**FAFSA: Step by Step**

**What is a FAFSA?** FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The federal government uses this form to determine your eligibility for financial aid including grants, work-study, scholarships, and loans. Seniors must apply as soon as possible after October 1st of your senior year, preferably by February 15.

**Why fill this out?** The FAFSA is used to determine how much aid you are eligible to receive. The government will determine your EFC – Expected Family Contribution – which your family must contribute in the coming year to your college costs, based on the government’s calculation.

**How does it work?** Your prospective college will try to meet your financial need through aid made up of funds from federal, state, school and private sources – these may include loans (which you pay back), grants, scholarships and student employment. Start by applying for your personal username and password, known as your FSA ID, at <https://fsaid.ed.gov>.

FAFSA Process: Easy as 1-2-3-4

**Step 1: Apply for your FSA ID** at <https://fsaid.ed.gov>

Your FSA ID can be used to electronically apply for federal student aid and to access your Federal Student Aid records online. When you receive your FSA ID, you agree not to share it with anyone. Your FSA ID serves as your electronic signature.

![C:\Documents and Settings\wynnpm\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\OZMKHM6C\MP900316868[1].jpg]()**Step 2: Assemble forms needed to complete the FAFSA**

You need the following to complete the form:

* 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. (**Note:** You may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool)
* Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
* Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
* An FSA ID to sign electronically

**Step 3: Complete the FAFSA**

* Complete a FAFSA on the web at: [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)
* In order to maximize your amount of aid, fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1st.
* Once finished, print the FAFSA summary as well as the “Submission Confirmation” page (or write down your confirmation number and date.) If completing the paper version, make a copy for your records.

**Step 4: Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)**

* The SAR is proof that your FAFSA was received. You should receive your electronic SAR in 1-3 days if you signed in with your FSA ID (paper form takes 2-3 weeks). **Bring confirmation into the counseling department to be entered into the FAFSA Completion Raffles!**
* If you find errors on your SAR, you can make corrections online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).
* If you don’t receive your SAR within 4 weeks, call 1-800-433-3243 (1-800-4-FED-AID).

**FAFSA TIPS:**

* The FAFSA is FREE! If you need help, call the FAFSA Help Desk at 1-800-4-FED-AID.
* Fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1st and EACH SUCCESSIVE year once you’re in college. Early submission maximizes chances of receiving aid and **must be completed by February 15 for freshmen.** .
* Save your FAFSA online if you can’t finish it in one session: Click the “SAVE” button to save info for 45 days.
* Don’t leave any fields blank. If a question doesn’t apply, enter “0.”
* Sign the application. If you are filing as a dependent, make sure your parents sign also. You can use your PIN if signing electronically.
* ***Attend Financial Aid night at your selected college***