

Federal Student Aid

What is federal student aid?

Federal student aid comes from the federal government—specifically, the U.S. Department of Education. It's money that helps a student pay for higher education expenses. Federal student aid covers such expenses as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. There are three main types of federal student aid: grants, work-study, and loans.

Who gets federal student aid?

Every student who meets certain eligibility requirements can get some type of federal aid, regardless of age or family income. Some of the most basic eligibility requirements are that you must:

- **Demonstrate financial need, for most programs.**
- **Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen.**
- **Have a valid Social Security number.**
- **Register (if you haven't already) with Selective Service if you are a male between ages 18–25.**
- **Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an eligible degree or certificate program.**
- **Maintain satisfactory academic progress in college, career or technical school, or graduate school.**

The full list of eligibility requirements is available at www.StudentAid.gov/eligibility.

How do you apply for federal student aid?

To apply for federal student aid, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA.)

FAFSA Verification

What is it?

Verification is a process by which the college must collect documentation to verify information provided on the FAFSA is accurate. A student's selection for verification does not represent an error on the FAFSA, Federal Student Aid selects about 30% of FAFSA's each year to complete the verification process while some colleges choose to verify 100% of FAFSA submissions. If a student is selected, the process must be complete before the student will receive any State or Federal Financial Aid.

How do I know if a student has been selected for verification?

The earliest way a student is notified of their selection is through their Student Aid Report (SAR). Initial notification of a student's selection for verification will be displayed on the confirmation screen of the FAFSA in the form of an asterisk next to the Expected Family Contribution. The student will also receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) by email (traditional mail if no student email address was provided on the FAFSA) within 3-5 business day (5-7 if by traditional mail) which will indicate the student's selection for verification. It is extremely important to review the SAR for this and other important updates. Any time a student updates the FAFSA, a new SAR will be sent and the student may be selected for verification at that time.

The institution will also communicate a student's selection via online student account or school issued email account. It is important that the student access their online account regularly and review any information the college posted.

What should a student do if selected for verification?

Check the student account and review any communications the college has sent the student to see college specific instructions. If the college has yet to list any instructions the student may still begin the process of collecting documents. The easiest way to verify tax information is through the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. Students should log - in to their FAFSA to see if they are eligible to use this tool. If the IRS Data Retrieval Tool is unavailable for the student and parent to use, they will need to complete a 4506-T (Request for Tax Transcript Form) and return to the IRS. This process can take several weeks and should be started as soon as possible for both the student and parent tax information.

NOTE: Most traditional students will be unable to use the online tax transcript request and must use the form.



What Types of Federal Student Aid are Available?

The following chart outlines the most common types of federal student aid:

PROGRAM AND TYPE OF AID	PROGRAM INFORMATION	AWARD AMOUNT (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)
<p>Federal Pell Grant</p> <p><i>A grant: does not need to be repaid.</i></p>	<p>For undergraduates with financial need who have not earned a bachelor's or professional degree.</p> <p>StudentAid.gov/pell-grant</p>	<p>Amounts can change annually. For 2019-2020, the maximum award amount was \$6,195</p>
<p>Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)</p> <p><i>A grant: does not need to be repaid.</i></p>	<p>For undergraduates with exceptional financial need; federal Pell Grant recipients take priority; funds depend on availability at a school.</p> <p>StudentAid.gov/fseog</p>	<p>Up to \$4,000</p>
<p>Federal Work-Study</p> <p><i>Work-Study: money earned through a job and doesn't have to be repaid.</i></p>	<p>For undergraduate students, part-time jobs can be on campus or off-campus. Money is earned while attending school.</p> <p>Your total work-study award depends on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you apply - Your level of financial need - Your school's funding level <p>Student Aid.gov/workstudy</p>	<p>No annual minimum or maximum amounts</p>
<p>Federal Loans</p> <p><i>A loan must be repaid with interest.</i></p>	<p>Subsidized Loans: The U.S. Department of Education generally pays interest while the student is in school; the student must be enrolled at least half-time. StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub</p> <p>Unsubsidized Loans: The borrower is responsible for interest during all periods, including while the student is enrolled. A student must be enrolled at least part-time. StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub</p> <p>Direct PLUS Loan: For parents of dependent undergraduate students; the borrower is responsible for interest during all periods, including while the student is enrolled; a student must be enrolled at least half-time; financial need is not required; the borrower must not have adverse credit history. StudentAid.gov/plus</p>	<p>Subsidized Loans: Up to \$5,500 depending on grade level and dependency status.</p> <p>Unsubsidized Loans: Up to \$20,500 (less any subsidized amounts received for the same period) depending on grade level and dependency status.</p> <p>Direct Plus Loan: Maximum amount is the cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received.</p>

SAR (Student Aid Report)

What is it, how do I get one, and why is it important?

What is the SAR?

The Student Aid Report (SAR) summarizes the information you submitted on your FAFSA and provides information about financial aid eligibility based on that information.

A sample SAR is shown on the next page.

How and when will I get my SAR?

After you submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you'll get your personal SAR (within three days if you complete the FAFSA online; within three weeks if you mail the paper FAFSA). Whether you receive your SAR online or through the mail depends on whether you provide an email address on your FAFSA. If you provide a valid email address, you'll receive an email with instructions on how to access an online copy of your SAR. If you have an FSA ID (username and password) and your FAFSA has been processed, you can log in at www.fafsa.gov to view your SAR information regardless of how you filed the FAFSA. The school(s) you list on your FAFSA will have access to your SAR data electronically within a day after it is processed.

What information does a SAR contain (and not contain)?

The SAR won't tell you how much financial aid you'll get, but if your application is complete, an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will display in the upper right hand corner of your SAR and your estimated Pell Grant amount will be provided. If your application is incomplete, your SAR will not include an EFC or Pell amount, but it will tell you what you need to do to resolve any issues.

The SAR also contains a four-digit Data Release Number (DRN), which appears on the first page in the upper right corner of the paper SAR and SAR Acknowledgment. On the electronic SAR, the DRN is located in the box that contains the Application Receipt Date, below the EFC. You will need the DRN if you choose to allow your college or technical school to change certain information on your FAFSA.

What am I supposed to do with my SAR?

When you get your SAR, review it carefully to make sure it's correct and complete. Take a copy of it to your college/career counselor to get help reviewing it. The school(s) you listed on your FAFSA will use SAR information to determine your eligibility for federal and state financial aid. A school may ask you to verify the accuracy of the data you provide on the FAFSA, so you need to be sure the information is correct.

If you don't have any changes to make to the information listed on your SAR, just keep it for your records.

What if my SAR does not list an EFC?

If your EFC is blank on your SAR or if there is a "C" after the number, you need to make corrections to your FAFSA. It is extremely important that you make these corrections to your FAFSA to receive financial aid. Your SAR will provide you with details about the errors in your FAFSA.

What if there is an asterisk (*) next to my EFC?

If there is an asterisk (*) next to your EFC, this means that your FAFSA has been selected for verification. Being selected for verification is quite common. This just means that you will need to work with your college to complete a few extra steps to verify the information you provided on your FAFSA.

Sample SAR

Federal Student Aid **FAFSA**

Form Approved
OMB No. 1845-0001
App. Exp. 12/31/2016

Electronic Student Aid Report (SAR)

20XX-XX

Application Receipt Date:	02/21/20XX	XXX-XX-XXXX BA 03
Processed Date:	03/17/20XX	EFC: 000000 *
		DRN: [REDACTED]

The SAR summarizes the information you submitted on your 2019-20 FAFSA

Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

This is your Expected Family Contribution. The number may be all zeros, or a combination of zeros and other numbers, but if it is blank or there is a "C" after the number, you need to make corrections to your FAFSA or you won't get any aid. The details are in the body of the SAR below.

The last four digits of your social security number appear here.

Comments About Your Information

Learn about [federal tax benefits for education](#), including the *American Opportunity Tax Credit* (AOTC).

Based on the information we have on record for you, your EFC is 000000. You may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant and other federal student aid. Your school will use your EFC to determine your financial aid eligibility for federal grants, loans, and work-study, and possible funding from your state or school.

Being selected for verification is quite common. The asterisk after the EFC above indicates this too.

Your FAFSA has been selected for a review process called verification. Your school has the authority to request copies of certain financial documents from you and your parent(s).

There is a limit to the total amount of Federal Pell Grants that a student may receive, which is the equivalent of six school years. Once a total amount of Pell Grant eligibility has been received, a student can no longer receive Pell Grant aid.

WHAT YOU MUST DO NOW (Use the checklist below to make sure that all of your issues are resolved.)

The date of birth you reported for your first parent on your FAFSA matches the Social Security Administration's (SSA) records, but the date of birth you reported for your second parent does not match the SSA's records. Your second parent should review the date of birth in Item 67 and either confirm the date you have reported or make the necessary correction by clicking 'Make FAFSA Corrections' on the 'My FAFSA' page.

If you need to make corrections to your information, click 'Make FAFSA Corrections' on the 'My FAFSA' page. You must use your Federal Student Aid PIN to access your record online. If you need additional help with your SAR, contact your school's financial aid office or click the 'Help' icon on the FAFSA home page. If your mailing address or e-mail address changes, you can make the correction online.

Based on your EFC of 000000, you may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant of up to \$6,195 for the 2019-20 school year provided you have not met or exceeded the lifetime limit established for the Federal Pell Grant program.

Your Pell Grant eligibility is referenced at the bottom, if you qualify. The lower your EFC, the more money you qualify for, up to the maximum in 2019-20 of \$6,195.

Although you're instructed to use the "checklist" below, it's not formatted like a checklist; read everything below this instruction very carefully and do what it says! Your FAFSA is not considered "complete" until you do.

FAFSA Completion Flow Chart for Students

START

Access your SAR (Student Aid Report) by logging in to www.fasfa.gov with your FSA ID. Select the “View or Print your Student Aid Report” option at the bottom of the screen. Is there a number next to the EFC?

YES

Does the EFC number have an asterisk (*) next to it?

YES

An asterisk next to the EFC number means that you have been selected for verification.

Verification is not a mistake that you made, it is just another step in the process of receiving your full amount of financial aid.

You will need a copy of your parent’s federal income tax transcript and may need to send additional information to your college of choice.

Talk to your college’s financial aid office if you have questions about verification. Be sure to check your college’s student portal to see if any additional information or forms must be submitted before you register for classes.

NO

You have not been selected for verification.

Complete the checklist on pg. 46 and make sure that you are checking your college’s student portal, your student email, and/or your mail for important enrollment information.

NO

Information is missing on your FAFSA and it is incomplete.

Review page 1 of the SAR to determine what information needs to be corrected. You will need to sign into the FAFSA with your FSA ID and select “Make FAFSA Corrections” to complete your FAFSA.

After making corrections, you will need to submit the FAFSA. If you provided an email address, another SAR will be available within three to five days online. If you did not provide an email address, a paper SAR will be mailed to your address.

Making Corrections on your FAFSA

After filing the FAFSA, use the following checklist and flow chart on the next page to make sure that your FAFSA is complete, does not require corrections, and that your financial information has been sent to the correct college.

Log in to the FAFSA with your FSA ID: Is your chosen college listed on your FAFSA? If not, make changes to your FAFSA to ensure that school is on your list so that your college gets your financial aid information.

Click “View or Print My Student Aid Report” and review the information: Look closely at lines **18, 29, 30,** and **70.**

Line 18: Student's legal state of residence. Make sure that you filled out that you're a resident of Tennessee (TN) to receive state financial aid.

Line 29: Student's grade level in 2020-2021. You should answer “Never attended college/1st year.” Other answers might make the system think you are student who is working on an advanced degree and may disqualify you from financial aid that is meant for students working on a certificate, diploma, associate or bachelor's degree.

Line 30: Type of degree or certificate. Depending on the college you've chosen, you'll want to select one of the following options:

- 1st bachelor's degree (if you plan on attending a four-year university for a bachelor's degree)
- Associate degree, general education/transfer program (if you plan on attending a community college and later transferring or if you are using Tennessee Promise towards an associate degree at a four-year university)
- Certificate/diploma, occupational/technical education program of less than two years (if you are enrolling in a TCAT, a technical school or a trade school)

Line 70: Parent's legal state of residence. Make sure that you've filled out that your parents live in Tennessee, as this is important for establishing that you are a Tennessee resident for state aid and in-state tuition.

Log in to your TSAC student portal: Which college did you list on your account? If that college does not match the college you plan to attend, change it. The college listed on your TSAC student portal is the college that will receive your scholarship money for state financial aid like Tennessee Promise and the HOPE Scholarship.

Attending a community college or four-year university? Log in to your college's student portal. This student portal is often mentioned in your acceptance letter or an email from the college. Check your portal to make sure you don't need to submit any additional forms for your college's financial aid office. The portal will also be where you receive information about registering for classes and orientation, so plan to check it often this summer!

Attending a TCAT or Technical School? Check your mail or call your campus to speak to financial aid. Ask them to confirm that your financial aid documents are complete during the 2020 - 2021 school year. They may be sending you information in the mail during the summer, so be sure to open any mail from them and complete action items before the deadlines.

Who Is My Parent When I Fill Out My FAFSA?

