

COMMON FAFSA APPLICATION ERRORS

A mistake on the FAFSA can delay the processing of the application by up to three weeks. One in seven FAFSA forms is returned due to errors.

AVOID THE MOST COMMON MISTAKES

- Do not report cents, round figures to the nearest dollar.
- Do not report the amount of federal income tax withheld from paychecks, self-employment, taxes, or state taxes. Report the line item from the tax return as instructed on the application. If tax return will be filed at a later date, estimate the tax to be paid.
- Make sure to report only net worth (value of asset minus debt) of real estate and investments, business assets and documents, such as tax returns, on the FAFSA.
- Use the 1040 federal tax return for income reporting and reporting taxes paid. Some parents and students mistakenly use their W-2 form.
- Don't forget to report all the required sources of untaxed income. This includes child support.
- Make sure the correct Social Security number is being used. Refer to an official document such as the student's Social Security Card.
- Report your correct marital status. If you plan to file as a married student, you must be married on or before the date that you sign your FAFSA.
- Make sure to include your stepparent's information.
- Include yourself in the household size. Even if you didn't live there during the previous year, you should always include yourself as part of your parent's household.
- Don't forget to sign the application. If you're filing as a dependent, both you and your parents must sign. If you file online, you and your parents can sign the form electronically using your PIN numbers.
- Remember to file on time. Priority for programs with limited funds is often given to students who file the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible.
- As with all forms and applications, make sure you read the instructions and questions carefully. If you're unclear about a question or are having trouble filling out the FAFSA, check the **FAQ section** on the FAFSA Web site, or call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED AID (1-800-433-3243).
- On the paper form, follow instructions with regard to using a pen or pencil.

To avoid these errors, get started early. Use the **Pre-Application Worksheet** on the FAFSA Web site **fafsa.ed.gov**, to insure you've gathered all the necessary information. Be sure to proofread your application before you submit it. FAFSA on the Web automatically checks for errors prior to submission.

Fill it out right the first time, and you'll have your financial aid letter in no time.