

What will I need to fill out the FAFSA?

FAFSA website: fafsa.gov
FSA ID website: <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id>
FSA helpline: 1-800-433-3243

What is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)?

To apply for federal student aid, such as federal grants, work-study, and loans, you need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). Completing and submitting the FAFSA is free and easier than ever, and it gives you access to the largest source of financial aid to pay for college or career school.

To complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®), you will need:

- Student's social security number and a household parent's social security number and birth date (if dependent)
- Student's driver's license number
- Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned for all members of the student's household (student, spouse and parents if dependent). *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)
- Untaxed income received in the household (child support, veteran's benefits, social security, etc.) if applicable)
- Information on any investments or assets (not including the home)
- An FSA ID to sign electronically. FSA IDs are used to log in to certain U.S. Department of Education (ED) websites, complete the FAFSA, accept student loans and more. One parent of a dependent student will also need to create an FSA ID. (<https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id>)

Complete and submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) each year after October 1st to have eligibility determined for federal, state and some types of institutional financial aid. Apply at: fafsa.gov

Common Questions:

- **What is North Central State College’s Federal School Code for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)**

NC State’s Federal school code is 005313.

- **Why does the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) use tax information from 2 years ago?**

Use of the prior-prior year allows the FAFSA to be based on federal income tax returns that have already been filed, as opposed to estimating income and tax information.

- **What else is needed besides completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)?**

North Central State College will also need either a Final High School Transcript (showing date of graduation) or GED certificate – required to receive aid; submit to the College’s ADMISSIONS office. If you are still in high school, submit your transcript as soon as you graduate.

Watch for response by email or by postal mail, confirming that your FAFSA form was processed. Double-check that your info is correct by logging on at the FAFSA site and reviewing your data. Correct any mistakes and submit the corrected info.

Watch for emails or letters from the schools you are considering on your next steps. Give the schools any additional paperwork they ask for. Meet all deadlines or you could miss out on aid!

- **Do I have to complete the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) every year?**

Applying for aid is a *yearly* process because aid eligibility runs out at the end of each aid year. (The financial aid year starts with fall semester and ends with summer term.)

- **What is the definition of an independent student?**

To be considered an independent student for financial aid consideration, you must be able to answer “yes” to one of the seven questions in Step Three on the FAFSA. If you cannot answer “yes” to one of these questions, you are considered a dependent student and must include parental information on the form. However, if you feel you have extenuating circumstances and should be considered an independent student, you must file an appeal with the financial aid office. At NC State, the following situations are NOT usually considered to be valid reasons for independent student status:

- You do not reside with your parents, or you support yourself
- Your parents refuse to pay for your college education
- Your parents are not financially able to pay for your education
- You were married after you applied for financial aid

- You do not want your parents' help and have decided to pay for your own college education.
- **Who is my parent according to the FAFSA® form?**

If you need to report parent information, here are some guidelines to help you:

- If your legal parents (your biological and/or adoptive parents, or parents as determined by the state [e.g., a parent listed on your birth certificate]) are married to each other, answer the questions about both of them, regardless of whether your parents are of the same or opposite sex.
- If your legal parents are not married to each other and live together, answer the questions about both of them, regardless of whether your parents are of the same or opposite sex.
- If your legal parent is widowed or was never married, answer the questions about that parent.

What if my parents are divorced or separated?

In this case, how you fill out the [FAFSA form](#) depends on whether your parents live together or not.

Keep the following in mind as you read this section:

- For FAFSA purposes, your married parents are separated if they are considered legally separated by a state, or if they are legally married but have chosen to live separate lives, including living in separate households, as though they were not married.
- When two married persons live as a married couple but are separated by physical distance (or have separate households), they are considered married for FAFSA purposes.

Divorced or Separated Parents Who Do Not Live Together

If your parents are divorced or separated and don't live together, answer the questions about the parent with whom you lived more during the past 12 months.

If you lived the same amount of time with each divorced or separated parent, give answers about the parent who provided more financial support during the past 12 months or during the most recent 12 months that you actually received support from a parent.

Divorced or Separated Parents Who Live Together

If your **divorced** parents live together, you'll indicate their marital status as "Unmarried and both legal parents living together," and you will answer questions about both of them on the FAFSA form.

If your **separated** parents live together, you'll indicate their marital status as "Married or remarried" (NOT "Divorced or separated"), and you will answer questions about both of them on the FAFSA form.

What if I have a stepparent?

If you have a stepparent who is married to the legal parent whose information you're reporting, you must provide information about that stepparent as well.

EXCEPTION: The FAFSA form asks about your parents' education level. For these two questions, your parents are considered to be your birth parents or adoptive parents—your stepparent is not your parent in these questions.

What if my parents are in a same-sex marriage?

Same-sex couples must report their marital status as married if they were legally married in a state or other jurisdiction (foreign country), without regard to where they live or where the student will be going to school.

Please visit: <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out/parent-info>

- **What to Do If Your Parents' (or Your) Marital Status Has Changed Since Taxes Were Filed**

Here are some tips for this type of situation using the example of the 2022–23 FAFSA form:

- The FAFSA form asks for marital status “as of today” (the day it’s filled out). So, if the student or parent is married now but wasn’t in 2020 (and therefore didn’t file taxes as married), the spouse’s 2020 income will need to be added to the FAFSA form.
- Similarly, if the student or parent filed 2020 taxes as married but is no longer married when filling out the FAFSA form, the spouse’s income will need to be subtracted.
- And if the student or parent was married when filing 2020 taxes, then got divorced and is now married to someone else, there’s a bit more math to do: Subtract the ex’s income, then add the new spouse’s income.

The FAFSA help text covers all these situations in more detail as you’re filling out the application.