

Mapping Your Future
Answering student and parent questions
about the 2018-19 FAFSA
September 26, 2017

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Question	Answer
Financial Information	
1. After a death in the family this year, we expect to inherit some funds, but are not sure on the amount. Do we have to report this?	Income and assets are reported at the time you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If the inheritance has not been finalized at the time of FAFSA completion, that information is not included.
2. Which tax year should we use to complete the 2018-19 FAFSA?	Use 2016 tax information to complete the 2018-19 FAFSA.
3. Do I need to report my contributions to my 401K Plan? Do I need to report my contributions to my health savings account (HSA)?	Contributions made to a 401(k) or other tax-deferred retirement plan during 2016 should be reported on the FAFSA as untaxed income (Question 94a). Tax-free contributions made to a HSA during 2016 should also be reported as untaxed income.
4. Do I report Social Security benefits received for dependent children on the FAFSA?	Social Security benefits should be reported on the FAFSA if they are taxable income. For more information, please see https://www.irs.gov/fags/social-security-income .
5. Does a transfer of assets from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA count as income for FAFSA purposes?	"Rollovers" of retirement funds from one account to another are not income for FAFSA purposes.
6. My mother died in 2011. I will receive her life insurance payout when I turned 18 in 2018. Is this an asset?	It is an asset as of the date you receive the funds. Please see Question 1.
7. If an applicant's marital status changed after 12/31/2015, can he or she use IRS Data Retrieval?	No; the information transferred through IRS Data Retrieval would be inaccurate.
8. On the screen "what are the asset questions" it says total amount of parents' assets not available yet for 2018-19. When will this be available and where?	The screenshot used during the presentation was an example. The amount which appears in the question when the FAFSA is completed will vary based on the age of the older parent.

Question	Answer
9. Where can I find more information about what is considered untaxed income?	Review the information included with the PDF version of the FAFSA, which will be available October 1 at https://fafsa.gov .
10. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool was closed down and now is being reopened. Was there an announcement that it is now safe to use the tool without being concerned about identify theft?	The Department of Education (ED) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) have taken a number of steps to ensure the security of data transferred through IRS Data Retrieval, including the encryption of data.
11. How do I report a 529 plan on the FAFSA?	<p>The value of 529 plans owned by the parent or dependent student are reported on the FAFSA as the parent's asset.</p> <p>If the student receives a distribution from a 529 plan owned by an individual other than the parent (such as a grandparent), he or she would report the distribution as untaxed income.</p>
12. Why do you need to include child support when the parent will not have this anymore when the child goes to college? How is this explained in the FAFSA?	Applicants must accurately report all income received for the specified year on the FAFSA (2016 income for the 2018-19 FAFSA). If income reported for 2016 is no longer available, the applicant should contact the financial aid office about adjusting the information reported on the FAFSA.
13. What do you do if your tax returns will not be prepared in time to complete the FAFSA?	Since the 2018-19 FAFSA will use 2016 tax information, most families will have filed their taxes before October. If needed, applicants may use estimated tax information to complete the FAFSA. However, the FAFSA must be updated once the taxes are filed. Please contact the financial aid office for additional information on using estimated tax information.
14. How do I report a primary and secondary residence I own on the FAFSA?	<p>A family's primary residence is not an asset reported on the FAFSA. However, other property, including secondary residences and investment properties, are reportable assets. The net value of the reportable assets should be reported.</p> <p>Market value-debt owed=net value.</p>
15. If you lose your job during this year how does that affect the FAFSA if you report 2016 income information?	The FAFSA will require the student and/or parent to import their 2016 tax return. However, the student is encouraged to contact the financial aid office to determine if adjustments can be made due to the change in income.

16. How should I complete the FAFSA if my parents divorced after 2015?	You should complete the FAFSA using the information of the parent with whom you lived the most during the last 12 months. If you lived equally with both parents, use the information of the parent who provided the most financial support during the last 12 months.
17. The mother (and a brother) of a dependent student has her name on a relative's house. The relative is the mother's grandmother (student's great-grandmother). How would this asset be reported on the FAFSA?	The house would be considered an asset of the parent. The value of the asset belonging to the parent should be reported on the FAFSA. If the parent and others are listed as owners on the title to the property, then the parent would report the percentage of the asset that belongs to him or her.
18. How should we report an asset if grandparents have investments in the student's name or list the student as a beneficiary?	The answer to this question depends somewhat on the investment. For example, if the grandparents have a 529, any distributions to the student would be reported as untaxed income by the student. (If the parent on the FAFSA has a 529 for the dependent student, they would report the 529 as an asset). For other investments, if the student is listed as the owner, they would need to report the value as an asset. If the student is a beneficiary of the asset, the reporting depends on when he or she receives a benefit. For example, if the student receives interest income from an asset, the student would report the interest income received during 2016. If the student does not receive any benefit from the asset until it is sold, the student would report the funds received at that time.
General	
19. Are there separate applications for state and institutional aid?	The answer varies by state and school. To locate contact information for state aid agencies, visit https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html . Contact each school for information about any additional aid application forms.
20. How does an applicant create a FSA ID?	To create a FSA ID, follow the steps at https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm .
21. Can you start the FAFSA and then go back on to complete it or does it all need to be done at once?	An applicant may complete the FAFSA in multiple sessions.
22. Do you use the same FSA ID that you used for another child in 2016? Or you have to create a new FSA ID for each child?	An applicant can only have one FSA ID. If a parent created a FSA ID earlier to complete a FAFSA for another child, he or she should use the same FSA ID to complete the parent section of the 2018-19 FAFSA for each child.

23. How long do you have to complete the FAFSA? When is it due?	An applicant can submit a 2018-19 FAFSA between October 1, 2017 and June 30, 2019. Some schools establish priority filing deadlines for the FAFSA, check with each school regarding deadlines.
24. I do not have a Social Security Number, but my son has one. Can he apply for a parent PLUS Loan?	No; a student cannot borrow a parent PLUS Loan. Because the parent is not an eligible borrower, the student may be able to borrow additional money in his own name. Contact the financial aid office at the college for more information.
25. In the case of an application for early decision, can the FAFSA be submitted without an admission application to other non-early decision schools?	Yes; a student can list up to 10 schools on the FAFSA, whether they are admitted to those institutions are not.
26. When you say financial aid office, do mean the office at the high school or the college?	The financial aid office is located on the college or university campus of the school the student is planning to attend.
27. Are the rules the same for citizens and permanent residents or are there differences?	<p>The eligibility criteria to apply for and receive federal financial aid are the same for citizens and permanent residents.</p> <p>U.S. citizens and U.S. nationals will indicate they are a U.S. Citizen on the FAFSA. There are other categories that are classified as eligible non-citizens. However, deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) students, students with a F1 or F2 student visa, students with a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, and students with a G series visas are classified as "neither citizen or eligible non-citizen."</p>
28. Once my application is submitted, can I resubmit it if there's any changes?	You may submit corrections after the application is processed. You can submit corrections online by logging into fafsa.gov . You may want to touch base with your financial aid office before submitting corrections.
29. As a single, independent, female with no assets, I don't understand why I could not get a Pell Grant. How much money can you make to receive a Pell Grant?	The formula used to calculate the EFC is designed to consider each applicant's situation. There is no income threshold for receiving a Pell Grant.
30. Are specific schools that a student may be applying to all listed on the FAFSA application?	A student can list up to 10 schools on the FAFSA. If he or she wants to add additional schools, the student can provide those schools with the Data Release Number (DRN) located in the upper right corner of the Student Aid Report (SAR).
31. Does the October 1 availability of the FAFSA replace the previous January 1 start of the aid application process?	Yes.

32. Is it true that money is available first come, first served? Is it true that there is a limit in how much a family can receive?	The Federal Pell Grant is an entitlement program, which means that if the student qualifies, the student will receive funding. However, other need-based grants are usually awarded first come, first served. In regards to a limit, a student cannot receive more financial aid than the school's cost of attendance.
33. What paperwork do you need in order to fill out the FAFSA? How long will it take (estimate) to fill out the FAFSA?	Documentation needed to complete the FAFSA includes tax returns, Social Security cards, and information about assets. The time needed to complete the FAFSA varies since the online application uses skip logic to ensure applicants only answer applicable questions. Completing the FAFSA generally takes at least 30 minutes.
34. What is the difference between the FAFSA and the Pell Grant?	The FAFSA is the application students complete to apply for federal financial aid. The Pell Grant is a federal financial aid program.
35. Will students attending college during the spring or second semester have a longer grace period to apply for financial aid?	Students who will not attend college until a later term such a spring must submit the FAFSA during the same time frame (October 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018) as student who plan to attend college during the fall term.
Household Information	
36. Can a grandparent be a member of the household?	<p>Yes; if the parent or independent student is providing more than 50 percent of the grandparent's support and will continue to do so through June 30, 2019.</p> <p>The impact of including a grandparent in the household on a student's aid eligibility depends on all of the information reported on the FAFSA.</p>
Parental Information	
37. Can either mom or dad complete the FAFSA? Only one parent needs to sign the application, correct?	<p>Either parent can fill out the FAFSA. If the parents are married (or remarried), information for both parents must be reported. Information for both parents must also be reported if the parents are unmarried but living together.</p> <p>Only one parent signs the FAFSA.</p> <p>For additional information regarding who is the parent for FAFSA purposes, please visit https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/parent-info.</p>
38. How do you determine in a legal sense the parent with whom the student lived the most during the last 12 months.	A student should consider the length of time (months or days) spent in each parent's house.

<p>39. My parents' separation agreement indicates my mom has primary custody, but my father claims me on his taxes. Is my mom the parent for FAFSA purposes?</p>	<p>The mom may be the parent for FAFSA purposes.</p> <p>The parent for FAFSA purposes is the parent that you lived with most during the last 12 months. If you did not live with one parent more than the other, provide information about the parent who provided more financial support during the last 12 months, or during the most recent year that you actually received support from a parent.</p> <p>The IRS rules for dependency are different from the FAFSA definition of a dependent. Whoever claims the student on taxes isn't necessarily the parent for FAFSA purposes.</p>
<p>40. How should a student apply when the father is claiming the student as a dependent and the parents are no longer married and live in two different states?</p>	<p>For FAFSA purposes, the student must include the parent that he or she lived with most during the last 12 months, regardless of which parent claimed the student on their taxes. If the student did not live with one parent more than the other, provide information about the parent who provided more financial support during the last 12 months, or during the most recent year that you actually received support from a parent.</p>
<p>41. The parents are divorced. Mother and student live in one state and father lives in another. Student plans to move to state where father lives and go to school there. The student can possibly take advantage of disabled military benefit for tuition. Who should the student report as the parent on the FAFSA? Anything else they need to know?</p>	<p>The parent for FAFSA purposes is the mother because the student lived with the mother for most of the past year. Regarding the military benefit for tuition, the student should check with the college or university financial aid office regarding any requirements for the program.</p>
<p>42. Is a stepparent a parent for the purpose of completing the FAFSA?</p>	<p>Yes; if the stepparent is married to the student's parent of record, he or she should provide information on the FAFSA.</p>
<p>43. Should undocumented parents complete the FAFSA?</p>	<p>Yes; completing the FAFSA increases the amount and type of aid a student could receive.</p>
<p>44. If a student lives with her mother and the mother's fiancé (not the biological father), does the fiancé have to report his information on the FAFSA?</p>	<p>No; since the mother and fiancé are not married, he is not a parent for FAFSA purposes.</p> <p>However, if the fiancé is contributing to the household expenses, the mother will need to report that information in Question 94i</p>