - Understand the terms and conditions of the financial aid, such as the difference between grants and loans
 - Unmet need
 - Front-loading of grants
 - Scholarship displacement
- Consider whether the student loan debt is reasonable and affordable

5



How to Appeal for More Financial Aid

How to Appeal for More Financial Aid

Appeal for more financial aid if the family's financial circumstances have changed (including mid-year) or differ from the typical family

Special circumstances include documented:

- Changes to family income, assets, etc.
- Recent unemployment
- Dislocated worker
- High unreimbursed medical/dental expenses
- High dependent care expenses
- Housing change due to homelessness
- One-time events (e.g., a bonus) that do not reflect ability to pay

After submitting the FAFSA, discuss special circumstances with the college financial aid office

6



Resources and Helpful Tips

Helpful Application Tips for the FAFSA

- ✓ Complete the FAFSA before California's priority deadline of March 2, 2025
- ✓ Apply for financial aid regardless of income or assets
- ✓ Include at least one college in California, even if the student plans to study out-of-state
- ✓ Keep a copy of the final Confirmation page and all documents used to complete the FAFSA
- ✓ Check CSAC's WebGrants for Students once the FAFSA/CADAA is completed (mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov)
- ✓ Keep checking your email for important notices
 - Check junk and spam folders




Federal Student Aid Assistance

- Answers to common questions about the FAFSA process
 - studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out/help
- Online assistance and contact information for Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC)
 - 1-800-433-3243
 - studentaid.gov/help-center/contact
- National College Attainment Network (NCAN)
 - ncan.org
- Tips on the FSA ID
 - studentaidpolicy.com/FSA-ID-Tip-Sheet.pdf

Contact

Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC)

 Live Chat

 1-800-433-3243

 Email

CSS Profile (for institutional aid)

- Supplemental application required by some colleges and scholarship competitions to determine a student's eligibility for non-federal institutional aid
- Asks for additional information such as home equity, income and assets from non-custodial parents, retirement plans, etc.
- Cost – \$25 for initial registration and first college
- \$16 for each additional college
- cssprofile.collegeboard.org



How Counselors Can Help

- Host a Cash for College event at your school in your district
- Invite students and parents to financial aid workshops
- Hold workshops for specific audiences, such as first-generation students
- Ask your local college or university financial aid folks for assistance
- Keep connected with CSAC, FSA, and other good resources on financial aid
- Sign up and disseminate information and public service announcements from FSA social media
- Write articles and emails



Q & A



Knowledge Test!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

True

OR

False

True or False?

The 2025-26 FAFSA will
become available
on October 1, 2024



True or False?

The value of small
businesses and/or family
farms must be reported
on the FAFSA



Thanks for joining us!



CALIFORNIA
STUDENT AID
COMMISSION



casfaa
California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators