



Seniors and Parents,

This packet is intended to assist you as you prepare and complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)** for your 2024 senior student. All students pursuing postsecondary education at any level should plan to complete the FAFSA® as it is often required by the college or university your student is attending to determine eligibility for Pell Grants, Work-Study, and subsidized student loans. Many schools also require the FAFSA® to apply scholarship dollars that have been awarded.

UPDATE - Federal Student Aid has made the 2024-2025 FAFSA® Form available as of December 31, 2023, at StudentAid.gov. We recommend that parents and students begin the process together due to the amount of information required from at least one parent as well as the sensitive nature of the information requested. More information on the steps that need to be completed are included in this packet.

Included in the documents attached to this letter is a copy of each of the following:

- Starting the FAFSA® at Home
- Helpful Links, Videos, & Walkthrough Webinars
- Is My Parent A Contributor on my FAFSA® Form? (modeled after Federal Student Aid's flowchart)
- "Should I File for FAFSA®?" Decision Tree (from Alabama Extension's packet)

St Clair County Career Coaches are partnering with high school counselors to visit each campus during the spring semester to work with groups of seniors on their portion of the FAFSA®. However, it is very important that you complete steps 1-3 listed on the attached guide before we visit your campus. We will continue to update information as it is released from Federal Student Aid. For the most updated information, visit the Career Coach 2024-25 FAFSA Information site at www.sccboe.org/page/8795.

If you decide that you will not complete a 2024-25 FAFSA® for your senior, a non-participation waiver must be submitted to the school with a parent's signature by April 1, 2024. We will distribute those waivers as soon as the Alabama State Department of Education makes the form available for us to send to you and your student.

If you need assistance, you may contact your college's financial aid office, your high school counselor, or a career coach.

SCCHS SENIOR COUNSELOR

Mrs. Ashley Edwards

ashley.edwards@sccboe.org



SCCHS CAREER COACH

Mrs. Christina Puckett

christina.puckett@sccboe.org

Starting the FAFSA® Form at Home

The most effective strategy for successfully completing the 2024-25 FAFSA® Form is to have the student and contributors work together throughout the process. It is advised to have all parties create their individual account before starting the FAFSA® Form. Federal Student Aid Accounts can be created at StudentAid.gov (<https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>).

Students are required to invite their contributors (most often one or both parents) during the first part of the application process. Please see the “Is My Parent A Contributor on my FAFSA® Form?” Flowchart below to determine who is considered a contributor on your FAFSA® Form. Due to the sensitive nature of the information requested, we understand that most students will not have access to these details for a parent while at school. Students will need the following information to invite their contributor to their 2024-25 FAFSA® Form:



Once a contributor is invited, they will receive an invite to the email address entered to complete their portion of the student’s FAFSA® Form. The contributors will be required to log into their **previously created** StudentAid.gov account to confirm their identity and begin working on the FAFSA® Form. If the contributor has never created an account, they may do so at this point. After successfully creating their account, they will need to return to the original invite email from the student to access the 2024-25 FAFSA® Form as the contributor.

STUDENT GUIDE

- 1 Create FSA ID**
Students have to create their account prior to starting their FAFSA® Form.
- 2 Begin the 2024-25 FAFSA® Form**
The early you can complete and submit your application, the better!
- 3 Invite Contributors**
You’ll need the info above to invite your contributor(s). Ask before you start!
- 4 Continue Your Portion**
Enter answers and share tax data with the form to complete all sections.
- 5 Complete & Sign FAFSA® Form.**
After confirming the information enter, electronically sign by logging in again.

PARENT GUIDE

- 1 Create FSA IDs**
Each Contributor will need their own StudentAid.gov account.
- 2 Prepare Your Student**
Your student will need specific information to invite you to their form.
- 3 Accept your Invitation**
Click the emailed link to join and help complete your student’s FAFSA Form.
- 4 Continue Your Portion**
Enter answers and share tax data with the form to complete all sections.
- 5 Complete & Sign FAFSA® Form.**
After confirming the information enter, electronically sign by logging in again.

Helpful Links, Videos, & Resources

Links:

- Create an FSA ID (StudentAid.gov account) or log in to a previously created account - <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>
- Complete the 2024-25 FAFSA® Form - <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/afsa>

Videos & Webinars:

Preparing for the 2024-25 FAFSA® Form Playlist

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtr3wy4M_CJ18cBXJb2r5mzyFoh9e9mcl&si=gOdbXW0saz3P1e0Y

Videos played: (each are under 3 minutes in length)

1. Applying for Financial Aid With The FAFSA Form
2. Understand and Prepare FAFSA Form Contributors
3. Create and Access Your StudentAid.gov Account
4. Gather Information Required To Complete the FAFSA Form

FAQs for the 2024-25 FAFSA® Form Playlist

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtr3wy4M_CJ2Hrd0UwCAWJOgOPu8I_ZLf&si=kktSN4OM4kELqrDK

Videos played: (each are under 3 minutes in length)

1. What is the FAFSA?
2. What has changed for the 2024-25 FAFSA Form?
3. Who is a Contributor on the 2024-25 FAFSA Form?
4. Why do my Contributors and I need our own StudentAid.gov accounts for the 2024-25 FAFSA Form?
5. What Does it Mean to Provide Consent and Approval on the 2024-25 FAFSA Form?
6. How Do I Complete the 2024-25 FAFSA Form If My Parents Are Divorced or Separated?
7. How Do I Create a StudentAid.gov Account If I Don't Have a Social Security Number?
8. How Do I Complete the 2024-25 FAFSA Form If My Parent Is a Noncitizen?

*more videos may be added to each of these playlists as they are published by Federal Student Aid YouTube Channel

Recorded Webinars (less than an hour in length)

- Walkthrough for a **DEPENDENT STUDENT**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgpZ45wizkc>
This example uses a student with married parents who filed joint taxes
- Walkthrough for an **INDEPENDENT STUDENT**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBhikcNFYvM>
This example does not have a contributor to entering information

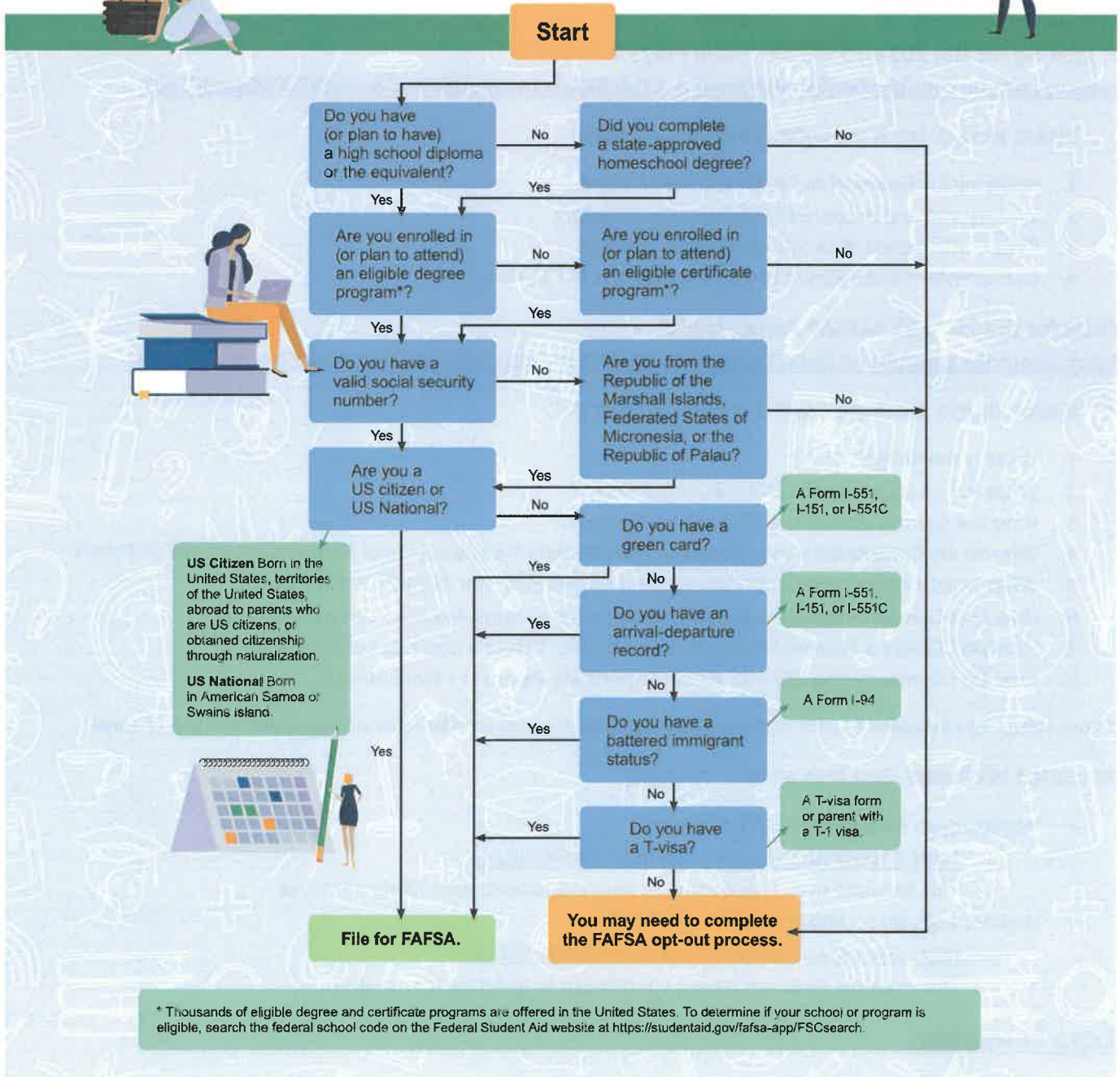
Extra Resources:

Federal Student Aid Help Line - For help with filling out and signing your student's FAFSA® form and/or using your StudentAid.gov account (FSA ID). Call at **1-800-433-3243** or email at **studentaid@ed.gov**

Alabama Possible Help Desk – For assistance with specific questions about special or unusual circumstances for you or your student. Call or text at **334-316-6155** or email at algoestocollege@alabamapossible.com

Should I File for FAFSA?

High school students and their parents must decide whether to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or opt out by submitting a nonparticipation waiver. Answer the questions in this decision flow chart to determine which option is better for your family.



* Thousands of eligible degree and certificate programs are offered in the United States. To determine if your school or program is eligible, search the federal school code on the Federal Student Aid website at <https://studentaid.gov/afsa-app/FSCsearch>.

For more information on completing the opt-out process, go to aces.edu/FAFSA



The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Everyone is welcome! Please let us know if you have accessibility needs. New July 2022, FCS-2650



Is My Parent a CONTRIBUTOR When I Fill Out My FAFSA® Form?

A **parent** means your legal (biological or adoptive) parent or a person that the state has determined to be your legal parent. A **stepparent** is considered a parent if they have adopted you. Stepparents that have not adopted you will be identified as a parent spouse.

Are your biological or adoptive parents married to each other?

NO

YES

Your parents' marital status is married (not separated), and both of your parents' information must be included on the FAFSA® form. If your parents did not file taxes jointly, then both of your parents are contributors. Their individual information, consent and approval, and signatures will be required on the FAFSA form. If your parents filed taxes jointly, only one parent is required as a contributor and will report information for both parents.

Note: Dependent students are required to report parent information on the FAFSA® form, and in most cases, a parent will be identified as a contributor for these students. All contributors are required to provide their information, signature, and consent and approval to have their federal tax information transferred directly from the IRS into the FAFSA form. Being a contributor on the FAFSA form does not mean an obligation to pay for the student's education.

Do your biological or adoptive parents live together?

NO

YES

Your parents' marital status is unmarried (both legal parents living together), and both of your parents are contributors, even if they were never married, are divorced, or are separated. Their individual information, consent and approval, and signatures will be required on the FAFSA® form.

Did one parent provide more financial support than the other over the past 12 months?

NO

The individual information, consent and approval, and signature of the parent who has the greater income or assets will be required on the FAFSA® form, and this parent will be identified as a contributor.

YES

The individual information, consent and approval, and signature of the parent who provided more financial support over the past 12 months will be required on the FAFSA® form, and this parent will be identified as a contributor.

Has this parent married/remarried?

YES

Your parent's marital status is married/remarried. Your stepparent will also be identified as a contributor on the FAFSA® form if they didn't file their taxes jointly with your parent.

NO

Your parent's marital status is single (never married), separated, divorced, or widowed. An additional parent will not be identified as contributor.

