

THE BIG CHANGES UNDER THE NEW FAFSA

Last year the U.S. Department of Education released a new, simplified version of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You'll be relieved to learn it has fewer questions — from more than 100 questions to as few as 18 — but the form is different. Check out some of the biggest changes we see with the FAFSA, and as always, reach out with questions.

1 Who Has to Help Complete Your FAFSA:

An important new term in this updated version of the FAFSA is "Contributor." A Contributor is anyone who is required to provide information on your FAFSA, and that means they will need to create their own FSA ID.

Who's considered a Contributor:

- ➔ **Your spouse.**
- ➔ **If your parents are married and filed joint 2023 tax returns:** only one parent needs to complete the FAFSA as a Contributor.
- ➔ **If your parents are married, but filed separate 2023 tax returns:** each parent is a Contributor and must complete their section of the FAFSA.
- ➔ **If your parent is remarried:** your stepparent is considered a Contributor and must complete their section of the FAFSA.
- ➔ **If your parents are divorced, separated, or never married:** The parent who provides the most financial support should complete the FAFSA as a Contributor.

When you start your FAFSA, you'll be asked to provide information for all your Contributors. You need to know the following information for each Contributor:

- ✓ Legal name
- ✓ Date of birth
- ✓ Social Security Number (if they don't have one, you'll be asked to provide their mailing address)
- ✓ Email address

- ## 2 Consenting to the direct transfer of tax information from the IRS:
- You and your Contributors must consent to allowing the direct transfer of Federal Tax Information (FTI) from the IRS into the FAFSA form for you to have a complete FAFSA and be eligible for funding.

- ## 3 Student Aid Index — aka SAI.
- This is used to determine your Pell Grant eligibility, and what the college uses to determine its own need-based aid. Curious about what your SAI could be? Use the SAI Calculator — it's not official but will give you an estimate of your eligibility.

SAI calculator:

<https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/estimate/student-information>



4 What is considered an asset for the 2025-2026 FAFSA?

- ✓ Annual child support received
- ✓ Net worth of all businesses, regardless of the size or number of employees
- ✓ Net worth of farm, including the value of a family farm (with the exception of the family's primary residence).
- ✓ Education savings accounts will be counted as parental assets if the account is designated for the dependent student.

