

2023-2024 FAFSA Changes: What You Should Know

Happy FAFSA season everyone! As you know, on October 1st the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opens up for the 2023-2024 academic year. This year the application has a few changes due to the bill that passed in December 2021.

So, let's get into it!!

When Does the 2023-2024 FAFSA Become Available?

October 1st is the big day! The deadline to complete the application is June 30, 2024, although it is not recommended that you wait that long. Remember, you may have Tennessee Promise or scholarship deadlines that you must meet. Many schools also have a deadline for financial aid packages and the longer you wait, the less likely you are to receive institutional grant aid from colleges.

FAFSA Updates

In December 2021, Congress passed a package that included emergency pandemic relief as well as policy changes for higher education. A number of these changes will go into effect this summer (July 2023), but some will already be reflected in this year's FAFSA.

These changes include:

- The application will only have, at most, 36 questions, down from 108.
- The Student Aid Index (SAI) is replacing the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which will help students and their families make better sense of their award letters.
- Additional information will be supplied regarding Pell Grant eligibility ahead of time if the students wish to check.
- Pell Grants are available again to those who have been in jail or prison, have drug-related convictions, and men who haven't registered for Selective Service.

- Questions regarding Selective Service and drug conviction eligibility have also been entirely removed.
- Easier application process for those in foster care or homeless.
- The myStudentAid app has been removed.

In addition, the look and feel of the FAFSA has been improved. It is supposed to be more user friendly, site navigation easier, and the application now asks whether you are a student, parent, or preparer BEFORE the you begin. Helpful text and explanations have been included as well.

What is the Student Aid Index?

One of the changes is the Student Aid Index (SAI). The new acronym replaces the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) in the student financial aid world. The EFC could be as low as 0, but the SAI cannot be lower than \$1500. This new system will be a new adventure for all of us to get used to. Once we have more information about how to define what the index number is, we will share this.

Pell Grant Eligibility

One of the most important changes could be the Pell eligibility. Students do not repay federal Pell Grants, so award increases can have a big impact on low-income families.

Last year's awards saw changes to the award size and family income limits. The maximum award increased to \$6,895 for the 2022-2023 year.

Following the recent student loan forgiveness announcement, it's likely that Pell Grant recipients will see another bump for the 2023-2024 year.

Apply for FAFSA Every Year

FAFSA opens each October and is available for the next academic year. So yes, you need to apply for FAFSA every year.

Pre-FAFSA Information

If you have already filled out the FAFSA last year, then a majority of this information will already be plugged in for you this year. If there have been any changes to the following, you will need to have those items on hand before you begin the application.

- Your FSA ID
- Your parents FSA ID
- Your email address (not your school email) and cell phone number
- Parent email address and cell phone number
- If you are a TN resident, the month and year you began living in TN
- If your parents are TN residents, the month and year your parents began living in TN
- Your Social Security number
- Your parents Social Security numbers
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, your permanent resident/green card
- Your parents' date of birth
- Your driver's license or state ID, if you have one
- The month and year your parents were married, divorced, separated or widowed
- The highest level of school your parents completed

Documents Needed

- All federal 2021 income tax forms (including W-2's/1099s/Schedules filed) for you and your parents
- Most current statements from all accounts (checking, savings, investments, etc.)
- Child support paid or received
- Value of investments, farms or businesses
- Other 2021 year benefits (workers comp, military, clergy, veteran amounts)

Filing the FAFSA

After creating or finding your FSA ID, the next step is to file your FAFSA! You will need to make sure you go to www.fafsa.gov

When filing the FAFSA, questions often arise about dependency status, parental information and citizenship status. Below you will find some charts to help you answer these questions.

Dependency Status

The following statements will determine your dependency status for the FAFSA. Check any that are true.

- ✓ I will be 24 or older by December 31 of the school year for which I am applying for aid

- ✓ I am serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces

- ✓ Since I turned age 13, both of my parents were deceased

- ✓ I was a dependent or ward of the court since turning age 13

- ✓ I am married

- ✓ I am a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces

- ✓ I was in foster care since turning age 13

- ✓ I am homeless or at risk of being homeless

- ✓ *In the upcoming school year*, I will be working on a master's or doctoral program

- ✓ I now have or will have children for whom I provide more than half of their support

- ✓ I have dependents (other than children or my spouse) who live with me and I provide more than half of their support

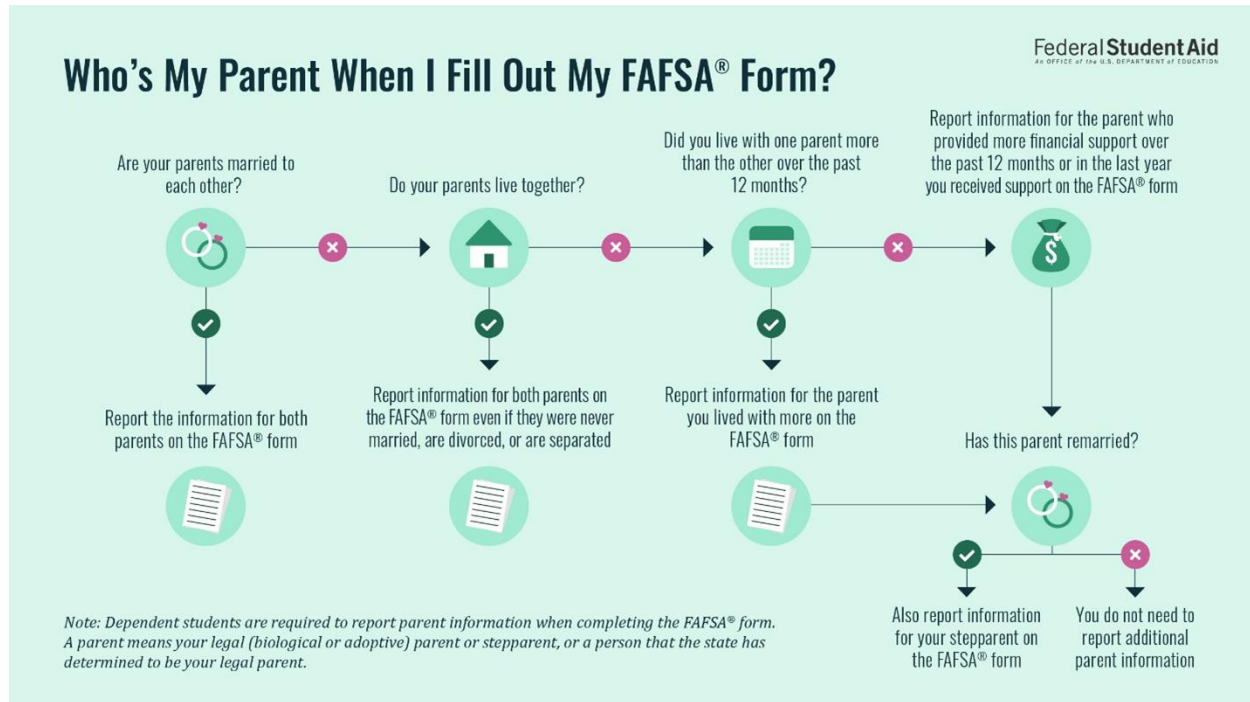
- ✓ I am currently or I was in a legal guardianship

- ✓ I am currently or I was an emancipated minor

If any of these statements are true for you, you are an **independent** and will not provide parental information on the FAFSA.

If none of the statements are true, you are a **dependent** student and **must provide** parental information on the FAFSA. Dependent students are required to include parent information.

Who is Your Parent on the FAFSA?



The following people are not your parents unless they have legally adopted you:

- Widowed stepparent
- Grandparents
- Older brothers or sisters
- Foster parents
- Legal guardians
- Aunts or uncles

FAFSA Assistance

If you need help filling out the FAFSA, contact your Upward Bound Adviser for assistance. Below you will find information about each county's FAFSA Frenzy event or adviser availability, as well as their contact information.

If you can't make it to a FAFSA Frenzy event, don't worry! Just give us a call! We will schedule a time and place to help you out.

Grainger County (Grainger High School)

Adviser: Hannah Ballas



Office: (865) 828- 8404



Cell: (865) 469-0958



Email: ubgrainger@outlook.com

FAFSA Frenzy at Grainger High School: October 20th (3:30 PM - 6:30 PM)

Hawkins County (Cherokee High School)

Adviser: Abby Lyons



Office: (423) 272-2299



Cell: (423) 754-3154





Email: alyons@douglascherokee.org


FAFSA Frenzy at Cherokee High School: October 18th (12:00 pm - 7:00 pm)

Morgan County (Central High School)

Adviser: Kathryn Nabors

 Office: (423) 346-2417


 Cell: (423) 223-6313


 Email: ubmorgan@douglascherokee.org

FAFSA Frenzy at Central High School: October 4th (5:00 PM - 7:00 PM)

Morgan County (Coalfield & Sunbright Schools)

Adviser: Amy Brown

 Office: (865) 435-7108

 Cell: (423) 223-6308


 Email: amybrown@douglascherokee.org


FAFSA Frenzy at Coalfield School: October 17th (5:00 PM - 7:30 PM)

FAFSA Frenzy at Sunbright School: November 7th (6:00 PM - 7:30 PM)

Scott County (Scott High School)

Adviser: Matthew Boshears

 Office: (423) 569-7957

 Cell: (423) 223-6319

 Email: ubscott@douglascherokee.org

Availability to help with FAFSA's: Mondays - Fridays (2:30 PM - 4:30 PM)

If you live in the following counties you can also seek help with our Educational Opportunity Center (EOC). This program is a TRIO program which provides college counseling and FAFSA assistance for those students who want to enter or continue a program of postsecondary education.

Cocke County

Program Manager: Judith Butler



Office: (423) 736-5261



Email: jbutler@douglascherokee.org

Schedule an appointment [HERE](#)

Hamblen & Jefferson County

Adviser: Jenny Rosenberger



Cell: (423) 748-4635



Email: jrosenberger@douglascherokee.org

Schedule an appointment [HERE](#)

Claiborne, Grainger & Hamblen County

Adviser: Victoria Reed



Cell: (423) 748-4634



Email: jbutler@douglascherokee.org

Schedule an appointment [HERE](#)

Hancock & Hawkins County

Adviser: Amanda Burton



Cell: (423) 921-2073



Email: echawkins@douglascherokee.org

Schedule an appointment [HERE](#)