



4 fast FAFSA tips

1. Don't pay to file it. Never. Ever. "Free" is right there in the name. Free advice is available [on our website](#) or through the U.S. Department of Education's hotline: 1-800-4-FED-AID.

2. Meet the deadlines. Many states, including Iowa, have FAFSA filing deadlines for state-funded scholarships, grants and work-study opportunities. Most colleges and universities have their own FAFSA filing deadlines. Some are as early as March 1.

3. Check and double-check. Review all your information before you submit the FAFSA. For instance, make sure your Social Security number and your parent's Social Security number are in the correct spaces. Mix-ups will cause processing delays.

4. File it, file it, file it. File the FAFSA even if you think your family makes too much money for federal aid. Many colleges require a FAFSA to consider you for institutional aid. You're also required to file a FAFSA for federal Stafford loans. Completing the FAFSA does not obligate you to accept any aid offered.

October 7, 2016

Applying for College and Financial Aid

FAFSA season is open!

The window for filing your 2017-18 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opened October 1. Starting with this application, applicants can use their tax information from 2015 (or "Prior-Prior Year" return). The free application will determine your eligibility for federal grants, loans and work-study. It's also required for most state-administered grants and scholarships.



Find help on our website

Visit our [FAFSA page](#) for everything you need to know about filing, plus a link to the federal application. As soon as you file your FAFSA, be sure to file the [Iowa Financial Aid Application](#) as well.

College Application Month

It's officially College Application Month in Iowa, and Iowa College Aid is mounting a College Application Campaign as part of our [3-Step Process](#). Watch for events at your school, or find [more information](#) on our website.

Avoid college application fees

If you're already trying to save for school, college application fees can be bad news—especially if you're applying to multiple schools. The good news is that, in some cases, you can [avoid paying those fees](#).

Find out what's 'Up Next'

Up Next is a texting campaign that gives high school students and their families free support through the college search and application process. When you sign up, you'll answer simple questions that tailor the campaign to your specific needs. Sign up by texting "COLLEGE" to 44044. Find [more information here](#).