

FAFSA & FINANCIAL AID

A Family's Guide to Getting Started

UNDERSTANDING FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the starting point for accessing federal student financial aid, including grants, work-study opportunities, and loans. Colleges and states may also use FAFSA information when awarding financial assistance.

The 2027–28 FAFSA is now available for students entering college in fall 2027.

Completing the FAFSA is free.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A few important things for families to know:

- Students and required parent contributors need their own StudentAid.gov accounts.
- Financial and tax information may be required.
- Each college may have its own financial aid deadlines and additional requirements.
- Some institutions also require the CSS Profile or other financial aid forms.
- After submitting, students should review their FAFSA Submission Summary and respond to any requests for additional information.

MY RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. Understanding FAFSA: Class of 2027 Guide

An accessible guide for high school students and families.

Explains how FAFSA works, how to complete it, and how to understand financial aid offers.

2. Federal Student Aid: Student Walkthrough

The U.S. Department of Education's step-by-step guide to completing the FAFSA.

3. Federal Student Aid: Parent Walkthrough

Explains parent contributor responsibilities, account setup, and the steps parents complete.

4. Federal Student Aid: Official FAFSA Application

The official site for submitting the FAFSA and managing federal aid.

A NOTE FROM AVENUES ACADEMICS

Financial aid is its own area of expertise. My role at Avenues Academics is to guide students through college admissions strategy, academic fit, and the application process.

For financial aid eligibility, household-specific questions, and the financial implications of college decisions, I encourage families to consult their colleges' financial aid offices and qualified financial professionals. Your CPA or Tax Professional can often support with household-specific nuance.

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

External guidance: Understanding FAFSA and Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education.