



Tips for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) without the IRS Data Retrieval Tool

If you need money for college, one of the most important forms to complete is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Even if you think you won't qualify for need-based aid, the form is a requirement for many other scholarships and state or campus financial aid programs.

If you plan to file the FAFSA soon, you should know that the United States Department of Education and IRS recently announced that the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) that was a part of the FAFSA application will be unavailable indefinitely. **Although the Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) is not available, you can still complete the FAFSA.** Here are some important tips for anyone getting ready to complete the FAFSA.

1. **Apply for an FSA ID at fsaid.ed.gov.** The FSA ID allows you to sign the FAFSA electronically.
2. You should **complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1** in the year before you are requesting aid. Check with the schools you're interested in attending and your state department of higher education for specific deadlines.
3. **Have tax returns and other records of other income available while you complete the FAFSA** – this is extremely important since you cannot use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. You should have the following items for you and your parent(s), if applicable, on hand when you prepare to complete the FAFSA:
 - 2015 Income tax return if you are applying for financial aid for the 2017-2018 academic year
 - Other records of money earned, including untaxed income
 - Current bank statements
 - Business and farm records
 - Records of investments
 - Drivers' licenses
 - Social Security cards
 - Dates of birth
4. **Prepare for your information to be verified by your school financial aid office.** The number of students selected for verification is expected to increase because the IRS Data Retrieval Tool cannot be used. Verification is a way to ensure that information on the FAFSA is accurate and financial aid is being distributed appropriately and fairly. If you are selected for verification, you may need a tax return transcript or tax account transcript for verification. Request the transcript online, if possible, at www.irs.gov/transcripts to receive your transcript immediately. If you cannot request your transcript online, complete IRS Form 4506-T and allow up to 10 days to receive it.