2021-2022 FAFSA GUIDE

WHAT IS A FAFSA?

The FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is a necessary requirement for all students seeking Federal and State financial aid for higher education in the United States. This application determines how much financial aid a student is eligible to receive from the government based on need, and often, students are required to fill out the FAFSA when applying for private scholarships and grants.

WHY COMPLETE A FAFSA?

A FAFSA qualifies the student for federal grants, loans, or work-study programs. At WSC, it is a requirement for the tuition/fee scholarship and most internal scholarships.

BEFORE YOU START

Having the following information and forms on hand will help you fill out the 2021-2022 FAFSA:

- Social Security Number (can be found on Social Security card)
- Driver's license (if any)
- W-2 Forms from two years prior (2019) and other records of any money earned
- Student (and/or your parents') Federal Income Tax Return from two years prior — IRS Form 1040, foreign tax return, or tax return from Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federated State of Micronesia
- Any untaxed income records for two years prior (2019) — e.g., payments to tax deferred pension and savings plans, tax exempt interest and child support received in 2018

- Records of taxable earnings from Federal Work-Study or other need-based work programs in 2019
- Records of any grants, scholarships, and fellowship aid that was included in your or your parents' 2019 adjusted gross income (AGI)
- Any current bank statements
- Any current business and investment mortgage information, business and farm records, stock, bonds and other investment records
- Documentation that you are a U.S. permanent resident or other eligible noncitizen, if applicable

WHY USE PRIOR-PROIR TAX YEAR INFORMATION?

By using two-years prior tax information on the FAFSA, it will increase the form's accuracy and give families an earlier and more accurate idea of their anticipated financial aid and college costs.

Benefits:

- You will have completed your taxes by the time you fill out your FAFSA
- Can use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) to import your tax information into your FAFSA®
- Give you more time to explore and understand your financial aid options

Concerns:

- You had a significant change to your financial information (ex. Loss employment) or have an unusual circumstance (ex. High unreimbursed medical or dental expenses); still complete the FAFSA using 2019 taxes, but contact your Student Financial Aid
- Change in Marital Status; if remarried since 2019 taxes then **add your spouse's income** and if divorced then **subtract your spouse's income**
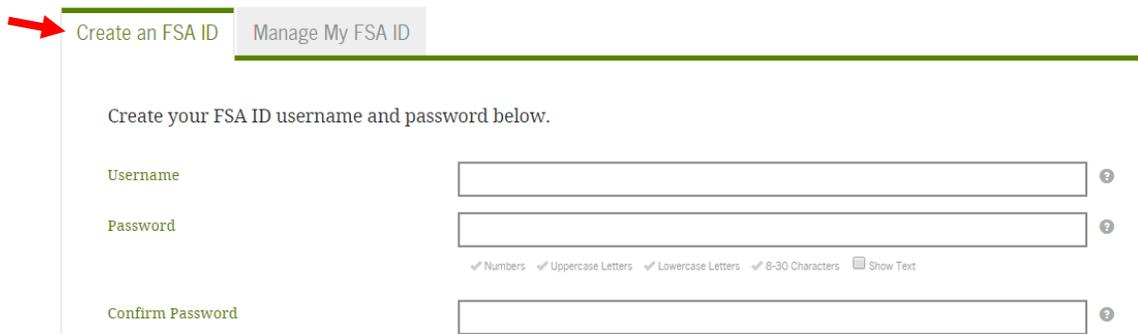
STEP 1: CREATE AN FSA ID

The FSA ID is a username and password you use to log in to U.S. Department of Education (ED) online systems. The FSA ID is your legal signature and shouldn't be created or used by anyone other than you—not even your parent, your child, a school official, or a loan company representative. You'll use your FSA ID every year you fill out a FAFSA form and for the lifetime of your federal student loans.

You will need your Social Security number, full name, and date of birth.

You'll be required to provide either your email address or your mobile phone number when you make your FSA ID. Providing a mobile phone number and/or email address that you have access to will make it easier to log in to ED online systems and allow additional account recovery options.

IMPORTANT: A Social Security number, email address, and mobile phone number can only be associated with **one** FSA ID. If you share an email address with someone else, then only one of you will be able to use that email address to create an FSA ID.

1. Go to fsaid.ed.gov to create your FSA ID.

Write down your username and password, you will need to renew your application each school year!

2. Enter all your information.
3. Select your secure questions and enter answers.
4. Verify phone number and email with the secure codes it will send.

If you need to provide information about your parents on the FAFSA form, one of your parents will need an FSA ID to sign the form. Your parent can create an FSA ID and then sign the FAFSA form electronically using that FSA ID.

If you're not sure whether you'll need to put your parents' information on the FAFSA form? Review dependency at StudentAid.gov/dependency.

NOTE: You should create your own FSA ID, and your parent should create his or her own FSA ID. Also, make sure to use the correct FSA ID when signing the FAFSA form electronically.

FORGOT USERNAME AND PASSWORD

If you forget your FSA ID username and/or password, go to "**Manage My FSA ID**" and look for the "**Forgot My Username**" and "**Forgot My Password**," links on log-in pages.

These links will direct you to web pages where you can request a secure code to be texted to your verified mobile phone number or emailed to your verified email address. The secure code will allow you to retrieve your username or reset your password.

You can also retrieve your username or reset your password by successfully answering your challenge questions. We recommend using answer challenge questions as the last choice because it will lock you out for 30 minutes.
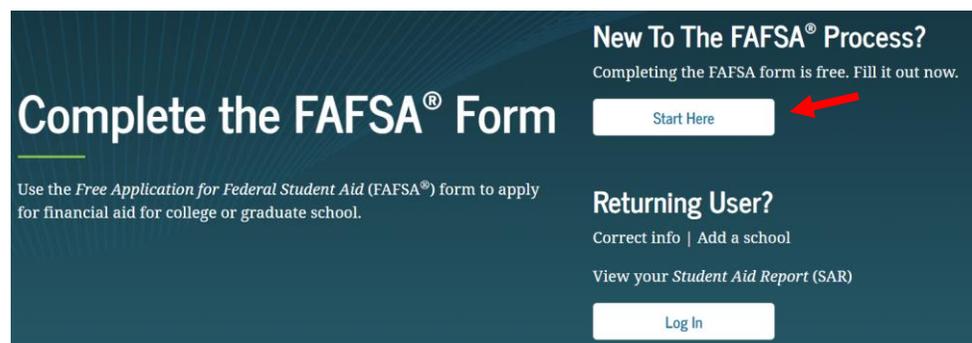
NOTE: If you verified your email address or mobile phone number during account creation, you can enter your email address or mobile phone number instead of your username to log in.

Learn more about how you can use your FSA ID at https://studentaid.gov/.

STEP 2: LOG ONTO THE FAFSA FORM

For more guidance to help answer questions, click the symbol ❓ .

1. If you are starting the application for the first time on fafsa.gov, select "**Start Here**."

2. The student should select "**I am the student**." If a parent is completing the FAFSA **without** the student, they should select "**I am a parent**." If the student and parent are together, we recommend the student signing in as themselves to complete the FAFSA.

- The <u>student</u> will use their FSA ID to sign in.

- If the <u>parent</u> is signing in without the student, input the student's information.

3. Read the disclaimer, click "**ACCEPT**."

4. Select which FAFSA you will be completing:
   a. **START 2020-2021 FAFSA** if attending Fall 2020 – Spring 2021 – Summer 2021
   b. **START 2021-2022 FAFSA** if attending Fall 2021 – Spring 2022 – Summer 2022

For which school year are you applying for financial aid?

If you are applying for a summer session, or just don't know which application to complete, check with the college you are planning to attend.

Which school year should I choose?

START 2020-2021 FAFSA   OR   START 2019-2020 FAFSA

**Will be updated October 1, 2020

NOTE: If you filled out a FAFSA form last year and want to renew it, select "**Log In**", then select "**I am the student**," enter your FSA ID, and be sure to select "**FAFSA RENEWAL**" once given the option. Many of the nonfinancial questions will be prefilled for you. Continue to review each question and update any information that has changed since last submitting a FAFSA.

5. Create a "**Save Key**," which is a temporary password that is used if you start your FAFSA form, save it without finishing it, then need to open it again later to finish it.

   One benefit of the save key is that students and parents can use this function to access the FAFSA form if they are completing the FAFSA in separate locations.

   NOTE: Unlike with the FSA ID, which needs to be kept private, it's okay to tell your parent what your save key is. They will need it when the FAFSA isn't being completed together.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Form Approved
OMB No. 1845-0001
App. Exp. 12/31/2021

Create a Save Key.
The Save Key is for temporary use for you or your parent to return and complete this specific FAFSA.

Create a Save Key   ?

Re-enter Save Key   ?

◄ MY FAFSA   NEXT ►

STEP 3: FILLING OUT THE FAFSA

If at any time you need to save and come back later, make sure to click the **"SAVE"** up at the top of the page. **For more guidance to help answer questions, click the symbol** ❓ .

1. The **Introduction – 2021-2022** is an overview of the FAFSA. Click "**Next**."

2. **Student Demographics**
   a. Most information has been pulled over from your FSA ID. Update any information and fill in any blanks.
   b. If you're a male between the ages of 18 and 25 and you haven't registered with the Selective Service System, select "**Yes**" when you're asked if you would like to be registered. Otherwise, you won't be eligible to receive federal student aid. This requirement applies to any person assigned the sex of male at birth.

3. **School Selection**
   a. WSC Federal School Code: **003007**
   b. You can add up to 10 schools and change them at any time.
      NOTE: Schools will not be able to see which other schools you listed on your FAFSA form.

4. **Dependency Status**
   a. The FAFSA will ask a series of questions to determine if you're a dependent or independent for purposes of federal student aid.

5. **Parent Demographics**
   a. Determining which parent to use:
      i. If your legal parents (your biological and/or adoptive parents, or parents as determined by the state [e.g., a parent listed on your birth certificate]) are married to each other, answer the questions about both of them, regardless of whether your parents are of the same or opposite sex.
      ii. If your legal parents are not married to each other and live together, answer the questions about both, regardless of whether your parents are of the same or opposite sex.
      iii. If your legal parent is widowed or was never married, answer the questions about that parent.
   b. If your parents are separated or divorced:
      i. If your parents are divorced or separated and don't live together, answer the questions about the parent with whom you lived more during the past 12 months.
      ii. If you lived the same amount of time with each divorced or separated parent, give answers about the parent who provided more financial support during the past 12 months or during the most recent 12 months that you actually received support from a parent.
   c. If you have a stepparent:
      i. If you have a stepparent who is married to the legal parent whose information you're reporting, you must provide information about that stepparent as well.
      ii. **EXCEPTION**: The FAFSA form asks about your parents' education level. For these two questions, your parents are considered to be your birth parents or adoptive parents—your stepparent is not your parent in these questions.

d. It doesn't matter if you don't live with your parent(s); you still must report information about them. The following people are not your parents unless they have **legally** adopted you: grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, older brothers or sisters, uncles or aunts, and widowed stepparents.

e. If you're unable to provide parent information:
   i. You will have the option to indicate that you have special circumstances that make you unable to get your parents' information if:
      1. Both parents are incarcerated.
      2. You have left home due to an abusive family environment.
      3. You do not know where your parents are and are unable to contact them (and you have not been adopted).
      4. You are older than 21 but not yet 24, are unaccompanied, and are either homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless.
   ii. Still submit the FAFSA without the parent information. Then contact your Student Financial Aid Office.

f. If your parent(s) are unwilling to provide their information, contact your financial aid office.

g. If you're considered an **independent**, then you do not have to provide parent information.

6. **Parent Financials**
   a. If marital status has changed since taxes were filed:
      i. Married now but wasn't in 2019 (and therefore didn't file taxes as married), the spouse's 2019 income will need to be added to the FAFSA form.
      ii. Filed 2019 taxes as married but is no longer married when filling out the FAFSA form, the spouse's income will need to be subtracted.
      iii. Married when filing 2019 taxes, then got divorced and is now married to someone else, there's a bit more math to do: Subtract the ex's income, then add the new spouse's income.
   b. If you are eligible, we strongly encourage to try using the "**IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT)**." Click "**LINK TO IRS**."

> **IRS Data Retrieval Tool**
>
> Applying is faster and easier if you transfer your tax return information into this FAFSA with the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT)!
>
> LINK TO IRS ⇄

   i. Sign in using parent FSA ID
   ii. Enter the name and other information exactly as it was provided on the tax return.
   iii. Import the information into the FAFSA form.
   iv. On the FAFSA, you'll see "**Transferred from the IRS**" in the appropriate fields. You won't be able to make changes to those answers.

   c. If you selected "**Married-Filed Joint Return**", then the incomes will need to be provided for each parent.
   d. If your family's financial situation has changed dramatically since filing taxes, you should complete the FAFSA questions as required, submit the FAFSA form, then contact the school you plan to attend and discuss your situation with the financial aid office.
   e. **For more guidance to help answer questions, click the symbol** ❓ **.**

7. **Student Financials**
    a. Follow the same steps as the **Parent Financials** but using student information.
    b. If the student worked but did not file taxes in 2019, still include all income earned in 2019.

8. **Sign & Submit**
    a. A "**preparer**" is anyone who charges a fee for helping you fill out your FAFSA form.
    b. Review answers on FAFSA
    c. **Agree** to the terms
    d. Student and parent will sign using your FSA ID. If you successfully used the IRS DRT, you will not have to enter FSA ID again.
    e. If you're unable to provide an electronic signature, then you can print a form to send in. This does delay the process.

9. **Confirmation**
    a. Once you see your confirmation page, you'll know you've successfully submitted your FAFSA form. If you provided an email address on the form, you'll automatically receive the confirmation page by email.
    b. Your confirmation page offers the option for the parent information in your FAFSA form to be transferred automatically into another student's application. If you have a sibling who needs to fill out a FAFSA form, be sure to use this option when you see your confirmation page. **The link will only appear on the confirmation page within the FAFSA form, so be sure to take advantage of it while you're still in the application.**

STEP 4: AFTER SUBMITTING

Once your FAFSA has been submitted, continue to check your emails in case your financial aid office needs more information.

In 3 to 5 days you will receive an email with your "**Student Aid Report (SAR).**" This will determine your financial aid eligibility (Grants and/or Loans). It will also tell you if you have been selected for a review process called "**Verification**." Your FAFSA is not complete until the verification process is complete.

If you've been accepted at a college or career school that you listed on your FAFSA form, the school will calculate your aid and send you an electronic or paper aid offer, sometimes called an award letter, telling you how much aid you're eligible for at the school. This happens as the school year approaches.

For further assistance, please contact WSC Financial Aid:
Phone: 701-774-4248 / Text: 701-595-7382
Email: wsc.financialaid@willistonstate.edu