2020-2021 FAFSA Checklist

- Complete the 2020-2021 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Needed to apply for federal, state and college-based financial aid
- Complete as soon after October 1st, 2019 as possible!
- Never pay anyone to complete the form for you!
- Must be completed every year for federal, state, and institutional aid consideration
- FAFSA completion tips provided in the margin for all questions
- Tools needed to complete the FAFSA (required for both parent and student unless otherwise noted):

Required Information	Where to find it
2018 student and parent Federal Income Tax forms (if filed/required to file)	Personal records or visit www.irs.gov/transcript
2018 student and parent W-2 forms	Personal records, contact your employer, or visit www.irs.gov/transcript for a "Wage & Income Statement"
FSA-ID (Federal Student Aid ID)	Create FSA ID's at http://fsaid.ed.gov
Drivers' license number *(student only)*	Personal records
Email addresses	Personal records
Social Security numbers	Personal records or contact the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213
Birth dates	Personal records
Date parents were married, separated, divorced, or widowed	Personal records

What Happens Next

1) The Department of Education processes your FAFSA and assigns you an EFC (Expected Family Contribution)
   a. EFC determines eligibility for need-based aid
   b. Calculated based on information indicated on FAFSA (including student/parent income/assets, # in household, # in college, etc.)
2) The student receives a summary of their FAFSA called a Student Aid Report
3) If you are applying to a private college, you may need to complete the **CSS Profile**
   a. CSS Profile does not replace the FAFSA; it is required by some institutions as a supplemental financial aid form to the FAFSA
   b. All students need to submit a FAFSA, but not all colleges will require students to submit a CSS Profile.
4) Colleges generate financial aid award offers for students; awards are based on student's eligibility, availability of funds, and the student's Cost of Attendance (COA)
   a. COA = All estimated & exact costs (program specific-tuition, fees, room, board, books, lab fees, transportation, supplies, personal expenses, etc.) associated with attending a specific college for 1 year
5) A financial aid award offer will be generated
6) Compare each college's costs to the amount of financial aid you are offered to see if you have enough aid to cover the cost of attending that school
7) View your award offer and accept whatever portion of the offered aid that you wish to accept
8) Complete any additional steps for loan borrowing (such as Loan Entrance Counseling and a Master Promissory Note) if you choose to borrow loans

Dependency Status Questions

1) Were you born before January 1, 1997?
2) As of the date of the FAFSA filing, are you married?
3) Will you be working on a master's or doctorate program at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year?
4) Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
5) Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
6) Do you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021?
7) Do you have any dependents (other than your child or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2021?
8) At any time since you turned age 13, were both of your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
9) Are you or were you an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?
10) Does someone other than your parent/stepparent have legal guardianship of you, as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?
11) At any time on or after July 1, 2019, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?
12) At any time on or after July 1, 2019, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?
13) At any time on or after July 1, 2019, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

- If you answer "no" to every question, you are considered DEPENDENT for financial aid purposes, and must add parental information to the FAFSA, and submit.

- If you answer "yes" to any question, and provide sufficient proof, you are considered independent, and should not include parental information on the FAFSA. However, if you are married you will need to include income information for your spouse.

- If you answer "no" to every question, but feel you should be considered for independent status due to your extenuating circumstances, then you would have to contact the institution's Financial Aid Office for details on how to complete the dependency appeal process to gain independent status.

Reporting Parent Information on the FAFSA

Dependent students are required to report parent information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

For reporting purposes, "parent" means your legal (biological or adoptive) parent or stepparent, or a person that the state has determined to be your legal parent.

Use this guide to figure out which parent's information to include (depending on your family situation):

Question 1: Are your parents married to each other?

If yes, then report information for both parents (or your remaining parent if he/she is widowed) on the FAFSA.

If no, then answer question 2.

Question 2: Do your parents live together?

If yes, then report information for both parents on the FAFSA, even if they were never married, are divorced, or are separated.

If no, then answer question 3.

Question 3: If your biological parents are divorced, did you live with one parent more than the other over the past 12 months?

If yes, then report information on the FAFSA for the parent you lived with more. Also, if this parent remarried, you will need to report information for your stepparent on the FAFSA.

If no, then report information on the FAFSA for the parent who provided more financial support over the past 12 months or in the last year you received support. Also, if this parent remarried, you will need to report information for your stepparent on the FAFSA.

The following people are not considered your parents unless they have legally adopted you:

- • Widowed Stepparent
- • Grandparents
- • Foster Parents
- • Legal Guardians (court-ordered placement under non-parent)
- • Older Brothers/Sisters/Cousins
- • Aunts or Uncles

If you're not sure who to report as a parent, you can call 800-4-FED-AID (800-433-3243) or visit https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/parent-info.