



24 Places to Get Help with the FAFSA

In case you haven't heard, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) became available on October 1st this year. That means that it's time for high school seniors to fill out the FAFSA. If you don't think you need to fill out the FAFSA, you need to read [I won't qualify for financial aid, why should I fill out the FAFSA?](#) The Department of Education estimates the average time to complete the FAFSA, including gathering documents, to take two hours and it is two hours well spent. If you find yourself needing some help with the FAFSA, try these resources first.

Free FAFSA Web Resources

Start with the People Who are Responsible for the FAFSA

The FAFSA website has several resources that can help you with the FAFSA. You can estimate your eligibility for federal student aid by completing the FAFSA4caster. You can also print out the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet to help you get your information organized before you start the application.

Federal Student Aid-Filling Out the FAFSA

Download the Complete the FAFSA for a detailed guide to completing the application including help on specific questions.

NerdScholar

NerdWallet has a FAFSA tutorial along with guides for various family situations. Users can also submit questions to be answered by the website's counselors.

Khan Academy

Khan Academy has a paying for college section that includes a video walkthrough of the FAFSA as well as the PROFILE.

Edvisors

The FAFSA Help Guide takes you through filling out the FAFSA by showing each screen of the online application. You have to fill out contact information to get the PDF version but you can use the website version without having to give your information. You can go through the online version to see if it's worth the trouble to download the PDF.

My FAFSA Assistant

This is a free series of videos provided by Fox College Funding. The video topics include "Non-Reportable Assets," Taxable vs Non-Taxable", and "How to Report College Savings Plans."

Virginia Education Wizard FAFSA Tutorial

Video tutorial that takes you through each section but doesn't provide step-by-step

instructions. For example “This next section of the worksheet is asking you to check if your parents received assistance. For this section, please check all that apply.”

[National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators \(NASFAA\)](#)

Download the PDF on FAFSA Tips and Common Mistakes to Avoid.

[FAFSA The How-To Guide for High School Students](#)

This PDF is not a step-by-step guide but does answer some of the most commonly asked questions students and families might have.

In-Person FAFSA Help

[Form Your Future](#) (FAFSA completion events)

The National College Access Network has taken over the College Goal Sunday program. Get free help with the FAFSA in person by attending a College Goal Sunday/FAFSA completion event. The website links to resources and events in each state (it’s easy to miss, look at the bottom of the page.)

[State Resources](#)

Some states have agencies that provide assistance in completing the FAFSA. For example, the [EducationQuest Foundation](#) in Nebraska provides free help by appointment. The [Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency](#) and the [Finance Authority of Maine](#) conduct In-Person Help Events.

Toll Free Help

Talk with a live person by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center: 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)

Some states such as [New York](#) (1-800-808-1790) and [Texas](#) (1-888-311-8881) offer their own hotlines where students can get help with the FAFSA.

Financial Aid/FAFSA Webinars

Several organizations offer financial aid webinars throughout the year including [EducationQuest](#), [Mapping Your Future](#), [StudentChoice](#), and [BigFuture](#). Just search the web for “FAFSA webinars.”

Paid FAFSA Preparers

As when completing your taxes, families can choose to [pay a preparer](#) to complete the FAFSA. In the past, some companies took advantage of students charging them to complete a form

that they were unaware that they could complete for free. So there is a great deal of emphasis on not having to pay to file the FAFSA and available resources to help with completing the form.

However, given that Mark Kantrowitz, an expert of the FAFSA, states in the [New York Times](#) that “Even a certified public accountant or certified financial planner may not have in-depth knowledge of the intricacies of federal student aid laws and regulations” you would think hiring an actual expert would be a good thing. If you decide you would rather spend money than time in completing the FAFSA, practice due diligence in selecting a provider.

And to keep a little perspective, read [The Top Ten Ways A FAFSA Is Like A Colonoscopy](#).

More Resources for Finding and Paying for College

Best Free Resources for Finding and Paying for College Guide

Guide to 17 free PDFs, spreadsheets, and websites. [Click here to get your free copy.](#)

College Financial Aid Timeline

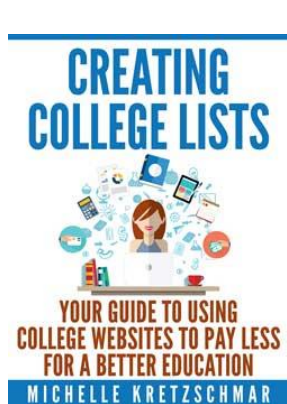
What you need to know about financial aid starting with high school juniors. [Click here to get your free copy.](#)

College Application Tracker Spreadsheet

[Free spreadsheet](#) to track your college application deadlines. Includes a financial timeline.

50-50 PDF College Listing

Listing of all colleges by state that have at least a 50% acceptance rate and 50% graduation rate in a [PDF format](#).



Don't have any idea of where to go to college?

Here's how to start making your list of colleges. If you're willing to step away from the rankings spotlight, you can find some impressive programs at great values. All it takes is a little time and a visit to one of the most ignored resources in creating a college list: the college website. [Find out more.](#)