



FAFSA Checklist 2020–2021

TO APPLY ONLINE: [FAFSA.GOV](https://fafsa.gov)

800.4FEDAID

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used to apply for federal, state and college-based financial aid. You should file a FAFSA **as soon as possible after October 1, 2020**. Awards are income-based, so applying early does not guarantee you will get an award. **You or your parents will need to use your 2018 tax return to file the FAFSA. You may be able to transfer your federal tax return info into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.**

What you will need:

- Your Social Security number
- Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your most recent federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned.
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
- A Federal Student Aid User ID and password to sign electronically.

If you are a dependent student, you will also need most of the above information for your parents.

How long will it take?



Initial Application:

30 minutes

Renewal Application:

20 minutes

FAFSA Corrections:

10 minutes

Are you dependent or independent?

If you answer “Yes” to any question below, you are considered an independent student.

- Were you born before January 1, 1998?
- Are you married?
- At the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year, will you be working on a master’s or doctoral program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, or graduate certificate, etc.)?
- Are you on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
- Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- Do you have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you?
- Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who will receive more than half of their support from you, through June 30, 2021?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- Have you been declared an emancipated minor by a court in your state of legal residence?
- Have you been placed in a legal guardianship by a court in your state of legal residence?
- At any time after June 30, 2020, 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?
- At any time after June 30, 2020, 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?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2020, 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?

Updating your FAFSA: IRS Data Retrieval Tool or Tax Transcript

You now use prior-prior year tax information for filing the FAFSA. You will use 2018 income and tax information for the 2020–2021 FAFSA. This change should decrease the number of students needed to update their tax information and increase the number eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval tool. Using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool allows you to transfer your tax information directly into the FAFSA. However, some people are ineligible and must request a tax transcript from the IRS.

IRS Data Retrieval Process

What you will need:

- Student's Social Security number and date of birth
- User IDs and passwords for both student and parent (if applicable)
- FAFSA on the Web password
- Copy of student's and parent's income taxes / W-2s

Are you eligible for the Data Retrieval Tool?

Some families will not be eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. If any of the following situations apply to you, you are **NOT** eligible to use the tool.

- Tax filing status is Married Filing Separately
- Tax filing status is Head of Household
- Filing an amended tax return
- Filing a foreign tax return

That means you'll need to update your information manually, using a copy of your completed 2018 tax return and any supporting documents. If the student's FAFSA is selected for verification, you must submit a tax return transcript. You may request a transcript by calling 1-800-908-9946 or by visiting irs.gov/Individuals/Get-Transcript.

Tax return transcripts show most line items from your tax return (Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ) as it was originally filed, including any accompanying forms and schedules. This transcript does not reflect any changes you, your representative or the IRS made after you filed your return.

1. Go to fafsa.gov.
2. Log in to the student's FAFSA record.
3. Select "Make FAFSA Corrections" and use the "Next" button at the bottom of each page to navigate to the Financial Information section.
5. Change income tax filing status to "Already Completed."
4. Answer the filtering questions to determine if you are eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.
5. If eligible, the parent will be asked to enter his/her PIN before linking to the IRS website.
6. Follow the onscreen instructions to complete the process. After the IRS has validated your identification, your IRS tax information will display. You can transfer your information from the IRS or return to FAFSA on the Web. If you transfer your tax information, questions that are populated with that tax information will be marked with "Transferred from the IRS."
- Note: Be sure to enter your address exactly as it appears on tax return.*
7. Once the data retrieval is complete, check each field for accuracy and complete any questions requiring information not transferred from the IRS. *Note: Do not change any data transferred from the IRS.*
8. Submit FAFSA corrections.



College admissions checklist

Keep copies of everything. If you're sending applications or other important documents by mail, you might want to send them return receipt requested. This will let you know when the school received the documents. Some of the items on this list might not apply to every school. For example, few public colleges require an entrance essay; many private colleges do. You should check to make sure that people writing recommendations or sending transcripts do so by the deadline. And you shouldn't wait until the deadline to send something in — send it in early just in case something goes wrong.

Item	Deadline	Sent/Taken
<input type="checkbox"/> Admissions application	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> High school transcript	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Letters of recommendation	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entrance essay	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Admissions test		
<input type="checkbox"/> ACT	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> SAT	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Fees and deposits		
<input type="checkbox"/> Application	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	_____	_____

Financial aid checklist

Keep copies of everything. If you're filing the FAFSA, the best way to do it is online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You should print out a hard copy for your records. If you're applying for scholarships and grants administered by the school that require a separate application, you should consider sending the application return receipt requested. And, as always, don't wait until the last minute — things can go wrong. Computers crash, and mail occasionally gets lost. If you file early and keep track of what you've been doing, you have time to fix things.

Item	Deadline	Sent
<input type="checkbox"/> FAFSA	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> School financial aid form	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Local scholarships		
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____

Senior calendar

August/September

- Ask colleges you're interested in to send you admissions information.
- If you're applying for Early Decision, start filling out the forms to meet the college's deadline.
- If you haven't taken the ACT/SAT or if you think you can do better, register. See page 7 for dates.
- Get with your counselor to find out about the financial aid sources available to you. Use KHEAA's *Affording Higher Education*. Copies are sent to high school counselors, high school libraries and public libraries.

October/November

- Ask your parents to get their tax return information ready so you can submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1.
- Meet with college admissions representatives at college fairs or when they visit your school.
- Attend a financial aid seminar if your school offers one. Read page 21 about scams first.
- If you haven't picked a college yet, narrow your list by visiting schools and talking with students. You should probably talk with your parents too.
- If you're going Early Decision, most schools want the applications submitted about now.
- If you're going through the regular admissions process, it's time to ask teachers to write recommendations and to polish your admissions essay if you have to write one.
- Check with each school's financial aid office to see what financial aid forms they require in addition to the FAFSA.

December/January

- Make sure your applications were received on time. See previous page for admissions and financial aid checklists.

- If you went Early Decision and were accepted, withdraw your applications from other schools.

February/March

- Submit midyear grades if the colleges you've applied to require them.
- Send in any deposits that are required.
- If you've been accepted by more than one college but haven't heard from your first choice, contact that school about a decision before you make any nonrefundable deposits to other schools.
- If you've decided on which school to attend, notify that college of your decision. Let any other colleges that have accepted you know about your decision.

April/May

- Follow up on your financial aid package. See next page for information about comparing packages.
- If you're going to need student loans, compare the benefits offered by the various lenders your college uses.
- Take AP tests if you're enrolled in AP courses.
- If you're on a waiting list at a school you really want to attend, ask the director of admissions how to strengthen your application.

June

- Let your high school counselor know which school you're going to so the school can send in final grades, class rank and proof of graduation.
- Send thank-you notes to counselors, teachers and others who helped you through the process.
- Prepare a budget for the coming school year.

School and package comparison

Use your award letters that you receive from colleges' financial aid offices and the Student Aid Report (SAR) that you receive after filling out the FAFSA to fill out this chart to compare the schools and financial aid packages you are considering. The sample column will give you an idea of how to fill in the needed information.

Sometimes the most expensive schools have scholarships that will bring them in line with others. So don't limit yourself; consider all your choices and compare.

Sample	School A	School B	
Need Calculation			
\$8,000			a. Tuition and Fees
800			b. Books and Supplies
6,200			c. Room and Board
800			d. Transportation
1,200			e. Personal Expenses
17,000			f. Total Cost of Attendance (add lines a through e)
-2,000			g. Minus Estimated Family Contribution (remains the same)
15,000			h. Financial Need (line f minus line g)
Financial Aid Package			
\$5,000			i. Federal Pell Grant
1,800			j. College Access Program Grant
0			k. Kentucky Tuition Grant
500			l. Other Grants/Scholarships
1,700			m. Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES)
700			n. Work-Study
5,300			p. Federal Direct Loan
0			q. Other Loans
15,000			r. Total Financial Aid Package (add lines i through q)
0			Unmet Need (line h minus line r)

School evaluation

Instructions: If you're considering more than three schools, photocopy this page before proceeding. Select the schools for evaluation and write their names on the slanted lines. Answer the questions for each school. (If the answer is "yes," make a "✓" in the column. If the answer is "no," make an "X" in the column.) What are your findings?

			Does the school offer the educational program you want?
			If you're admitted into the school, are you also admitted into the educational program you want?
			Is the school accredited by an agency accepted by the U.S. Department of Education (e.g., Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Council on Occupational Education, Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology, National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, American Association of Bible Colleges)?
			Is the school licensed or approved by the appropriate state government agency (e.g., Council on Postsecondary Education, State Board for Proprietary Education, State Board of Hairdressers and Cosmetologists, State Board of Barbering, Kentucky Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors)?
			Is the school approved for federal and state financial aid programs?
			Does the school have the resources to provide you the education you need to be successful in the work force? Look for up-to-date training devices, developmental course work and/or tutorial assistance, general education courses (e.g., English and math), educational qualifications of the faculty, and library holdings and resources related to your field of study.
			Will completion of the educational program qualify you for a job? An exam and/or apprenticeship may also be required. If a licensing examination is required for employment in your career field (e.g., nursing, cosmetology, or law), do a high percentage of the school's graduates pass the exam?
			Does the school have a job placement program? Is it free? Are a high percentage of graduates placed in jobs? Recent graduates and potential employers can help you answer these questions. A good school will give you a list of contacts.
			Does the typical starting salary for a new graduate of the school's educational program compare favorably with that of graduates from the same educational program at other schools? Does it meet with your expectation? If the school provides such data, ask to see detailed statistics substantiating the school's claim.
			Does the enrollment contract (if required) clearly indicate the complete cost of your course of study? Are all necessities (books, room and board, transportation, tools, uniforms, etc.) included in the cost? Schools must make printed cost-of-education information readily available to prospective students upon request.
			Does the enrollment contract contain language to protect you if the school closes or discontinues your program? Call the Better Business Bureau in the area to find out if the school has had problems.
			Does the school have a printed refund policy? Good schools have a reasonable refund arrangement for students who withdraw from school.
			Does the school have a low withdrawal rate? A high rate may be a warning sign.
			Will credits earned at one school be acceptable for transfer to another? If you plan to enter one postsecondary institution but transfer to another institution later, will your credits transfer?
			Does the school have a low student loan default rate? Call the U.S. Department of Education at 800.433.3243 to check a school's default rate. A high default rate may be a warning sign.
			How much will you have to borrow at this school? You need to compare the cost of repaying loans with what you'll earn when you finish.

Your college plan

List the top three reasons why you want to go to college:

1.	2.	3.
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List the top three factors you will use to choose your college:

1.	2.	3.
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List the top three career interests you have:

1.	2.	3.
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How have/will you prepare for college?

Courses taken:	1.	3.	5.	7.
	2.	4.	6.	8.
Test Scores (SAT, ACT, etc.):				
Extracurricular Activities:				
1.	3.	5.		
2.	4.	6.		

List your top college choices:	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Admission Requirements:					
Application Deadline:					
Open House/Preview Days:					
Scholarship Requirements:					
Scholarship Deadline:					

How will you pay for college?

How much is your KEES scholarship? (You can find this at kheaa.com.) \$

File the FAFSA in October (You can do this at fafsa.gov.)

Other scholarships: (You can search for scholarships at kheaa.com.)

1.	\$
2.	\$
3.	\$
4.	\$

You can get an estimate of your financial aid with *Getting the Facts* at kheaa.com.

Choose a college and make a deposit by the date required.

Register for classes?
orientation?

Sign up for
Confirm housing?

Check out KHEAA's *Surviving College* to help you prepare for a successful college experience.