

FAFSA

Checklist-

Fafsa Preparation FAFSA

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Purpose/Description: Prepare parents and students for FAFSA

<https://studentaid.gov/>

#1. FAFSA Overview

- FAFSA opens Oct. 1 for the 2026–2027 award year
- FAFSA is simply an online form students and families complete to apply for federal financial aid including grants, work-study, and loans for college
- Hawaii also uses FAFSA data to award scholarships and tuition assistance
- Example; APIA Scholarship, which supports underserved Asian & Pacific Islander students
- Scholarships are also merit-based, community service, field-specific, and cultural heritage - not all scholarships require financial need

#2. FAFSA training & assistance

- FAFSA training sessions for parents through the GEAR UP Hawai'i initiative & Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education
- GEAR UP Hawai'i offers free virtual FAFSA completion workshops every Wednesday evening through April 24, 2025
- Join virtual workshops or get help from college access advisors at: <https://collegeiswithinreachhawaii.com/>
- Sessions are designed to walk parents through the new FAFSA form
- The form has changed significantly this year

#3. Virtual FAFSA Webinars every Wednesday 6:00–7:30 p.m

- They continue through March 2026 for the 2026–2027 FAFSA cycle
- They began in September 2025, and families across the island
- Register for any of these sessions on the College Is Within Reach Hawai'i events page:

<https://collegeiswithinreachhawaii.com/upcoming-events/>

#4. Requirements for FAFSA ID Creation

- Valid **email addresses are required for a parent and student** (not shared between parent and student)
- Social Security Number (SSN) or Alien Registration Number (if not a U.S. citizen)
- Phone number (optional but helpful for account recovery)

#5. Financial Information

- Federal income tax returns (Form 1040)
- W-2 forms and/or 1099s - You'll need details from two years earlier - known as the "prior-prior" tax year (e.g., for 2025–26 FAFSA, use 2023 tax info)
- Records of untaxed income, such as:
 - Child support received
 - Workers' compensation
 - Disability benefits
 - Bank account balances (checking and savings)
 - Investment account balances (excluding retirement accounts)
 - Real estate holdings (excluding your primary residence)
 - 529 college savings plans (if applicable)

#6. Household Information

- Number of people in your household
- Number of children attending college
- Marital status and spouse's financial info (if applicable)

#7. Student Information (for dependent students)

- Student's SSN or A-Number
- Student's date of birth
- High school completion status
- Intended college(s) - you can list up to 20 schools

Pro Tips

- ❖ Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) during FAFSA to import tax info directly - it's faster and reduces errors
 - You can access the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) directly through the FAFSA application at studentaid.gov
 - Once you're logged in and working on your FAFSA, you'll find the option to "Link to IRS" in the Financial Information section
- ❖ Complete FAFSA as early as possible to maximize aid eligibility (some funds are first-come, first-served)
- ❖ You'll need to renew FAFSA every year, but the first setup is the most document-heavy

<https://community.maryville.edu/s/article/How-do-I-use-the-IRS-Data-Retrieval-Tool-to-update-my-FAFSA>