



Seven Steps to Take After Filing Your FAFSA

Completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step to qualify for federal and state financial assistance and a variety of other sources of aid for college. After you complete the FAFSA (either the paper form or the online version) there are several additional steps to determine your eligibility for financial aid.

1. A U.S. Department of Education processor analyzes the information submitted on the FAFSA. Using a formula prescribed by the U.S. Congress, the processor calculates the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), the amount your family is expected to contribute toward college expenses.
2. A Student Aid Report (SAR) reports lists EFC figure. This will arrive via e-mail or through the U.S. Mail. Review your SAR for accuracy and retain copies with your financial aid records.
3. You can make changes to your FAFSA information electronically through Corrections on the Web, to which you may link through www.fafsa.ed.gov, using a personal identification number (PIN). Or, you can correct the information on the paper SAR.

You can check the status of your FAFSA by calling (800) 4-FED-AID (800) 433-3243 or by accessing www.fafsa.ed.gov and clicking on "Check status of a submitted FAFSA." Please wait at least 24 hours after submitting a FAFSA before checking its status electronically.

4. The information from the processed FAFSA also is reported to the schools that you listed in Step Six of the FAFSA. The financial aid office of each school compares your EFC against its cost of attendance. The difference between those figures represents your financial need. The financial aid staff members attempt to meet this financial need by tailoring an aid package, which may include grants, work-study employment and loans.
5. Some financial aid applications will be selected for a federally required verification process. Your family may have to present federal tax returns and other financial documents to the financial aid office to verify that the information submitted on your FAFSA is accurate. The request will come to you via e-mail, U.S. Mail, or other official college communication system. Check with your institution to see how they will communicate with you.
6. Some postsecondary institutions, particularly private colleges and universities, as well as graduate and professional schools, require students to file an additional financial aid form known as the CSS Profile. These schools use the additional information supplied on this form to determine the allocation of the school's own financial aid programs, including grants, scholarships and loans.
7. After the financial aid office completes its financial aid packaging, it sends an award letter via e-mail, U.S. Mail, or other official college communication system listing the types and amounts of aid for which you are qualified, as well as the estimated cost of attending the school. You review the award package and decide whether to accept it. Check with your institution to see how they will communicate with you.