

STEPS TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

In Virginia and many other states, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used to award federal and most state and college-based aid, so students should complete the FAFSA as early as October 1 of their senior year in high school.



Gather your information

To complete a FAFSA, you need the following information:

- FSA ID (apply at [FSAID.ed.gov](https://fsaid.ed.gov))
- Social Security Number
- Prior-prior year federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned (for example, you will need 2018 tax records for the 2020-21 FAFSA). You may be able to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.
- Bank statements and records of untaxed income and investments
- Alien registration card (if not U.S. citizen)

See page 14 of the *Opportunities guide*.



Complete your FAFSA at FAFSA.gov

You can complete the FAFSA beginning October 1 of each year. Check with your preferred colleges for specific deadlines and any additional application requirements, such as the CSS Profile.

See pages 18-19 and 34-37 of the *Opportunities guide*.



Apply for scholarships

Start your search online using a credible website, such as [Fastweb.com](https://www.fastweb.com).

See pages 21-23 of the *Opportunities guide*.



Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)

After filing a FAFSA, you will receive a SAR from the U.S. Department of Education. Your SAR will provide a summary of your FAFSA information. Once received, make sure you review it and make any necessary corrections as soon as possible.

See page 15 of the *Opportunities guide*.



Compare financial aid packages

Your SAR is sent to the financial aid office at the colleges you listed on your FAFSA. Colleges use this information to determine your financial aid packages. Packages will vary, so carefully review all offers. Contact the college financial aid office if you have questions.

See pages 24-25 of the *Opportunities guide*.

