



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### **What is FAFSA:**

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the basis for all Federal and State Aid. The U.S. Department of Education uses this form to determine a student's eligibility for need-based federal financial aid for college based upon their financial situation. Aid which may include federal grants, scholarships, work-study and loans. It can be accessed and submitted online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). FAFSA opens every October 1 and is a yearly process for as long as you are a college student. **The FAFSA IS FREE!** Never pay anyone to help complete your **Free** Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA may also be required as a prerequisite for high school graduation based upon your state residency and the majority of scholarships will require the FAFSA be complete prior to being reviewed.

### **FSA ID:**

The FSA ID is your account to log into certain U.S. Department of Education websites, including the FAFSA application process. Any contributor, which is any individual required to provide consent and approval for federal tax information (FTI) along with their signature on the FAFSA form, including the student; the student's spouse, a biological or adoptive parent; or the parent's spouse (stepparent) is required to have an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA process. Each contributor will need to create their own FSA ID account by setting up a username and password. We recommend creating your FSA ID account early since it must be created and verified before you are ready to use it when completing the FAFSA to avoid any delays in the process. **IMPORTANT:** do NOT create an FSA ID account on behalf of someone else. That means parent contributor should not create an FSA account for their children and vice versa. Doing so may result in issues signing and submitting the FAFSA form and could lead to financial aid delays. You can create an FSA ID at: <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>

### **Scholarships are:**

Form of aid, known as "gift aid", that is provided to a student that **does not** have to be repaid. Scholarships are awarded by individuals, organizations, businesses and colleges. Never pay anyone for Scholarship assistance.

### **Renewable Scholarship:**

"Renewable" means you will be awarded the scholarship for every year of college if you meet the scholarship's terms/conditions and length of award.

**Letter(s) of Recommendation:**

A letter written by someone who can recommend an individual's work or academic performance, qualifications and skill as they relate to employment or education. These letters typically come from previous employers, professors, teachers, community leaders (youth ministers/pastors), or even close friends. Family members are discouraged from writing letters of recommendation on behalf of the applicant.

**Grants are:**

Form of aid, known as "gift aid", that is provided to a student that **does not** have to be repaid. Grants are awarded by a government program which are determined on need of the individual student.

**Loans are:**

Form(s) of aid, known as "self-help aid", that is provided to a student that **does** have to be repaid. Student loans can come from the federal government, from private sources such as a bank or financial institution, or from other organizations. Loans made by the federal government, called federal student loans, usually have more benefits than loan from banks or other private sources.

Direct Subsidized Loans-are loans made to eligible undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need to help cover the costs of higher education at a college or career school. The interest is paid by the Department of Education while in school or grace.

Direct Unsubsidized Loans- are loans made to eligible undergraduate, graduate and professional students, but eligibility is not based on financial need. The interest is not paid by the Department of Education while in school or grace.

Direct PLUS Loans-are loans made to graduate or professional students and parents of dependent undergraduate students to help pay for education expenses not covered by other financial aid. Eligibility is not based on financial need, but a credit check is required. Borrowers who have an adverse credit history must meet additional requirements to qualify.

**Calculator-** <https://finaid.org/calculators/loanpayments/> Loan payment calculators give estimates of the size of monthly loan payments and the annual salary required to manage repayment. This loan calculator can be used with Federal education debt (Subsidized, Unsubsidized, Perkins and PLUS) and most private loans.