Your Quick Guide to the 2027-28 FAFSA

The fast, simple way to file with confidence

CREATED BY COLLEGE AID PRO

WHAT IS THE FAFSA?

The FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It's the form that decides how much need-based financial aid your student can get for college including grants, scholarships, work-study, and federal student loans.

Here's why it's important:

1. **Every family should file. Even if you don't think you'll qualify for aid, some colleges and states require the FAFSA before awarding scholarships.**
2. **It's the gateway to free money. Grants and need-based scholarships start here.**
3. **One form covers it all. Instead of applying separately to each school, the FAFSA sends info directly to every college you list.**

👉 In other words: Filing the FAFSA keeps options open and puts your student in the running for thousands of dollars that might otherwise be left on the table.

Think of the FAFSA as a key.

It opens doors to financial aid, scholarships, and options.

WHO FILLS IT OUT?

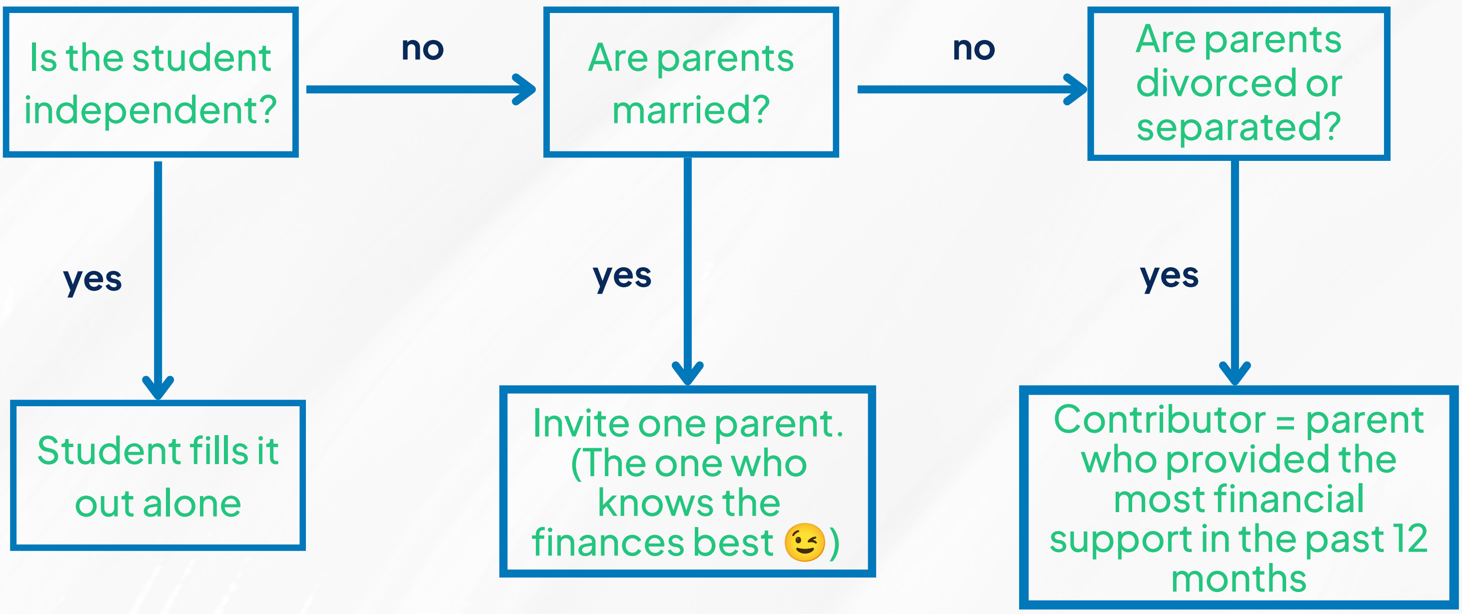
The FAFSA is technically the student's form, but parents are almost always involved.

Here's how it works:

- **The student starts the FAFSA and fills out their section.**
- **The student then invites the contributor(s) to add their information.**
- **If parents are married & file taxes as "married filing jointly", only one parent is a contributor.**

Married families should pick the parent who knows the finances best. For divorced/separated families, it's the parent who provided the most financial support in the past 12 months. This isn't always the parent the student lives with or who claimed them on taxes.

Follow the path to see who fills out the parent section.



The student drives the FAFSA. The parent provides the gas. Both parts matter.

WHERE & WHEN TO FILE

Where to File

Create your account here!

When to File

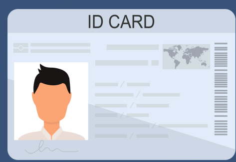
The FAFSA for the 2027-28 school year opens October 1, 2026.

You don't need to file the day it opens, but you don't want to miss any deadlines!

NEW ID VERIFICATION

Applicants flagged for real-time identity verification must show one valid government-issued photo ID on camera, be ready to be on camera to show your ID. Federal guidance lists these examples:

- Driver's license
- State-issued identification card
- U.S. passport or passport card
- Tribal identification card
- Permanent Resident Card (Green Card)
- More generally, another valid, unexpired government-issued photo ID containing the person's name and photograph



Have an ID handy!

Deadlines to Watch:

1. 🏫 College priority deadlines → set by each school.
2. 🏛️ State deadlines → firm cutoffs for grants/scholarships.
3. 🇺🇸 Federal deadline → the very last chance (but waiting could cost you money).

WHAT YOU & YOUR STUDENT NEED BEFORE STARTING

Gather These Basics:

- [ ] FSA IDs (one for your student + one for anyone contributing to the student's FAFSA)
- [ ] 2025 federal tax return (student + parent, even though most info will transfer automatically from the IRS)
- [ ] Records of your assets (savings, checking, investments, parent-owned 529s, real estate equity that is not your primary home)
  *Use the balances as of the day you file - a snapshot of today.
- [ ] Records of untaxed income or child support received (if applicable)
- [ ] List of schools your student is considering (up to 20 can be listed)

💡 *Quick reminder:* Don't include retirement accounts (401(k), IRA, pensions.) Those are not reported as assets.

Consent Reminder

Both you and your student will be asked to give consent and approval so the FAFSA can pull your federal tax info directly from the IRS.

- This step is required, even if no taxes were filed.
- No consent = no eligibility for federal student aid.

THE FAFSA IN 6 STEPS

1 Create FSA IDs

One for your student + one for each contributor (usually a parent).

2 Log in at FAFSA.gov

Student starts the FAFSA and gives consent to pull IRS info.

3 Complete student section

The student completes their portion of the FAFSA.

4 Invite parent contributor

Before submitting, the student invites a parent or "contributor" to join.

5 Complete parent section

The parent or "contributor" completes their portion of the FAFSA.

6 Review & submit

Both parent and student e-sign with their FSA IDs. You'll get a confirmation email and a Student Aid Report (SAR).

YOUR NEXT STEP AFTER THE FAFSA

Filing the FAFSA is step one. The next step? Knowing what college will *actually* cost your family.

That's where MyCAP comes in. It's a software tool that helps families shop smarter for college without the sticker shock.

With a MyCAP account you'll:

1. See a personalized estimate of what you'll pay (and not pay) at each school
2. Compare colleges side by side to spot the most affordable options
3. Plan ahead with confidence instead of waiting on financial aid letters

Create Your MyCAP account

www.collegeaidpro.com