

Do's and Don'ts

Common FAFSA mistakes

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DON'T leave blank fields:

Enter a '0' or 'not applicable' instead of leaving it blank. Too many blanks may cause miscalculations and an application rejection.

DON'T enter the wrong federal income tax paid amount:

The best way to avoid this is by using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool in the FAFSA. You can find this amount on your federal income tax return, not your W-2's.

DON'T list Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) as equal to total income from working:

AGI and total income from working are not necessarily the same. In most cases, the AGI is larger than the total income from working.

DON'T include the value of primary residents' value of family farm or retirement accounts as assets.

DO use the right primary identifiers:

Double check your Social Security Number and Driver's License Number and have someone else check them too. Triple check to be sure. If your parents do not have Social Security Numbers, list 000-00-0000. Do not make up a number or include a Taxpayer ID Number (TIN).

Enter the right address. Use your permanent home address! Do not list a temporary campus or summer address as your permanent address.

Use your legal name. Your name must be listed on your FAFSA as it appears on your Social Security Card - make sure you double check instead of assuming you know for sure what is on your card. Entering nicknames or other variations on your name will cause processing delays.

DO count yourself as a student:

The student completing the FAFSA must count himself or herself as a member of the household attending college during the award year.

DO register with the Selective Service:

If you are a male, aged 18-25, you must register with Selective Service. Failure to do so will make you ineligible for federal student aid.