FAFSA Renewal

Summary: If you completed a FAFSA the previous year, you will have the option to fill out the Renewal FAFSA. Some of the data will be pre-filled, saving you time and hassle.

You need to apply for student aid every year because the FAFSA determines your eligibility for **only one academic year** at a time. Fortunately, there's a special version of the FAFSA —the Renewal FAFSA (sometimes called FAFSA Renewal) — that makes it easier to complete the form the second (or third +) time around.

Why Complete the FAFSA Every Year?

Things change every year: new jobs, graduations, marriages, births, and more. One small change in your circumstances can have an impact on your eligibility for financial aid. Financial aid formulas also change, sometimes in major ways. In short, a lot can change in a year, and if you want to receive federal student aid, you'll need to complete the FAFSA for each academic year.

NOTE: Even if you received no financial aid other than loans the previous year, you should still take the time to complete the FAFSA. You don't want to miss out on "free money" (grants and scholarships), or money you need to borrow from the various federal student loan programs.

What's Different With the Renewal FAFSA?

- The Renewal FAFSA is pre-filled with some of the demographic information from the previous year's FAFSA. So, you don't have to fill out a completely new FAFSA every single year.
- There is no paper Renewal FAFSA. If you can't complete your FAFSA online or through the mobile app, you will need to complete the entire paper FAFSA form.
- You can update any information that has changed since the previous year. And, you can use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to transfer data about income from your federal income tax returns to the FAFSA.

6 Simple Steps for Completing a Renewal FAFSA
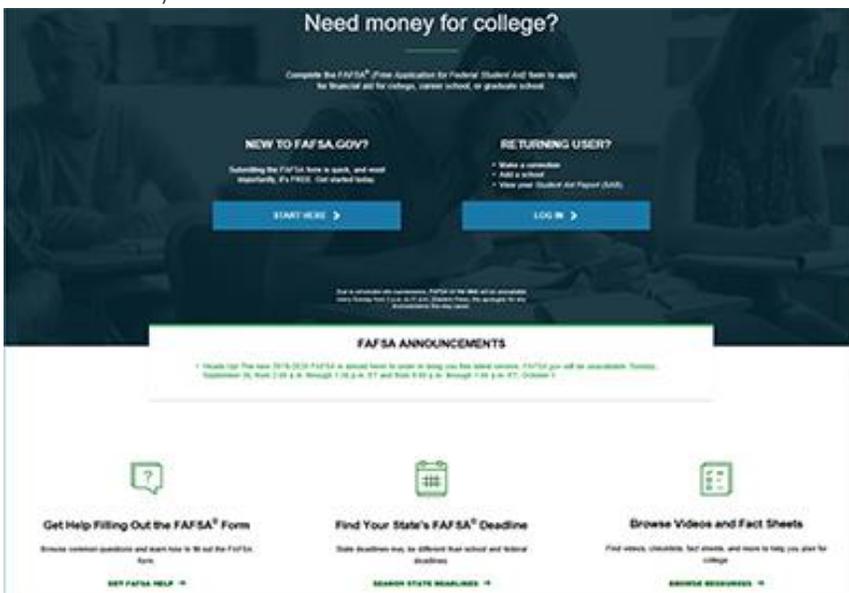
Step 1: Get Ready for the 2020-2021 FAFSA

- Review the prior year's FAFSA, Student Aid Report (SAR), and supporting documents.
- Gather your 2018 financial information and other records.

Step 2: Get an FSA ID

- If you don't have one, create your FSA ID at fsaid.ed.gov.

Step 3: Start a Renewal FAFSA

- Log in with your FSA ID at FAFSA.ed.gov.
- If you submitted a FAFSA the previous year, you will have the option to complete the Renewal FAFSA by clicking the "RETURNING USER" log in option. (This will allow you to prefill your 2020-2021 FAFSA using information from last year's form.)

Step 4: Complete Missing and Changed Information

- Review/update any information that has changed since the previous year.
- Provide answers to the questions about income, assets, and taxes.
- Provide school codes.
- Save and review your work often.

Step 5: Sign and Submit the Renewal FAFSA

- If filing electronically, sign the Renewal FAFSA with your FSA ID.
- If you are a dependent student, the parent whose information is reported on the FAFSA will also have to sign with their FSA ID.
- After you submit the Renewal FAFSA, print a copy of the Confirmation Page.

Step 6: Use 2018 Federal Income Tax Returns to Update Income, Asset, and Tax Information

- After your family has filed their federal income tax returns, use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) to transfer information from the tax returns (both yours and your parents', if applicable) to the FAFSA.
- If you're ineligible, or decide not to use the IRS DRT, complete the financial information sections as required.

Renewal FAFSA Tips

Check FAFSA deadlines for your school

Give yourself enough time to submit your Renewal FAFSA and any other required documents to your school's financial aid office before the deadline.

Ask for help with the FAFSA

Contact Christy Goodwin cbulger@rstc.edu with any questions about deadlines, the application process, or financial aid eligibility. Or, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED AID (1-800 433-3243) for answers to questions about filing the Renewal FAFSA.

Print the FAFSA worksheet

Download and print the helpful FAFSA on the Web worksheet before filing the Renewal FAFSA.

Review FAFSA questions carefully

Make sure you understand each FAFSA question and possible answers before you complete your answer.

Respond quickly to FAFSA document requests

If the financial aid office asks for additional documents, send the information right away. Save copies of all documents you submit.