

Completing the FAFSA:

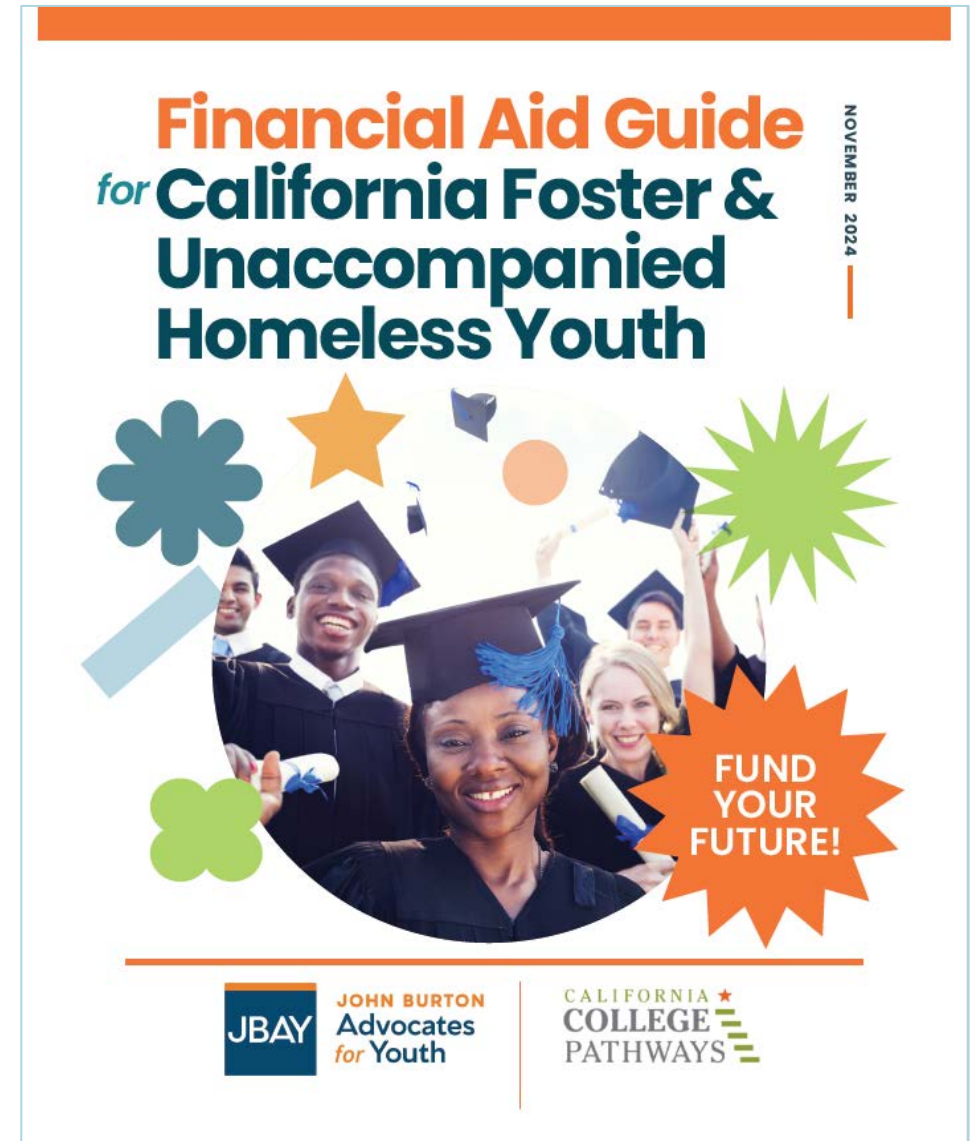
A Visual Guide For Youth with Experience in Foster Care or Homelessness

This Guide is intended to complement the *Financial Aid Guide for California Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth* with screen shots of the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and detailed step-by-step instructions for youth who have been in the foster care system or experienced homelessness.

Please refer to the full Guide for information on the different types of financial aid, what to do after completing the FAFSA, and how to maintain financial aid.

While this guide strives to be as accurate as possible, if you find an error, please let JBAY know at info@jbay.org and a revision will be issued as needed.

jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide



Who Should Use This Guide

This guide is intended for youth who have experienced foster care or been homeless as an unaccompanied youth in California who qualify for “Independent Student Status” on the FAFSA. Students who do not qualify for “Independent Student Status” will need to provide financial information about their parent(s). Information about providing parental information is not included in this guide.

Students who do not meet the criteria as a foster youth or unaccompanied homeless youth, but who cannot obtain parental information, can request an exemption for unusual circumstances such as an abusive family, parental incarceration or when parents’ whereabouts are unknown (see section 4(c)). Note that circumstances such as parents not providing financial support or being unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA do not alone qualify as unusual circumstances.

If a student is undocumented, including DACA recipients, they should fill out the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) at dream.csac.ca.gov instead of the FAFSA even if the student was granted a temporary Social Security Number as a DACA recipient. A Visual Guide of the CADAA is available at jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide.

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1.

How to Apply for Financial Aid

FAFSA Eligibility

- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available to U.S. Citizens, permanent residents or other eligible non-citizens* and is used to apply for both Federal and State aid.
- Qualified undocumented students or those with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or a U Visa should apply instead using the California Dream Act Application (CADAA).** A visual guide for completing the CADAA is available at jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide.

*See <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements/non-us-citizens> for details

** See <https://www.csac.ca.gov/post/california-nonresident-tuition-exemption> for details

Deadlines



To qualify for state and institutional aid:

4-Year Universities:

March 3, 2025*

CA Community Colleges:

September 2, 2025

Private or out of state colleges may have different deadlines. If you've missed these deadlines, you can still apply. While most state aid will no longer be available, some grants, such as the Federal Pell Grant, will still be available.

**Priority deadlines can change. Be sure to check for the latest information.*

Creating a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID is Required



An FSA ID must be created in advance of submitting the FAFSA and can take 3–7 days to process.

- The FSA ID is a username and password combination you use to log in to U.S. Department of Education (ED) online systems.
- You will be asked to provide an email address. Providing a mobile phone number is recommended to easily reset your password.
- You will be asked to provide your social security number, if applicable. Enter your legal name exactly as it appears on Social Security Card.
- Students can use an existing FSA ID but will need to verify the phone number and/or email address on file.



Students should create a system to safely store their username and password and not use high school email accounts that may expire.

How to Create an FSA ID

Go to

studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch

Select “Get Started”

Create an Account

Whether you're a student, parent, or borrower, you'll need to create your own account to apply for, receive, and manage your federal student aid.

[Get Started](#)

Already have an account? [Log In](#)

What You Can Do With Your Account

You must have an account to do the following:

- Fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form online
- Complete other online forms (such as the *Master Promissory Note*) required to receive aid
- Review the federal student aid you've received

What You'll Need

- Your Social Security number (if applicable)
- Your own email address

FSA ID: Step 1

Enter your legal name and Social Security Number (SSN) exactly as they appear on your Social Security Card.



If you don't know your SSN, a parent or guardian, social worker or current or former employer may have the number. If you still can't find it, you will need to request a replacement card at www.ssa.gov/myaccount/replacement-card.html. You will need the physical card for employment, including work-study.

While the form provides an option for those who don't have a social security number, this is just for parents/spouses who are foreign citizens or undocumented or for students who are citizens of the Freely Associated States (e.g. Republic of Palau).^{*} Students without a social security number can should apply using the CADAA at dream.csac.ca.gov.

If an account already exists with the SSN entered, an alert will pop up.

^{*}See <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2024-04-30/update-access-2024-25-fafsa-form-individuals-without-social-security-number-updated-august-2-2024> and <https://studentaid.gov/help/from-freely-associated-states>.

Step 1 of 7

Personal Information

I understand that I'll be required to certify that the information I provide to create an account is true and correct and that I'm the individual I claim to be.

If I'm not the person I claim to be, I understand that I'm not authorized to proceed and that I should exit this form now. If I provide false or misleading information, I understand that I might be subject to a fine, prison time, or both.

First Name

 ?

Middle Initial

 ?

Last Name

 ?

Date of Birth

Month Day Year

 ?

Social Security Number

 ?

I don't have a Social Security number.

Cancel

Continue

FSA ID: Step 2

Create a Username and Password that can be easily remembered but not easy for someone else to figure out (e.g., do not use your name, date of birth, or the word “password”). Your username must be between 8 and 30 characters.

Double check the email address for typos. You will need to verify the email address after you complete the process.



Do not use a high school email address, since those often expire. Create or use an email address that you can use throughout college such as a Gmail or Yahoo address.

Create an Account (FSA ID)

Step 2 of 7

Account Information

Because financial aid agreements are legally binding, you can't create an account for someone else, even another family member. Parents and students must create their own accounts.

Username ?

Email Address ?

Confirm Email Address ?

Password Show Password ?

- ✓ Uppercase
- ✓ Lowercase
- ✓ Number
- ✓ 8+ characters

Confirm Password Show Password ?

FSA ID: Step 3

Entering a mailing address and mobile phone number are optional.

Providing a phone number is recommended in case you are locked out and need to recover your username or password. This also allows you to use text for two-step verification.

Entering an alternate number is also optional.

Step 3 of 7

Contact Information

Mailing Address

Address ?

City ?

State ?

ZIP Code ?

Mobile Phone Account Access

We strongly recommend setting up your mobile phone for account access. This option helps you gain access to your account if you are locked out and allows your mobile phone to be used for two-step verification.

Mobile Phone ?

Confirm Mobile Phone

Yes, I agree to use my mobile phone for account access.

Alternate Phone Number (Optional)

[+ Add Alternate Phone Number](#)

i By selecting this option, I agree to receive text messages on my mobile phone for two-step verification and account recovery. I have reviewed and agree to Federal Student Aid's [Terms and Conditions](#).

Message and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Reply HELP for help or STOP to opt out.

FSA ID: Step 4

Indicate how you would like to receive future communications and your preferred language (English or Spanish). If you select Spanish, the FAFSA will display in Spanish.

Step 4 of 7

Communication Preferences

Required Communications

There are certain types of communications the U.S. Department of Education and our servicers are required to provide to you in writing. This includes communications such as student loan disclosures and student loan interest statements. You can choose whether you would like to receive these by email or postal mail.

Email *Recommended*



By selecting this option, you agree to receive required communications by email and confirm you have reviewed and agree to FSA's [Terms and Conditions](#).

Postal mail

Optional Communications

We want you to feel confident about the financial aid and federal student loan process. To help with this, we sometimes send information about available grants, student loan forgiveness programs, income-based repayment options, and more. You can choose whether you would like to receive these by email and/or text message.

Email

Text message

Language Preference

The language preference determines what language displays after you've logged in, as well as what language is used for forms and communications.

Language Preference

English

Previous

Continue

FSA ID: Step 5

Choose “Challenge Questions” and answers that can easily be remembered in case you forget your FSA ID username or password.

You must provide answers for all four questions.

Step 5 of 7

Challenge Questions

Challenge questions and answers are used to retrieve your username or password if you forget them or if you need to unlock your account.

Note: Answers are not case-sensitive.

Challenge Question 1

Question

Select ?

Answer

Show Answer ?

Challenge Question 2

Question

Select ?

Answer

Show Answer ?

Challenge Question 3

Question

Select ?

Answer

Show Answer ?

Challenge Question 4

Question

Select ?

Answer

Show Answer ?

[Previous](#) [Continue](#)

FSA ID: Step 6

Confirm and verify that all the information provided is correct. If you discover an error, you can use the edit buttons to make changes.

Check the box at the bottom of the page agreeing to the terms and conditions to continue.

I agree to FSA's terms and conditons.

[Previous](#) [Continue](#)

Step 6 of 7
Confirm and Verify

Verify the information you provided for your account below. If there is an error, select "Edit" to correct the information.

Personal Information [Edit](#)

NAME
Sally Smith

DATE OF BIRTH
01/30/1995

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
***-**-7456

Account Information [Edit](#)

USERNAME
ssmith1195

EMAIL ADDRESS
info@jbay.org

PASSWORD

Contact Information [Edit](#)

PERMANENT ADDRESS
1 Harmony Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90032

MOBILE PHONE NUMBER
(949) 285-2345

FSA ID: Step 7

When you click the “Verify” button, a screen will pop up where you can input the code sent to your email or phone. **The code must be entered within 30 minutes.**

You also have the option to use an authenticator app. If you select this option, instructions will appear.

Click Continue once complete.

Create an Account (FSA ID)

Step 7 of 7

Enable Two-Step Verification

Protect Your Account with Two-Step Verification

Whenever you sign in, we'll send a secure code to make sure it's really you. To keep your account protected, make sure your phone number and email are verified. We also suggest setting up verification using a secure authenticator app.

SMS Verification
9996666666 ⚠ Not Verified [Verify](#)

Email Verification
debbie@jbay.org ⚠ Not Verified [Verify](#)

Use an Authenticator App (Most Secure Option)

Use an authenticator app that you've downloaded from a mobile app store to view in-app secure codes—visible only to you—that can confirm your identity when you log in.
[Learn More](#)

[Set Up an Authenticator App](#)

[Previous](#) [Continue](#)

Secure Code Sent

Enter the secure code we sent to your email: debbie@jbay.org.

Enter the secure code below

[Resend code](#)

[Cancel](#) [Continue](#)

FSA ID: Step 7 (continued)

You will then be provided a unique backup code. You should copy this code and save it someplace safe as an alternative method of accessing your FSA ID and password if necessary.

If you get multiple backup codes, the most recent backup code will be the only one that is valid.

Follow any final instructions to complete the process.

Create an Account (FSA ID)

Step 7 of 7

Enable Two-Step Verification: Backup Code

i We recommend storing your backup code in a safe place.

Your backup code is a special code that lets you access your account in the event that you cannot use any other two-step verification method.

Your Backup Code Is:

XXX0001234

I have stored this backup code somewhere safe.

[Previous](#) [Continue](#)



**Write down these items
somewhere safe or save these
items with your mobile device so
you don't forget:**

- Username
- Password
- Email Address & Password
- Challenge Questions & Answers
- Backup Code

2.

Starting the FAFSA

What a student needs to apply



List of at least one and up to 20 colleges



FSA ID log-in information



Information about current assets, such as cash checking and savings accounts

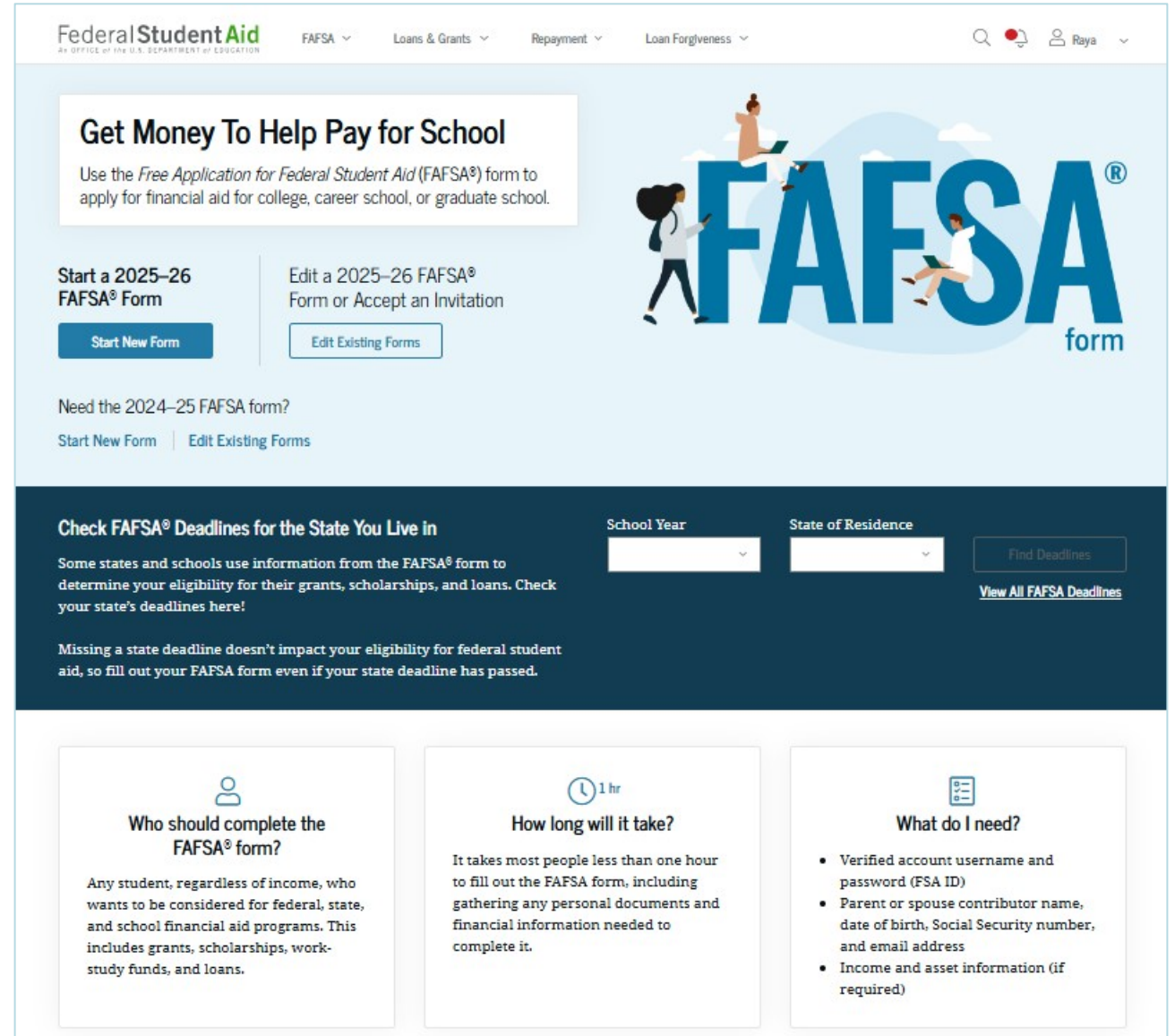


A copy of their tax return if the student filed taxes in 2023 and received grants, scholarships, or AmeriCorps that was reported on their tax return, or their filing status changed (e.g. married to divorced).

Landing Page

Begin at fafsa.gov which can be used on a computer or phone. You can "Start a New Form" or "Edit Existing Form."

Note that incomplete FAFSAs are deleted 45 days after the most recent activity.



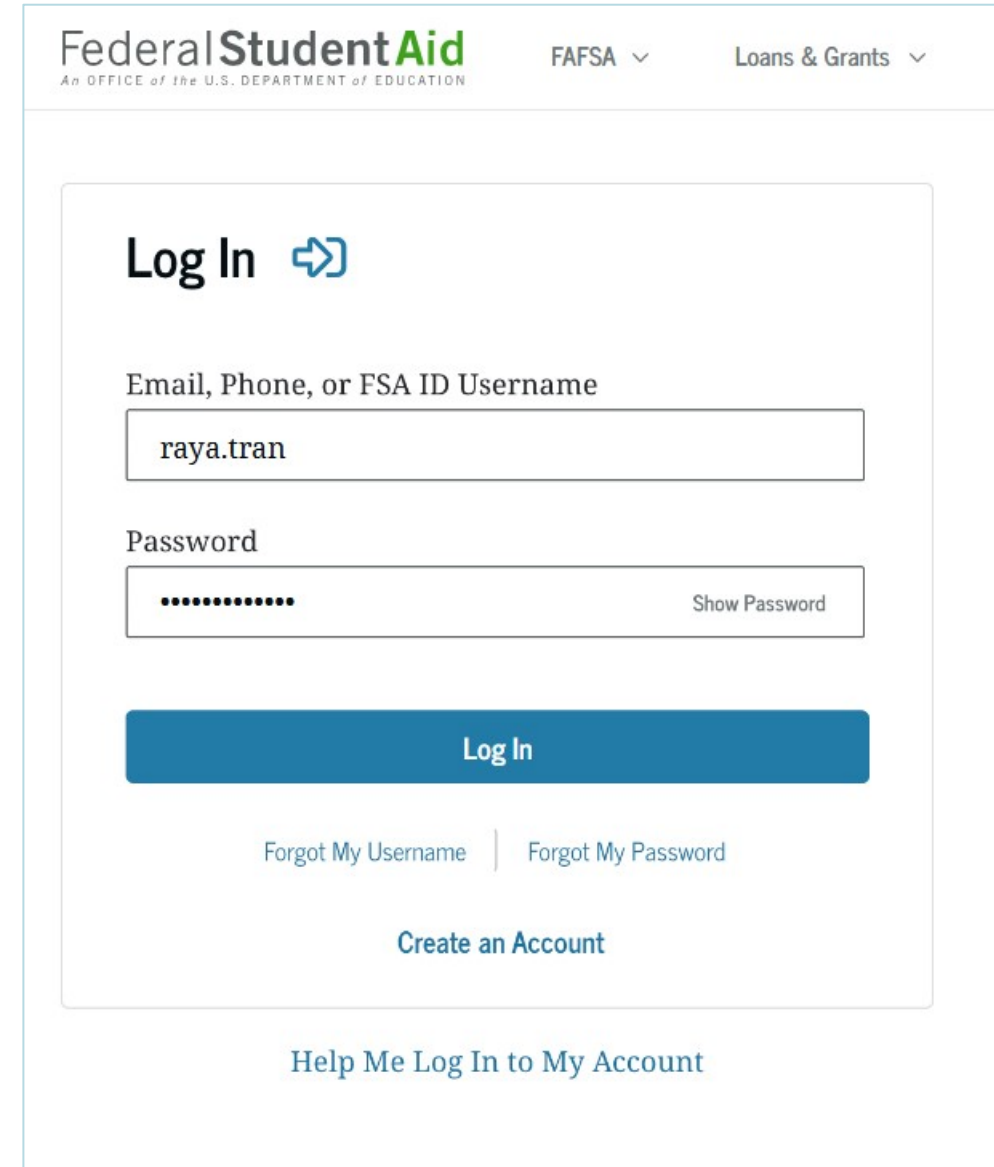
The screenshot shows the FAFSA landing page with the following elements:

- Header:** Federal Student Aid logo, navigation links for FAFSA, Loans & Grants, Repayment, and Loan Forgiveness, and a user profile icon labeled 'Raya'.
- Main Content:**
 - Get Money To Help Pay for School:** A call to action to use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form to apply for financial aid.
 - Start a 2025–26 FAFSA® Form:** A button labeled 'Start New Form'.
 - Edit a 2025–26 FAFSA® Form or Accept an Invitation:** A button labeled 'Edit Existing Forms'.
 - Need the 2024–25 FAFSA form?:** Links for 'Start New Form' and 'Edit Existing Forms'.
- Check FAFSA® Deadlines for the State You Live in:** A section with dropdown menus for 'School Year' and 'State of Residence', a 'Find Deadlines' button, and a link to 'View All FAFSA Deadlines'. It includes text explaining that some states and schools use FAFSA information for eligibility and that missing a state deadline doesn't impact federal aid eligibility.
- FAQ Section:** Three cards with icons and titles:
 - Who should complete the FAFSA® form?** Text: Any student, regardless of income, who wants to be considered for federal, state, and school financial aid programs. This includes grants, scholarships, work-study funds, and loans.
 - How long will it take?** Text: It takes most people less than one hour to fill out the FAFSA form, including gathering any personal documents and financial information needed to complete it.
 - What do I need?** List:
 - Verified account username and password (FSA ID)
 - Parent or spouse contributor name, date of birth, Social Security number, and email address
 - Income and asset information (if required)

Student Log In

If you select "Start a New Form" you are taken to the "Log In" page to enter your log-in credentials (FSA ID username and password).

If you don't have an FSA ID, you can select "Create an Account" to create an FSA ID. See section 1 for details on how to create an FSA ID).



The screenshot shows the Federal Student Aid website's login interface. At the top, the logo "Federal Student Aid" is displayed with the tagline "An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION". To the right of the logo are two dropdown menus: "FAFSA" and "Loans & Grants". The main content area is titled "Log In" with a right-pointing arrow icon. Below the title are two input fields: "Email, Phone, or FSA ID Username" containing the text "raya.tran" and "Password" containing a series of dots. A "Show Password" link is located to the right of the password field. A large blue "Log In" button is positioned below the input fields. Underneath the button are two links: "Forgot My Username" and "Forgot My Password". At the bottom of the form is a link for "Create an Account". Below the entire form area is a link that says "Help Me Log In to My Account".

Two-Step Verification

Select if you want a code sent via text (SMS Verification) or via email and enter the code provided. You can also choose to verify through an authenticator app.

Two-Step Verification

You have the following two-step verification methods enabled. Select one to complete verification.



SMS Verification

*****8382

Send Code



Email Verification

de*****@jbay.org

Send Code



Enter Secure Code

Enter the secure code we sent in a text message to your mobile phone: *****8382

Enter the secure code below

[Resend code](#)

Student Log In

Accept the disclaimer that pops up to continue.

Please Read Before Continuing

You are accessing a U.S. Federal Government computer system intended to be solely accessed by individual users expressly authorized to access the system by the U.S. Department of Education. Usage may be monitored, recorded, and/or subject to audit. For security purposes and in order to ensure that the system remains available to all expressly authorized users, the U.S. Department of Education monitors the system to identify unauthorized users. Anyone using this system expressly consents to such monitoring and recording. Unauthorized use of this information system is prohibited and subject to criminal and civil penalties. Except as expressly authorized by the U.S. Department of Education, unauthorized attempts to access, obtain, upload, modify, change, and/or delete information on this system are strictly prohibited and are subject to criminal prosecution under 18 U.S.C. § 1030, and other applicable statutes, which may result in fines and imprisonment. For purposes of this system, unauthorized access includes, but is not limited to:

- any access by an employee or agent of a commercial entity, or other third party, who is not the individual user, for purposes of commercial advantage or private financial gain (regardless of whether the commercial entity or third party is providing a service to an authorized user of the system); and
- any access in furtherance of any criminal or tortious act in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States or any State.

If system monitoring reveals information indicating possible criminal activity, such evidence may be provided to law enforcement personnel.

Decline

Accept

Returning Users


If you are returning to complete a FAFSA that you started previously, you will be taken to your dashboard when you log in.

Select "2025-26 FAFSA Form." You will be taken to the overview page where you can select to return to where you left off.



My Dashboard


My Aid



You currently don't have any federal loans or grants.

My Activity

2025-26 FAFSA® Form

 Action Required *Last Updated: 11/12/2024*


[View All Activity >](#)


Starting Page

FAFSA[®] Form 2025-26

Welcome, Raya,
to the FAFSA[®] Form

I am starting the FAFSA form as a

Student 

Parent 

New users will be taken to the starting page. Select “Student” as your role.


Students who are not independent will need to have parents fill out their portion of the form. A dependent student can invite parents to be contributors and thus, to provide their information by providing the parents’ email addresses. Screens for this process are not covered in this document.


Starting Page

FAFSA[®] Form 2025–26

Welcome, Raya,
to the FAFSA[®] Form

I am starting the FAFSA form as a

Student 

Parent 

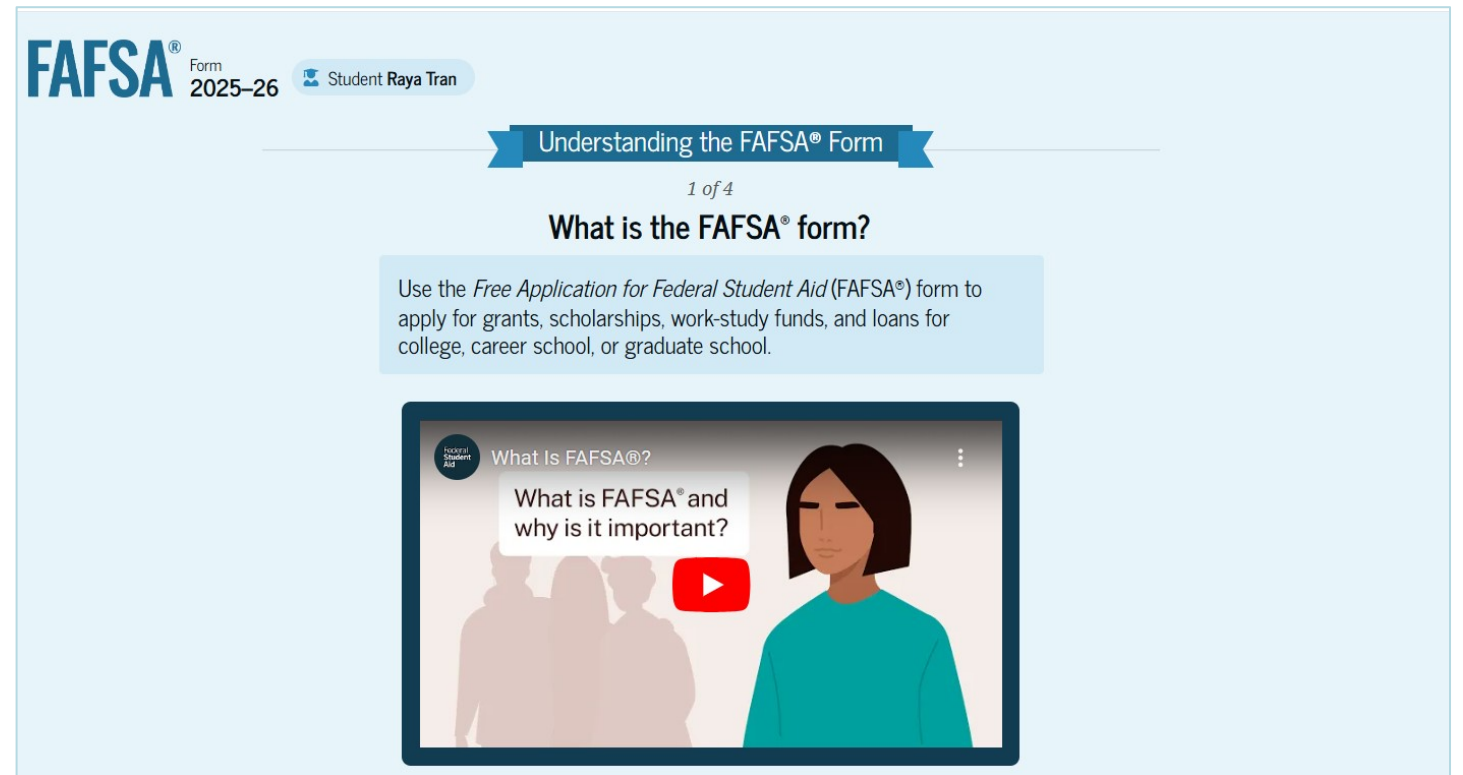
New users will be taken to the starting page. Select “Student” as your role.

Students who are not independent will need to have parents fill out their portion of the form. A dependent student can invite parents to be contributors and thus, to provide their information by providing the parents’ email addresses. Screens for this process are not covered in this document.

Onboarding (1 of 4)

When a student starts the 2025–26 FAFSA form for the first time, they are taken through the FAFSA onboarding process. The first onboarding page provides an overview of the FAFSA form and an accompanying video.

Select Continue to move on.



FAFSA® Form 2025–26 Student Raya Tran

Understanding the FAFSA® Form

1 of 4

What is the FAFSA® form?

Use the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)* form to apply for grants, scholarships, work-study funds, and loans for college, career school, or graduate school.

What is FAFSA®?
What is FAFSA® and why is it important?

Onboarding (2 of 4)

The second FAFSA onboarding page provides information about the different roles that may be required to participate in the student's FAFSA form and documents that may be needed to fill out the form.

If you are not independent (see section 4) and need to provide parental information or are married and need to provide spouse information, this video provides instructions for this process.

Select Continue to move on.

FAFSA Form 2025-26 Student Raya Tran

Understanding the FAFSA® Form
2 of 4

Contributors to the FAFSA® Form

Who is a contributor on the 2024-25 FAFSA® form?

Parents or Spouses
Your answers on the FAFSA® form will determine if any contributors need to be identified. These contributors will complete their own sections of the form and are asked to provide personal and financial information, but they will not be financially responsible for the student's education.

How To Invite
Contributors will need to log in with their own FSA ID to provide their information. To invite a contributor to a FAFSA form, you'll need to provide their name, date of birth, Social Security number (if they have one), and email address.

Onboarding (3 of 4)

The third FAFSA onboarding page provides information about the types of questions the student can expect to see and how they can get additional help with filling out the FAFSA form.


Understanding the FAFSA® Form

3 of 4

What To Expect

How long will this take? 🕒 1 hour

Every contributor must provide consent and approval for you to be eligible for federal student aid. With your consent and approval, we can obtain your federal tax information automatically from the IRS to help you complete the FAFSA® form. You can save the form and return to it later if you need more time.



The video thumbnail shows a young man with glasses and a red hoodie with a question mark on it. In the background, there are silhouettes of three other people. A red play button is centered over the image. The text on the thumbnail reads: 'What Does It Mean To Provide Consent and Approval on the 2024-25 FAFSA form?' and 'What does it mean to provide consent and approval on the 2024-25 FAFSA form?'. A small 'Federal Student Aid' logo is in the top left corner of the video frame.

Onboarding (4 of 4)

The last FAFSA onboarding page provides information about what to expect once the FAFSA form is completed and submitted.

Select "Start FAFSA form" to begin.

FAFSA® Form 2025-26 Student Raya Tran

Understanding the FAFSA® Form

4 of 4

After Submitting the FAFSA® Form


After submission, you'll need to check on the status of your FAFSA® form and make corrections, if required.

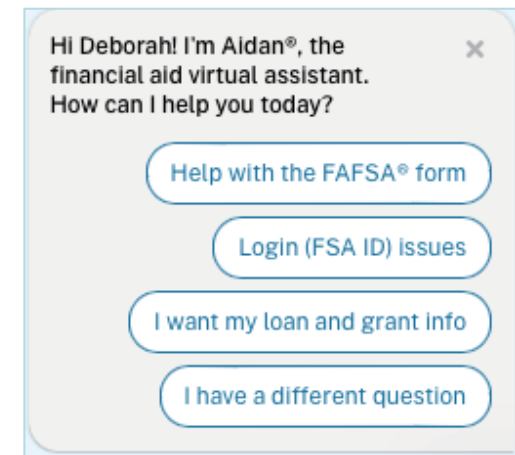
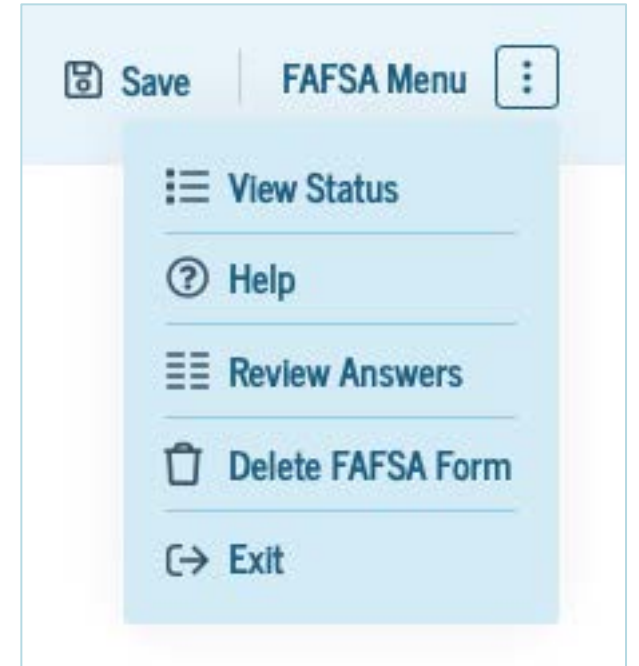
What Happens After Submitting Your FAFSA® ...

What Happens After Submitting Your FAFSA® Form?

- Your form will be processed in one to three days.
- You'll be able to view your FAFSA Submission Summary. It will include the Student Aid Index (SAI), an index number used to determine federal student aid eligibility.
- Schools will use your SAI to create your financial aid offer that explains the types and amounts of aid they are offering you. Most schools only send an aid offer when they accept you for admission.

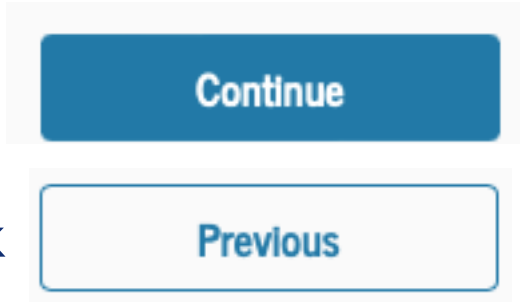
Using the FAFSA Form

- Click "Save" at the top of the screen to save your responses. Responses will save automatically when you move to a new page.
- Help is available through the FAFSA menu at the top of the screen or by clicking the ⓘ icon next to individual fields.
- You can also click the  to ask a question through the chatbot.



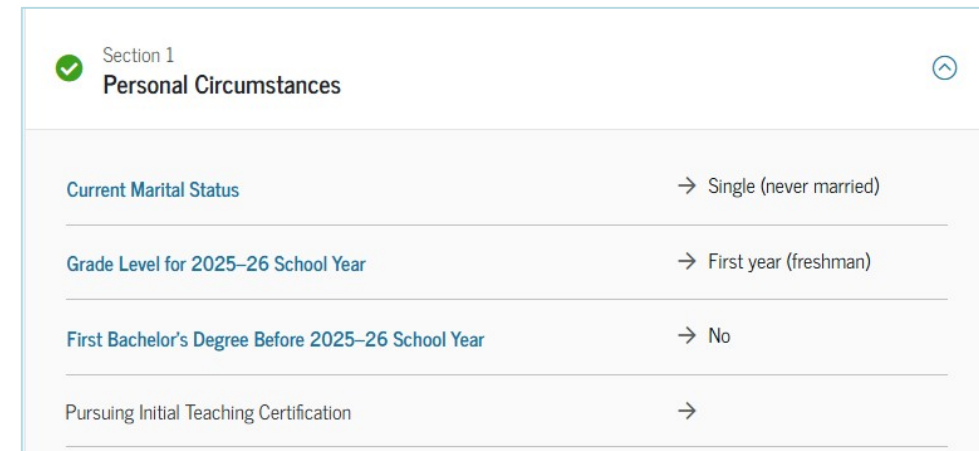
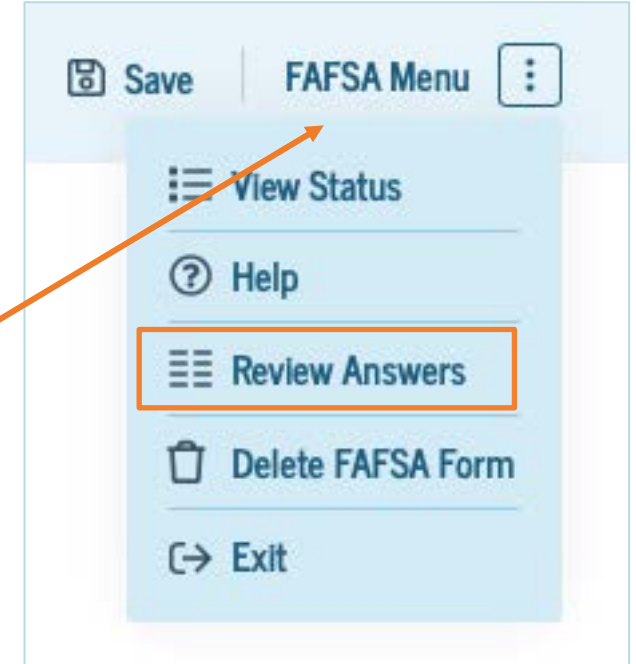
Using the FAFSA Form

- To move through the form, click
- To go to the previous screen click



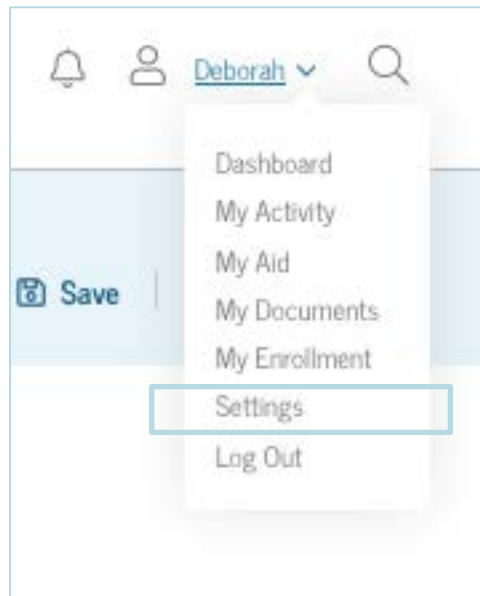
Do not use your computer's back button

- To go back to a specific screen, select "FAFSA menu" at the top of the screen and Review Answers.
- You will be taken to the review page where you can expand any section and click on the link for any question already answered (shown in blue) to return to that question.

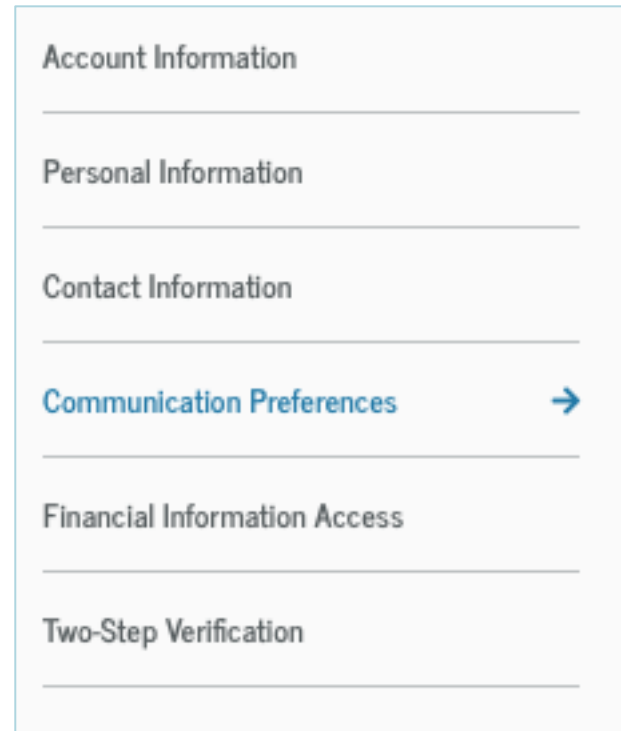
The image shows a screenshot of the FAFSA review page. At the top, it says 'Section 1 Personal Circumstances' with a green checkmark icon on the left and a collapse icon on the right. Below this, there are four rows of questions and answers. The first row is 'Current Marital Status' with the answer 'Single (never married)'. The second row is 'Grade Level for 2025-26 School Year' with the answer 'First year (freshman)'. The third row is 'First Bachelor's Degree Before 2025-26 School Year' with the answer 'No'. The fourth row is 'Pursuing Initial Teaching Certification' with the answer '→'. The text for the questions is blue, indicating they have been answered.

Language Options

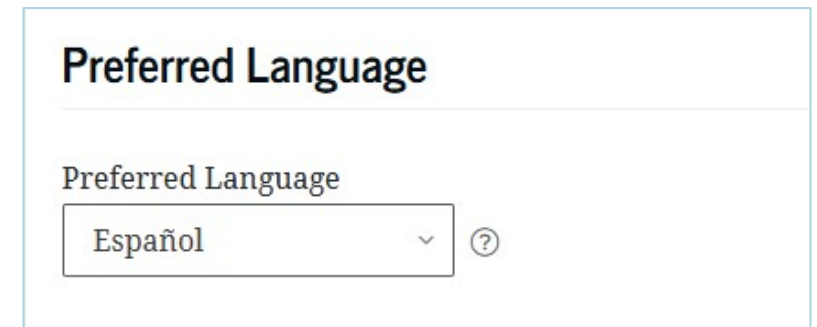
1. To access the Spanish language version, access your Account Settings, which are available through a dropdown menu under your name at the top of the screen.



2. Select “Communication Preferences” from the lefthand menu



3. Select Español as your preferred language



3.

Identity Information and Consent to Import Tax Info

Identity Information

Review the information on the screen and verify that it is correct. To update any of this information, you must access your Account Settings, which are available through a dropdown menu under your name at the top of the screen.

FAFSA[®] Form 2025-26 Student Raya Tran

Student Identity Information

Review the information below and verify that it's correct before moving forward.

Name
Raya A. Tran

Date of Birth
5/5/2003

Social Security Number
••••-1234

Email Address
raya.tran@email.com

Mobile Phone Number
(555) 555-5555

To update this information for all U.S. Department of Education communications, go to Account Settings.

Dashboard
My Activity
My Aid
My Documents
My Enrollment
Settings
Log Out

Save

Identity Information (Continued)

For fields related to your mailing address, you can edit them directly on this page. The address should be a place that you can receive mail.

If you do not have a permanent mailing address, you can use an address where you can reliably receive mail, like the address of a friend, relative, or social service agency that has given you permission to use their address.

Permanent Mailing Address
Include apartment number.

12345 Sesame Street

City
New York

State
New York (NY) ▾

Zip Code
67891

Country
United States of America (US) ▾

Previous Continue

State of Legal Residence

Select your state of legal residence from a dropdown box and provide the month and year when you began living in the state. If you have lived in the same state since birth, enter your date of birth.

This information is used to determine eligibility for state aid. If you are unsure if you are considered a California resident, consult your college.

FAFSA® Form 2025–26 Student Raya Tran

Student State of Legal Residence

State
New York (NY)

Date the Student Became a Legal Resident of New York (NY)

Month	Year
10	2005

Previous

Federal Tax Information (FTI)

This page informs the student about consent and their federal tax information. By providing consent, your federal tax information is transferred directly into the FAFSA from the IRS.

(Only the summary, and not the full text on the screen, is shown here.)

Summary

Your consent and approval are needed to retrieve and disclose federal tax information. With your consent and approval, we can obtain tax return information automatically from the IRS to help you complete the FAFSA[®] form. If you don't provide consent and approval, you will not be eligible for federal student aid, including grants and loans. You must provide consent and approval even if you didn't file a U.S. federal tax return or any tax return.

→ Get your 2023 tax return information for the 2025–26 FAFSA form.

→ Tax return information is required to complete the FAFSA form.

→ Federal tax information is used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid.

Federal Tax Information (FTI)

Students must approve & consent to importing data from the Federal Tax Information (FTI) (even if no tax return was filed).

The application looks at income information from the “prior-prior” year. If applying for the 2025–2026 school year, this would be from 2023.

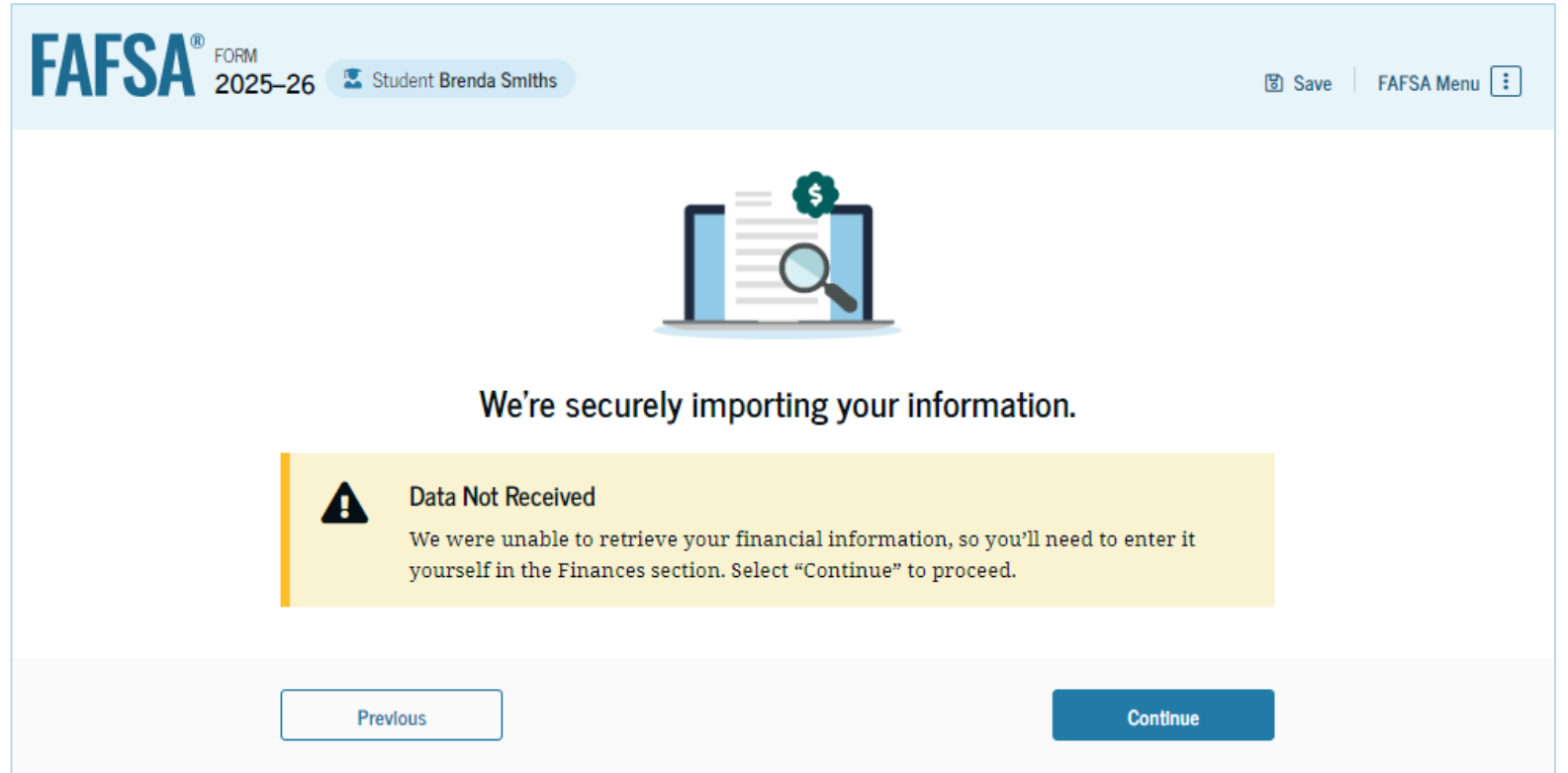
If you decline the FTI transfer, you will be ineligible for federal and state student aid.

Select “Approve” to consent to using your tax information to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. If you select “Decline,” you will not be eligible for federal student aid.

[Previous](#) [Decline](#) [Approve](#)

Federal Tax Information (FTI)

After submitting “Approve”, students will see a processing screen, indicating that their tax information is being imported. If you did not file a tax return in 2023, you will see a message stating “Data Not Received”.



The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2025-26 interface for Student Brenda Smiths. The header includes the FAFSA logo, the form year (2025-26), the student's name, and options to 'Save' and view the 'FAFSA Menu'. The main content area features an illustration of a laptop with a magnifying glass and a dollar sign, indicating a search or verification process. Below this, a message states: 'We're securely importing your information.' A yellow warning box contains the text: 'Data Not Received. We were unable to retrieve your financial information, so you'll need to enter it yourself in the Finances section. Select "Continue" to proceed.' At the bottom, there are 'Previous' and 'Continue' buttons.



If your income or circumstances have changed, submit the FAFSA form and then contact your financial aid office to request an adjustment to the income that is used to calculate your eligibility.

- Examples of special circumstances may include the following:
 - significant changes to your financial situation, such as loss of employment or pay cuts
 - tuition expenses at an elementary or secondary school
 - high amounts of medical or dental expenses not covered by insurance
 - a family member who recently became unemployed or furloughed
 - Impacted by a federally declared natural disaster such as wildfires, hurricanes, floods or tornados
 - Volatile income that varies from one year to the next, especially if self-employed
 - other changes in income or assets that may affect your eligibility for federal student aid

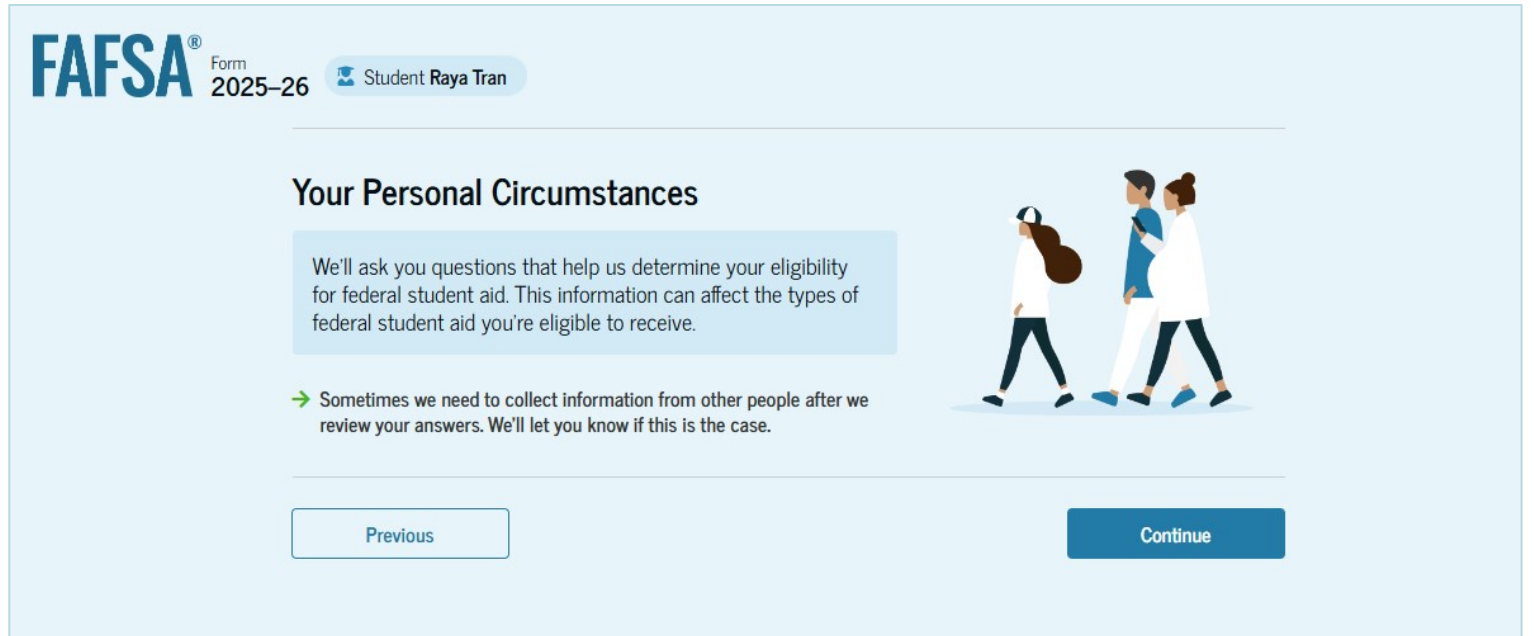
Your school may ask you to document your special circumstances so that they can consider making an adjustment to your FAFSA information.

4.

Personal Circumstances

Personal Circumstances

The first page within the Student Personal Circumstances section provides an overview of the section.



The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2025-26 interface for Student Raya Tran. The page title is "Your Personal Circumstances". A light blue box contains the text: "We'll ask you questions that help us determine your eligibility for federal student aid. This information can affect the types of federal student aid you're eligible to receive." Below this, a green arrow points to the text: "Sometimes we need to collect information from other people after we review your answers. We'll let you know if this is the case." To the right of the text is an illustration of three people walking. At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Previous" and "Continue".

Marital Status

You are first asked about your marital status. Your legal status is “single” if you are not legally married, even if you live with or have a boyfriend, girlfriend, partner or significant other.

If you are married, your spouse must provide income information. The screens for this process are not included in this guide.

The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2025-26 application interface. At the top, it displays the FAFSA logo, the form year '2025-26', and the student's name 'Student Raya Tran'. Below this is a progress bar with three steps: '1 Personal Circumstances', '2 Demographics', and '3 Financials'. The '1 Personal Circumstances' step is currently active. The main heading is 'Student Current Marital Status'. Below this heading are six radio button options: 'Single (never married)', 'Married (not separated)', 'Remarried', 'Separated', 'Divorced', and 'Widowed'. The 'Single (never married)' option is selected, indicated by a filled blue circle next to the text.

Student College or Career School Plans

Indicate what your grade level will be when the 2025–2026 school year begins.



Students who took “dual enrollment” courses in high school should select “First Year (freshman)”



For returning students, this is based on units completed, not the number of years enrolled. For example, if degree completion requires 60 units, a student entering their second year who had completed less than 30 units, would select “First Year (freshman).”

You should answer NO regarding whether you will have your first bachelor’s degree unless you have already COMPLETED a bachelor’s degree program.

FAFSA Form 2025–26 Student **Raya Tran** Save

1 Personal Circumstances 2 Demographics 3 Financials 4 Colleges 5 Signature

Student College or Career School Plans

When the student begins the 2025–26 school year, what will their college grade level be?

- First year (freshman)
- Second year (sophomore)
- Other undergraduate (junior and beyond)
- Master’s, doctorate, or graduate certificate program (such as M.A., MBA, M.D., J.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)

When the student begins the 2025–26 school year, will they have their first bachelor’s degree?

- Yes
- No

Student Personal Circumstances

- The “Student Personal Circumstances” section is used to determine if a student is independent. Students who qualify as independent do not need to provide information about parents and eligibility for financial aid is based on the student’s income only (and spouse if applicable).
- Students should select all that apply.

1 Personal Circumstances 2 Demographics 3 Financials 4 Colleges 5 Signature

Student Personal Circumstances

Select all that apply.

The student is currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training.

The student is a veteran of the U.S. armed forces.

The student has children or other people (excluding their spouse) who live with them and receive more than half of their support from the student now and between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

At any time since the student turned 13, they were an orphan (no living biological or adoptive parent).

At any time since the student turned 13, they were a ward of the court.

At any time since the student turned 13, they were in foster care.

The student is or was a legally emancipated minor, as determined by a court in their state of residence.

The student is or was in a legal guardianship with someone other than their parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in their state of residence.

4a.

Current & Former Foster Youth

Current & Former Foster Youth

To qualify as a **ward of the court** or in **foster care**, a student must have been a dependent of the court and lived in an out-of-home placement at any point on or after their 13th birthday. No guidance is available regarding the difference between being in foster care and being a ward of the court, and so students can check either or both. While this includes foster youth who are under the jurisdiction of the probation system, someone who is incarcerated is not considered a ward of the court for FAFSA purposes.

To qualify under the legal guardianship criteria, you must have a guardianship in place currently or when you turned 18. Both kinship guardianships and non-related legal guardianships qualify.

At any time since the student turned 13, they were an orphan (no living biological or adoptive parent).

At any time since the student turned 13, they were a ward of the court.

At any time since the student turned 13, they were in foster care.

The student is or was a legally emancipated minor, as determined by a court in their state of residence.

The student is or was in a legal guardianship with someone other than their parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in their state of residence.

None of these apply.

How is foster youth status verified?

Each college determines if it will require verification of foster care status. Financial aid offices can automatically verify foster care status through a data match with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS); however, this doesn't always happen, and a letter or other acceptable documentation (see next page for options) may be required.

Once verified, status does not need to be redetermined in subsequent years.

Who can provide verification?

College financial aid administrators (FAA) must accept any of the following:

- Court order or official State documentation that the student received Federal or State support in foster care;
- Verification of eligibility for a Chafee Grant;
- A phone call, written statement, from:
 - A State, county, or Tribal agency administering a program under part B or E of title IV of the *Social Security Act*;
 - A State Medicaid agency;
 - A public or private foster care placing agency or foster care facility or placement;
 - An attorney or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA);
 - A financial aid administrator who documented the student's circumstance in the same or a prior award year.

To Get a Foster Youth Verification Letter:

- ✓ **Current foster youth:** Contact your social worker or Independent Living Program (ILP) representative
- ✓ **Former foster youth:** May also contact the Office of the California Foster Care Ombudsperson: 877-846-1602 or fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov/verification-request-form

4b.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Unaccompanied Homeless Students

Students are then asked about their homelessness status.

The screenshot shows a multi-step survey interface. At the top, a horizontal progress bar contains five numbered steps: 1. Personal Circumstances (highlighted in blue), 2. Demographics, 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, and 5. Signature. Below the progress bar, the section title "Student Homelessness" is displayed. The main question is: "At any time on or after July 1, 2024, was the student unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?". There are two radio button options: "Yes" (selected) and "No". At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "Previous" and "Continue".

1 Personal Circumstances 2 Demographics 3 Financials 4 Colleges 5 Signature

Student Homelessness

At any time on or after July 1, 2024, was the student unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

Yes No

Previous Continue

Definition of Homeless Youth on the FAFSA

A Student Must be Unaccompanied
AND either Homeless OR Self-
Supporting & at risk of being
homeless

Unaccompanied

Not in the physical
custody of a parent
or guardian.



Homeless

Lacking fixed, regular, and adequate
housing. (Learn more on the next page)

OR

Self-supporting AND at risk of being homeless

A student is paying for their living
expenses (including housing) AND
when a student's housing may cease
to be fixed, regular, and adequate.

Note: A student living in any of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent may be considered homeless even if the parent would provide support and a place to live.

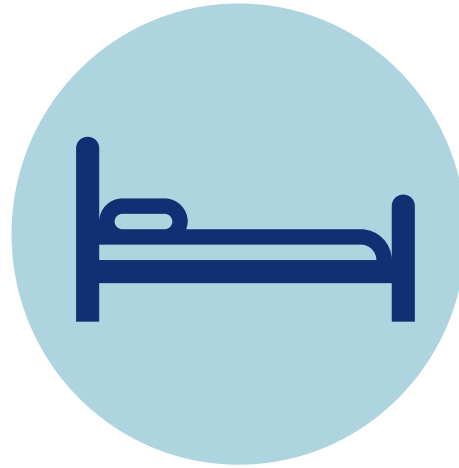
“Lacking fixed, regular and adequate housing” includes students who:



Are staying with other people temporarily due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (i.e., couch-surfing)



Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations



Are living in emergency shelters



Are living in their car, sleeping outside, or staying someplace not normally meant for human habitation

Homelessness Determinations

Did any of the following determine the student was homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?

Select all that apply.

Director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness

The student's high school or school district homeless liaison or designee

Director or designee of a project supported by a federal TRIO or GEAR UP program grant

Financial aid administrator (FAA)

None of these apply.

- If you select "yes," you will be asked who will provide a homeless youth determination. Select all that apply.
- Financial aid administrators must accept documentation, including a documented phone call from these entities unless there is "documented conflicting information."
- Status does not need to be redetermined every year if the student is at the same institution unless the student informs the institution that circumstances have changed, or the institution has specific conflicting information about the student's independence and has informed the student of this information.
- If you don't have verification from one of the listed entities, select "none of these apply."

Note: If you indicated that you are a foster youth in the prior section, this screen will not appear.

- If “None of these apply,” you can complete the FAFSA as an independent student but must contact the financial aid office for a determination.
- FAAs MUST make a determination based on a written statement, or documented interview, with a student.
- Financial aid administrator's determination of homelessness must be made without regard to the reasons why the student is unaccompanied and/or homeless.
- Provisional independence ≠ unaccompanied homeless youth determination.

Homelessness Determinations

Your Dependency Status



Provisionally Independent or **Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

You Can Proceed without Parent Information

Based on your answers, you can submit your application without answering questions about your parent(s).

To complete the financial aid process, you'll need to contact the financial aid office at the school you wish to attend.

If you are not in contact with a parent, or contacting a parent would pose a risk to you, you are considered a provisionally independent student. You will need to speak with the financial aid office at your school about your circumstances.

If you have indicated that you are unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless, the financial aid office at your school is required to make a determination of your status based on a written statement from you or a documented interview with you. Please contact your school's financial aid office to complete this process.

We won't be able to calculate your Student Aid Index (SAI) until your financial aid office confirms your circumstances. Until then, we will provide only an estimate of your federal student aid eligibility as an independent student.

4c.

Unusual Circumstances

Student Unusual Circumstances

Students may complete the FAFSA as a “provisionally” independent student if they believe they may qualify for independent status due to unusual situations such as parental abandonment, abuse, neglect, legally granted asylum, or student or parental incarceration.

Provisional independent provisions may be helpful for youth who are neither homeless nor former foster youth, but who nonetheless have extenuating circumstances that preclude being able to obtain parental information.

Colleges have discretion to use professional judgement when evaluating whether to consider unusual circumstances.

Student Unusual Circumstances

This information will help us evaluate the student's ability to pay for school.

Do unusual circumstances prevent the student from contacting their parents or would contacting their parents pose a risk to the student?

A student may be experiencing unusual circumstances if they

- left home due to an abusive or threatening environment;
- are abandoned by or estranged from their parents;
- have refugee or asylee status and are separated from their parents, or their parents are displaced in a foreign country;
- are a victim of human trafficking;
- are incarcerated, or their parents are incarcerated and contact with the parents would pose a risk to the student; or
- are otherwise unable to contact or locate their parents.

If the student's circumstances resulted in not having a safe and stable place to live, they may be considered a homeless youth and should review the answer to the previous question about being unaccompanied and homeless.

Yes

No

Impact of Provisionally Independent Status

If a student has “unusual circumstances”, they will be “Provisionally Independent.”

The student can sign and submit their FAFSA without providing parental income information but will need to contact their school to see what supporting documentation they need to submit. A financial aid administrator at the school will review and make a determination regarding a dependency override.

Your Dependency Status



Provisionally Independent or Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

You Can Proceed without Parent Information

Based on your answers, you can submit your application without answering questions about your parent(s).

To complete the financial aid process, you'll need to contact the financial aid office at the school you wish to attend.

If you are not in contact with a parent, or contacting a parent would pose a risk to you, you are considered a provisionally independent student. You will need to speak with the financial aid office at your school about your circumstances.

If you have indicated that you are unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless, the financial aid office at your school is required to make a determination of your status based on a written statement from you or a documented interview with you. Please contact your school's financial aid office to complete this process.

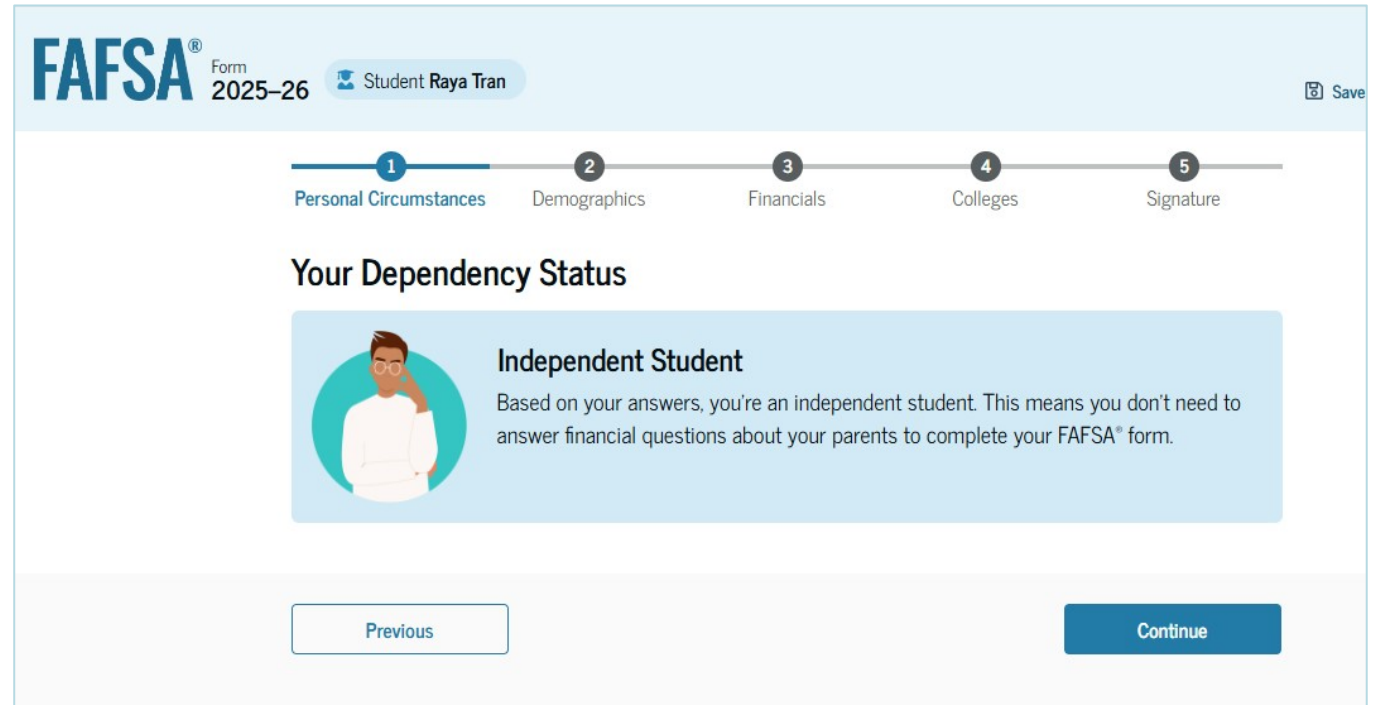
We won't be able to calculate your Student Aid Index (SAI) until your financial aid office confirms your circumstances. Until then, we will provide only an estimate of your federal student aid eligibility as an independent student.

4d.

Independent Status Confirmation

Independent Status Confirmation

If you indicated that you meet one or more of the criteria for independent status, this screen will appear.




The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2025-26 interface for Student Raya Tran. At the top, the FAFSA logo and form year are displayed, along with the student's name and a 'Save' button. A progress bar below the header indicates five steps: 1. Personal Circumstances (highlighted in blue), 2. Demographics, 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, and 5. Signature. The main content area is titled 'Your Dependency Status' and features a light blue box with an illustration of a student. The text in this box reads: 'Independent Student. Based on your answers, you're an independent student. This means you don't need to answer financial questions about your parents to complete your FAFSA form.' At the bottom of the screen, there are two buttons: 'Previous' and 'Continue'.

5.

Student Demographics

Student Demographics


This is the first view within the Student Demographics section. It provides an overview of the section.



FAFSA[®] Form 2025-26 Student **Raya Tran**

Student Demographics

We'll ask questions about your background and the education levels of your parent(s). Some of these questions will help determine how much federal student aid you may be eligible to receive for school.



[Previous](#) [Continue](#)

Gender Identity

You are asked about your gender identity. Select your response from the options.

Selecting “prefer not to answer” does not impact eligibility for aid. The answers are not shared with the colleges and are for research purposes only.

The screenshot shows a multi-step form with five steps: 1. Personal Circumstances (checked), 2. Demographics (active), 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, and 5. Signature. The current step is titled "Student Demographic Information" and includes a green box with the following text: "Questions Used for Research Purposes Only and Do Not Affect Federal Student Aid Eligibility. Your answers will not: • affect the student's eligibility for federal student aid, • be used in any aid calculations, and • be shared with the schools to which the student applies." Below this is the question "What is the student's gender?" with four radio button options: Male, Female, Nonbinary, and Prefer not to answer. At the bottom are "Previous" and "Continue" buttons.

Personal Circumstances 2 Demographics 3 Financials 4 Colleges 5 Signature

Student Demographic Information

Questions Used for Research Purposes Only and Do Not Affect Federal Student Aid Eligibility

Your answers will not

- affect the student's eligibility for federal student aid,
- be used in any aid calculations, and
- be shared with the schools to which the student applies.

What is the student's gender? ⓘ

Male

Female

Nonbinary

Prefer not to answer

Previous Continue

Race and Ethnicity

You are asked if you are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. You are also asked about your race. You can select multiple options for race. For each race selected, a pop up will appear that allows you to select a subcategory. Selecting “prefer not to answer” does not impact eligibility for aid. The answers are not shared with the colleges and are for research purposes only.

Student Race and Ethnicity

Questions Used for Research Purposes Only and Do Not Affect Federal Student Aid Eligibility

Your answers will not

- affect the student's eligibility for federal student aid,
- be used in any aid calculations, or
- be shared with the schools to which the student applies.

Is the student of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

Select all that apply.

No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

Prefer not to answer

What is the student's race?

Select all that apply.

White

Black or African American

Asian

American Indian or Alaska Native

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Prefer not to answer

Citizenship Status

You are asked about your citizenship status. If you are an eligible non-citizen, you will be asked to enter your Alien Registration Number.

If you select that you are not a US citizen or eligible non-citizen the form will allow you to continue, however you are not eligible for federal aid and should complete the CADAA instead.

The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2025-26 form for Student Raya Tran. The progress bar indicates the following steps: 1. Personal Circumstances (completed), 2. Demographics (current step), 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, and 5. Signature. The 'Student Citizenship Status' section contains three radio button options: 'U.S. citizen or national' (selected), 'Eligible noncitizen', and 'Neither U.S. citizen nor eligible noncitizen'. At the bottom, there are 'Previous' and 'Continue' buttons.

Parent Education Status

You are asked if either of your parents attended or completed college. This information is used to identify first-generation college students and is for statistical purposes only.

Selecting “don’t know” does not impact eligibility for aid.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Parent Education Status" within a larger application. At the top, a progress bar indicates five steps: 1. Personal Circumstances (checked), 2. Demographics (current step), 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, and 5. Signature. The question asks, "Did either of the student's parents attend college or complete college?" and provides four radio button options: "Neither parent attended college", "One or both parents attended college, but neither parent completed college", "One or both parents completed college", and "Don't know". At the bottom, there are "Previous" and "Continue" buttons.

Parent Killed in Line of Duty

All students under the age of 33 are asked if their parent or guardian was killed in the line of duty in the armed forces or as a public safety officer. If you do not know, select "no."

The screenshot shows a survey form with a progress bar at the top. The progress bar has five steps: 1. Personal Circumstances (checked), 2. Demographics (current step), 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, and 5. Signature. Below the progress bar is the title 'Parent Killed in Line of Duty'. The main question is: 'Was the student's parent or guardian killed in the line of duty while either (1) serving on active duty as a member of the U.S. armed forces on or after the events of 9/11, or (2) performing official duties as a public safety officer?'. Below the question is a note: 'Public safety officers include law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency service workers.' There are two radio button options: 'Yes' and 'No'. At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'Previous' and 'Continue'.

Personal Circumstances **2** Demographics Financials Colleges Signature

Parent Killed in Line of Duty

Was the student's parent or guardian killed in the line of duty while either (1) serving on active duty as a member of the U.S. armed forces on or after the events of 9/11, or (2) performing official duties as a public safety officer?

Public safety officers include law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency service workers.

Yes No

[Previous](#) [Continue](#)

High School Completion Status

You are asked what your high school completion status will be when you start the 2025–26 school year.

Students who were home-schooled or received a high school equivalency certificate (i.e., GED) are eligible for aid.

If you select “state recognized high school equivalent,” you will be asked the type of credential that you received (GED, HiSET, TASC or other) and which state issued the credential.

If you select “None of the above” you will be allowed to continue to complete the form. However, aid is available only under extremely limited “ability to benefit” criteria* or for eligible foster youth through the Chafee Grant.

*<https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements#ability-to-benefit>.

The screenshot shows a progress bar at the top with five steps: 1. Personal Circumstances (checked), 2. Demographics (current step), 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, and 5. Signature. Below the progress bar is the title 'Student High School Completion Status' and the question: 'What will the student's high school completion status be at the beginning of the 2025–26 school year?'. There are four radio button options: 'High school diploma' (selected), 'State-recognized high school equivalent (e.g., GED certificate)', 'Homeschooled', and 'None of the above'. At the bottom, there are 'Previous' and 'Continue' buttons.

High School Information

If you select "High school diploma", you are asked which high school you did or will graduate from. Enter your high school's state and city. After selecting "Search," select the correct high school from the search results and select continue.

Progress bar: 1. Personal Circumstances (checked), 2. Demographics, 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, 5. Signature

Student High School Information

From what high school did or will the student graduate?

State
California (CA) ×

City
Tulare ×

High School Name - optional
Accelerated Charter High

i To add a high school to this application, choose a school from the following list, and select "Continue."

Search Results 1 to 1 of 1

SORT BY:

- Accelerated Charter High
Tulare, CA

Is the student's school not listed? [Add school manually](#)


Confirm High School

You have the option to edit the high school information presented on this page by selecting "Edit," which will return you to the high school information page. If the information is correct, select "Continue" to proceed to the next section.

Personal Circumstances **2** Demographics Financials **4** Colleges Signature **5**

Confirm Your High School

Verify that your high school information below is correct. Once you're ready, select "Continue" and we'll add it to your FAFSA® form.

High School Name Accelerated Charter High [Edit](#) 

City
Tulare

State
California (CA)

6.

Student Financials

Introduction: Financials

This is the first page within the Student Financials section. It provides an overview of the section.

FAFSA[®] Form 2025-26 Student Raya Tran

Your Finances

The FAFSA[®] form helps determine your ability to pay for school. We ask about your financial information in this section.

[What if you have special financial circumstances?](#)

[Previous](#) [Continue](#)

The screenshot shows a user interface for the FAFSA 2025-26 'Your Finances' section. At the top left, the FAFSA logo is displayed next to the text 'Form 2025-26' and a user profile indicator for 'Student Raya Tran'. Below this, the section title 'Your Finances' is prominently displayed. A light blue text box explains that the FAFSA form helps determine the user's ability to pay for school and that financial information is asked about in this section. A link is provided for users with special financial circumstances. At the bottom, there are two buttons: a light blue 'Previous' button and a dark blue 'Continue' button. To the right of the text box, there is an illustration of a person in a teal hoodie pointing at a network diagram with nodes and dollar signs.

Financials Section: Federal Benefits Received

- Students are asked if they received certain means-tested public benefits at any time in 2023 or 2024.
- If you answer yes to any of these, you will be able to skip the question about your current assets.



In California:
Medicaid = MediCal
SNAP = Cal Fresh
TANF = CalWorks

Federal Benefits Received

Responses Don't Affect Federal Student Aid Eligibility

Your answers to these questions will not affect the student's eligibility for federal student aid or these federal benefits.

At any time during 2023 or 2024, did the student or anyone in their family receive benefits from any of the following federal programs?

Select all that apply.

- Earned Income Credit (EIC)
- Federal Housing Assistance
- Free or Reduced Price School Lunch
- Medicaid
- Refundable Credit for Coverage Under a Qualified Health Plan (QHP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- None of these apply.

Tax Filing Status

You will be asked if you filed taxes in 2023. (If you indicated that you are married these questions look slightly different)

If you respond no, you will be asked about any foreign income and a couple other unlikely scenarios.



Student Tax Filing Status

Did or will the student file a 2023 IRS Form 1040 or 1040-NR? ⓘ

Yes

No

Did the student earn income in a foreign country in 2023, were they employed by an international organization but not required to report their income on any tax return, or did they file a tax return with Puerto Rico or another U.S. territory? ⓘ

Examples of international organizations include the United Nations, World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

Yes

No

Previous

Continue

Family Size

This screen appears asks if the student's family size is different than what is reported on their 2023 tax return.

For most independent students, your family size will be 1 and will likely not have changed.

However, if they got married or have dependents who live with you and will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026 and you did not report them on your 2023 tax return, you would update your family size here.



Family Size

Based on answers to previous questions, we've made some assumptions about your family. The student (and student's spouse, if married) are always included in the family size. The box below shows your family size based on our assumptions and the number of children or other dependents you report.



The student's family size is **1**.

Student: 1

Student's Children and Other Dependents: 0

Enter the number of children or other dependents who live with the student and will receive more than half of their support from the student between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

Include dependent children who meet these criteria, even if they live apart because of college enrollment.

Do not include the student applicant.

 ⓘ

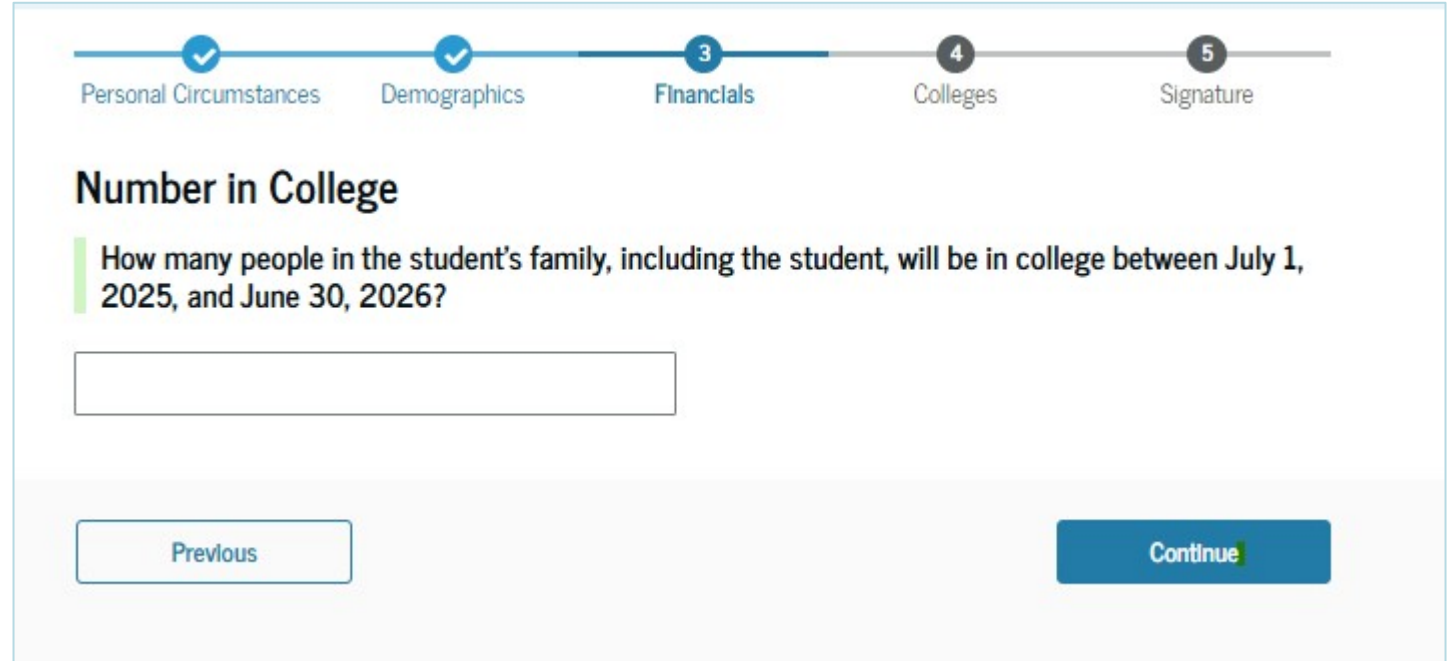
Previous

Continue

Number in College

You are asked how many people in your family will be in college between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, including yourself. Most students will answer “1” unless they have a spouse also in college.

You should not include anyone other than yourself and your spouse or child (do not include siblings or other members of your household who are attending college).



The screenshot shows a progress bar at the top with five steps: Personal Circumstances, Demographics, Financials, Colleges, and Signature. Steps 1 and 2 are marked with checkmarks, step 3 is the current step, and steps 4 and 5 are marked with numbers. Below the progress bar, the title 'Number in College' is displayed. The question asks: 'How many people in the student's family, including the student, will be in college between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026?'. A text input field is provided for the answer. At the bottom, there are 'Previous' and 'Continue' buttons.

Personal Circumstances Demographics Financials Colleges Signature

Number in College

How many people in the student's family, including the student, will be in college between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026?

Previous Continue

Student Assets

When asked about current student assets, student financial aid, such as grants or scholarships received for the current term, does NOT need to be reported.

Only those assets indicated here must be reported.

If you indicated that you receive public benefits on a previous screen, this question will not appear.



Annual Child Support Received

Enter the total amount of child support the student received for the last complete calendar year.

Student Assets

Current Total of Cash, Savings, and Checking Accounts

Don't include student financial aid.

Current Net Worth of Investments, Including Real Estate

Don't include the home the student lives in. Net worth is the value of the investments minus any debts owed against them.

Current Net Worth of Businesses and Investment Farms

Enter the net worth of the student's businesses or for-profit agricultural operations. Net worth is the value of the businesses or farms minus any debts owed against them.

Previous

Continue

Tax Information

If you answered yes to whether you filed taxes or had foreign income, you will be asked to answer two tax-related questions.

If you received college grants, scholarships, or AmeriCorps benefits in 2023 and included them on your 2023 tax return, it is important that they be reported on the FAFSA. The amount reported will be **DEDUCTED** from your total income and could result in eligibility for more aid.

If your tax return shows that you are married and you report a different marital status on the FAFSA (e.g., single, divorced) you will be asked to provide additional detailed information from your tax return (not shown here).

Personal Circumstances Demographics Financials Colleges Signature

Student 2023 Tax Return Information

Refer to the student's 2023 tax return to answer the following questions.
If the answer is zero or the question does not apply, enter 0.

IRA Rollover Into Another IRA or Qualified Plan

\$.00

Pension Rollover Into an IRA or Other Qualified Plan

\$.00

Amount of College Grants, Scholarships, or AmeriCorps Benefits Reported as Income to the IRS

The student paid taxes on these grants, scholarships, or benefits. These usually apply to those completing their FAFSA⁶ form again, not to first-time applicants. If married, include the amount the student's spouse received.

\$.00

Foreign Earned Income Exclusion

\$.00

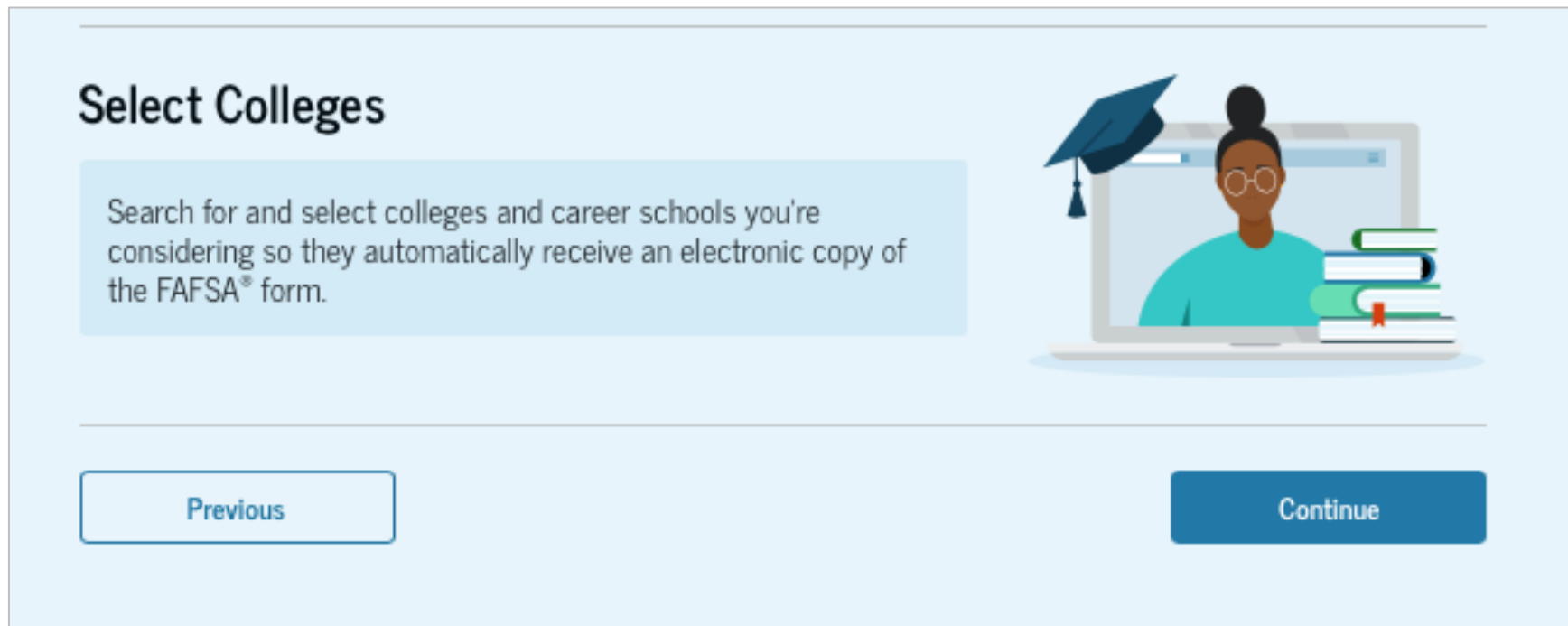
[Previous](#) [Continue](#)

7.

College Selection

Introduction: Select Colleges

This is the first page within the College Selection section. It provides an overview of the section.



College Search

You are asked to search for the colleges and/or career schools you would like to receive your FAFSA information.

You can search for a school by entering a state, city, and/or school name.

Schools may have similar names so take care to select the correct school.

The screenshot displays the FAFSA college search interface. At the top, a progress bar shows five steps: Personal Circumstances, Demographics, Financials, Colleges (current step), and Signature. Below the progress bar, the heading reads "Where should we send the FAFSA® information?" followed by the instruction "Search and select colleges and career schools." A note states: "If you can't find your school when searching by School Name or State, try searching by School Code." Below this, it says "You can add up to 20 colleges and career schools to the FAFSA® form." A green pill-shaped button shows "0 out of 20 schools selected" with a building icon, and a link "View Selected Schools" is next to it. Two search options are available: "Search by School Name" (selected) and "Search by School Code". The "Search by School Name" section includes three input fields: "State" (with "California (CA)" selected), "City - optional" (with "San Francisco" entered), and "School Name - optional" (empty). A blue "Search" button with a magnifying glass icon is at the bottom.

College Search

After selecting "Search," select the correct school from the search results and click "+Select." You can select to send your FAFSA information to a maximum of 20 schools.

A minimum of one school is required to proceed.

San Francisco State University San Francisco, California (CA)	Federal School Code 001154	+ Select
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Some 4-year institutions have separate codes for their graduate schools. If the code starts with a letter rather than a number, it is a graduate program and shouldn't be used by a student applying as an undergraduate.

Selected Colleges

You can then view which colleges and/or career schools you have selected. If you have not selected 20 schools, you have the option to search and select more schools.


Selected Colleges and Career Schools

These are the colleges and career schools that you've selected to receive the FAFSA® form.

Review this list of schools and confirm your selection(s).

School List Guidelines for California Residents

To be eligible for state grant aid in California, you must list an eligible in-state college. The order of schools in your college list will not impact your eligibility for state aid programs.

 3 out of 20 schools selected

Showing 1 to 3 of 3

San Francisco State University
San Francisco, California (CA)

Federal School Code
001154

 Remove

[View Info](#)

University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California (CA)

Federal School Code
001312

 Remove

[View Info](#)

Laney College
Oakland, California (CA)

Federal School Code
001266

 Remove

[View Info](#)

 [Search More Schools](#)

8.

Review & Signature

Review Page

The review page displays the responses that you provided. You can view all the responses by selecting "Expand All" or expand each section individually. To edit a response, you can select the question's link and you will be taken to the corresponding page.

The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2025-26 review interface for Student Raya Tran. At the top, the FAFSA logo and form year are displayed, along with the student's name and a 'Save' button. The main heading is 'Continue To Sign Your Form', accompanied by an illustration of two people on bicycles. Below this is a summary box stating: 'Here's a summary of the information you provided on the FAFSA® form. Continue once you're ready to submit.' A green checkmark icon indicates that the user has completed the form, with the instruction: 'Scroll To Continue After reviewing your answers, scroll to the bottom of the page to continue. You must continue past this page to sign and submit your section of the FAFSA form.' The 'Student Sections' list includes: Introduction, Personal Identifiers, Section 1 Personal Circumstances, Section 2 Demographics, Section 3 Financials, and Section 4 Colleges. Each section has a green checkmark and a dropdown arrow. At the bottom, there are 'Previous' and 'Continue' buttons.

Signature

You acknowledge the terms and conditions of the FAFSA form and sign.

Sign and Submit the FAFSA® Form

Summary

This page confirms that you understand the terms and conditions of the FAFSA® form and filled out the form accurately to the best of your ability.

The FAFSA form is a legal document you will electronically sign with your account username and password (FSA ID). Because your FSA ID is associated with your personal information, do not share it with anyone.

By signing this application electronically using your FSA ID, YOU, THE STUDENT, certify that you

- will use federal and/or state student aid only to pay the cost of attending an institution of higher education,
- are not in default on a federal student loan or have made satisfactory arrangements to repay it,
- do not owe money back on a federal student grant or have made satisfactory arrangements to repay it,
- will notify your school if you default on a federal student loan, and
- will not receive a Federal Pell Grant from more than one school for the same period of time.

By signing this application electronically using your account username and password, you certify that all of the information you provided is true and complete to the best of your knowledge and you agree, if asked, to provide

- information that will verify the accuracy of your completed form, and
- U.S. or foreign income tax forms that you filed or are required to file.

You also certify that you understand that the secretary of education has the authority to verify information reported on your application.

If you sign this application or any document related to the federal student aid programs electronically using a username and password, and/or any other credential, you certify that you are the person identified by the username and password, and/or any other credential and have not disclosed that username and password, and/or any other credential to anyone else. If you purposefully give false or misleading information, including applying as an independent student without meeting the unusual circumstances required to qualify for such a status, you may be subject to criminal penalties under 20 U.S.C. 1097, which may include a fine up to \$20,000, imprisonment, or both.

Additionally, by signing this application electronically using your FSA ID, you authorize the U.S. Department of Education to disclose all information provided on this application, as required under Section 483(a)(2)(D)(i) of the *Higher Education Act of 1965*, as amended, to the institutions you have identified herein, state higher education agencies (in your state of residence and the states in which the institutions identified herein are located), and designated scholarship organizations to assist with the application, award, and administration of federal, state, or institutional financial aid programs and designated scholarship programs. Notwithstanding this authorization, the name of an institution that you select to authorize such disclosure shall not be shared with any other institution.

Sign and Submit Your FAFSA® Form

I, **Raya Tran**, agree to the terms outlined above.

Confirmation Page & FAFSA Submission Summary

- Once submitted, you will receive a **confirmation page** with your estimated “**Student Aid Index (SAI)**”
- The SAI is used to determine eligibility for federal student aid. It is not how much aid you are eligible to receive.
- *Typically*, students receive a **FAFSA Submission Summary** indicating that their FAFSA was processed in 1–3 days.

FAFSA[®] Form 2025–26 Student Raya Tran

Exit FAFSA Menu

Congratulations,
the FAFSA[®] Form Is Complete!

Raya Tran

Completion Date	Data Release Number	Estimated Student Aid Index (SAI)
11/18/2024	2572	5000

The estimated SAI is subject to change based on final processing of your FAFSA form. The SAI is not a measure of how much student aid you'll receive or how much you'll pay for college or career school. Schools use your SAI to determine your federal student aid eligibility.

Based on the eligibility criteria, you may be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant of up to \$6,000.00. You may also be eligible for other federal, state, or institutional grants; scholarships; and/or work-study programs.

Confirmation Page (Continued)

What Happens Next



Check Your Email

You will receive an email version of this confirmation page at the following email address:
raya.tran@email.com.



Track the Status of Your Form

In one to three days, your FAFSA form will be processed and made available to your schools. Check the status of your form by logging in to StudentAid.gov and selecting your FAFSA submission from the “My Activity” section of your account Dashboard.



You Will Receive School Communications

We use the information collected on your FAFSA form to calculate your Student Aid Index (SAI). The SAI lets schools determine the aid you're eligible to receive. Your schools will reach out to you if they need more information. They will also contact you with your financial aid offers. Once received, you can contact their financial aid offices directly to ask questions about their student aid packages.

Start Your Application for New York State-Based Aid

[Apply for State Aid](#)

Track and Manage Your FAFSA® Form

[View Status](#)

You can check the status of your application in the “My Activity” section of your account Dashboard. We'll let you know if we need anything more from you.

9.


FAFSA Submission Summary

FAFSA Submission Summary Landing Page

The FAFSA Submission Summary is broken into four tabs: Eligibility Overview, FAFSA Form Answers, School Information, and Next Steps.

At the top, you will see information about when your form was received and processed. You also have the option to print your FAFSA Submission Summary to keep for your records.

FAFSA[®] FORM 2025–26 **FAFSA Submission Summary**

Student  Raya Tran	Application Received Nov. 18, 2024	Application Processed Jan. 16th, 2024	Data Release Number 1234	Viewing: Submission 1
---	---------------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	------------------------------

Eligibility Overview

On the Eligibility Overview tab, you see information about what federal student aid you may be eligible for, such as a Federal Pell Grant and Federal Direct Loans. You are also able to view your Student Aid Index. Any amounts of financial aid that display on this tab are estimates and are not guaranteed. **Final determination of your financial aid eligibility will be provided by your school's financial aid office.**

Your Estimated Federal Student Aid

Federal Pell Grant

A [Federal Pell Grant](#) is awarded to undergraduate students who have financial need and who have not earned a degree or are in a teacher certification program. Federal Pell Grants don't need to be repaid.

Up to **\$4,556**

Federal Direct Loans

A [federal direct loan](#) is money lent to you by the government to you that you must repay with interest.

Up to **\$4,556**

Federal Work-Study

[Federal Work-Study](#) is a way for students to earn money to pay for school through part-time jobs on or off campus.

You May Be Eligible

Amounts shown here are only estimates of federal student aid based on full-time enrollment and the average cost of attendance. Your school will determine how much student aid to offer you, which may include additional aid from your school or state.

[Learn more about financial aid](#)



Keep in mind, this is only an estimate

Always refer to your school's financial aid offer for a final determination of financial aid available.

Eligibility Overview (Continued)

Student Aid Index (SAI) can go as low as -1500. The lower the number, the more aid you are eligible for.

Your Student Aid Index (SAI)

Your SAI is an index number used by your school to determine your federal student aid eligibility and to build your financial aid offer. Your SAI may change due if you update or correct your FAFSA information or due to verification.

-355

[What does this mean?](#)

FAFSA Form Answers

On the Answers tab, you will see the answers that you and, if applicable, your contributor(s) (parents and/or spouse) provided on your FAFSA. If any of the provided answers are incorrect, you can choose to start a correction.

The screenshot shows the FAFSA Form Answers page. At the top, there are navigation tabs: "Eligibility Overview", "FAFSA Form Answers" (which is selected and underlined), "School Information", and "Next Steps" with a red notification icon. Below the tabs, the heading "Your FAFSA® Form Answers" is displayed. A sub-heading reads: "Review your responses carefully and make sure all the information you provided is correct. Start a correction to fix any errors and ensure that your form is processed correctly." To the right of this text is a blue button labeled "Make a Correction". Below this is a section titled "Student Sections" with an "Expand All" dropdown arrow. The sections listed are: "Introduction Personal Identifiers", "Section 1 Personal Circumstances", "Section 2 Demographics", "Section 3 Financials", "Section 4 Colleges", and "Section 5 Signature". Each section has a dropdown arrow on the right side.

School Information

On the School Information tab, you see information about the college(s) and/or career school(s) that you selected to send your FAFSA to. You can compare the graduation rate, retention rate, transfer rate, default rate, median debt upon completion, and average annual cost of your selected schools.

Eligibility Overview FAFSA Form Answers **School Information** 🔴 Next Steps

Find an Affordable School
Many schools offer the opportunity to attend college affordably. Learn about the costs and benefits associated with the schools you listed on your form.

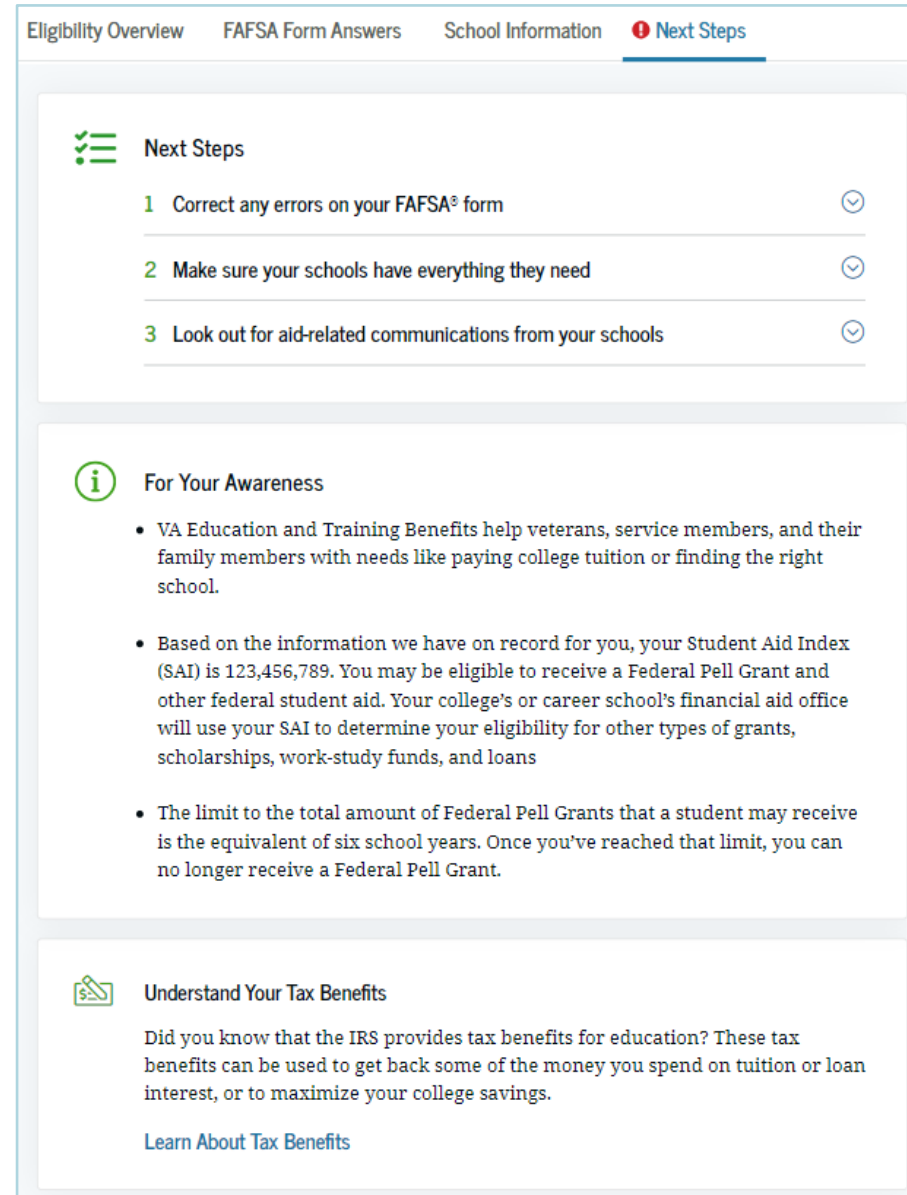
[Learn More on College Scorecard](#) 🔗 Showing results for family income between **\$0-\$30,000** ▼

School Name	Graduation Rate ?	Retention Rate ?	Transfer Rate ?	Default Rate ?	Median Debt Upon Completion ?	Average Annual Cost ?
George Washington University	15%	89%	26%	64%	\$56,000	\$102,000
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	26%	76%	25%	34%	\$24,000	\$38,000
University of California, North Ridge	55%	65%	35%	15%	\$19,000	\$24,000

[View All](#) ▼

Next Steps

On the Next Steps tab, you will see comments that pertain to your FAFSA. Some comments may require you to start a correction or send additional documentation to your school. Other comments may be informational and do not require any further action from you.



The screenshot shows the 'Next Steps' tab in the FAFSA application interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Eligibility Overview', 'FAFSA Form Answers', 'School Information', and 'Next Steps' (which is highlighted with a red dot and a blue underline). Below the navigation, there is a section titled 'Next Steps' with a list of three items, each with a checkmark icon on the right:

- 1 Correct any errors on your FAFSA® form
- 2 Make sure your schools have everything they need
- 3 Look out for aid-related communications from your schools

Below this list is a section titled 'For Your Awareness' with an information icon (i) on the left. It contains three bullet points:

- VA Education and Training Benefits help veterans, service members, and their family members with needs like paying college tuition or finding the right school.
- Based on the information we have on record for you, your Student Aid Index (SAI) is 123,456,789. You may be eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant and other federal student aid. Your college's or career school's financial aid office will use your SAI to determine your eligibility for other types of grants, scholarships, work-study funds, and loans
- The limit to the total amount of Federal Pell Grants that a student may receive is the equivalent of six school years. Once you've reached that limit, you can no longer receive a Federal Pell Grant.

Below this is a section titled 'Understand Your Tax Benefits' with a document icon on the left. It contains a paragraph of text and a link:

Did you know that the IRS provides tax benefits for education? These tax benefits can be used to get back some of the money you spend on tuition or loan interest, or to maximize your college savings.

[Learn About Tax Benefits](#)

More Resources

Along the right side of your FAFSA Submission Summary, you can choose from additional resources, including an Aid Summary and College Scorecard.

The screenshot displays the 'Estimated Federal Student Aid' section of a FAFSA Submission Summary. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Eligibility Overview', 'FAFSA Form Answers', 'School Information', and 'Next Steps'. The main content area lists three types of aid:

- Federal Pell Grant** (Up to \$4,556): A Federal Pell Grant is awarded to undergraduate students who have financial need and who have not earned a degree or are in a teacher certification program. Federal Pell Grants don't need to be repaid.
- Federal Direct Loans** (Up to \$4,556): A federal direct loan is money lent by the government to you that you must repay with interest.
- Federal Work-Study** (You May Be Eligible): Federal Work-Study is a way for students to earn money to pay for school through part-time jobs on or off campus.

Below the list, a note states: 'Amounts shown here are only estimates of federal student aid based on full-time enrollment and the average cost of attendance. Your school will determine how much student aid to offer you, which may include additional aid from your school or state.' A link 'Learn more about financial aid' is provided.

On the right side of the page, there are two resource boxes:

- View All of Your Federal Student Aid in One Place**: View detailed information about your federal loan and grant aid, including your enrollment history, payment history, and subsidized usage. A button labeled 'Visit Aid Summary' is present.
- Find the Right College or Career School**: Use the College Scorecard to compare schools by size, location, graduation rate, and more. A button labeled 'Visit College Scorecard' with an external link icon is present.

An orange arrow points from the text on the left to the 'Visit Aid Summary' button.


10.

After the FAFSA

Apply for a Chafee Grant if Eligible

- Eligibility: Current or former foster youth who were dependents or wards of the court at least one day between 16–18
- Up to \$5,000 for up to 5 years until age 26.
- Can be used at public or private colleges, universities or career and technical schools in California or out of state.
- Must be enrolled at least half-time (6 units).





CALIFORNIA CHAFEE EDUCATION
AND TRAINING VOUCHER
PROGRAM

for Foster Youth

Chafee Grant Application Tips

- A separate application is required for first-time applicants in addition to the FAFSA/CADAA (chafee.csac.ca.gov).
- You only need to fill out the Chafee application once.
- Apply as soon as possible.
- Planned School of Attendance refers to one college the student plans to attend. If the school isn't listed, contact CSAC. If the school changes, the student must inform CSAC to receive the award.
- Depending on the availability of funding, students may be wait-listed.

WebGrants 4 Students

Login

Create an Account

Helpful Videos

*Account Recovery

*Create an Account

Create a Webgrants 4 Students Account at:

mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov

- Wait until your FAFSA is processed. It can take 1-2 weeks for the FAFSA to process and link to WebGrants.
- If there are issues, contact the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC):
 - (888) 224-7268 or 1-800-735-2929 (TTY)
 - studentsupport@csac.ca.gov



WebGrants To Do's for Students



Check award status for Cal Grant, Middle Class Scholarship and Chafee Grant.



Verify if there are any "pending" items or forms that still need to be completed.



Confirm that school of attendance is accurate.



Verify that your GPA has been received. If not, contact high school/college counselor or CSAC.

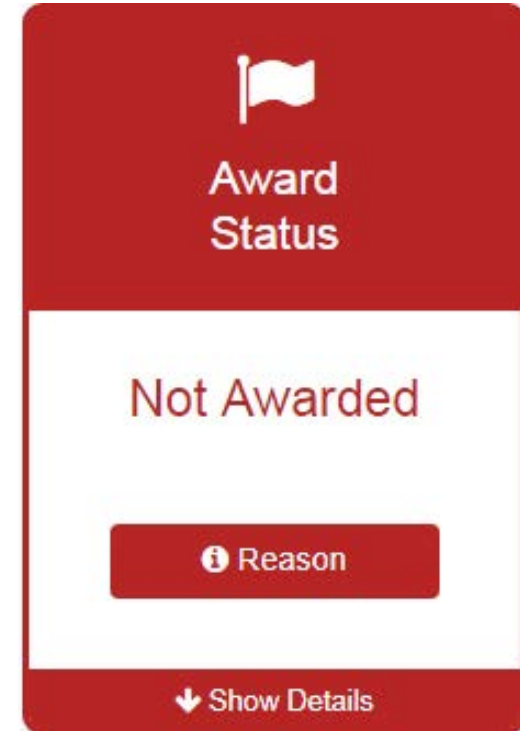
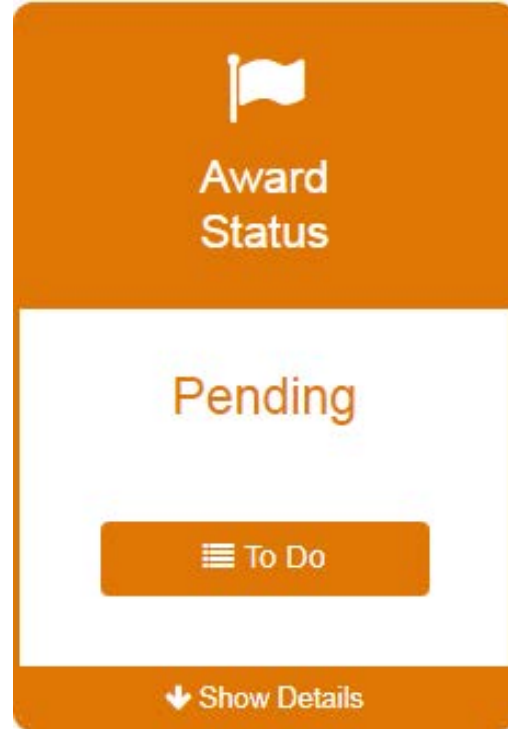
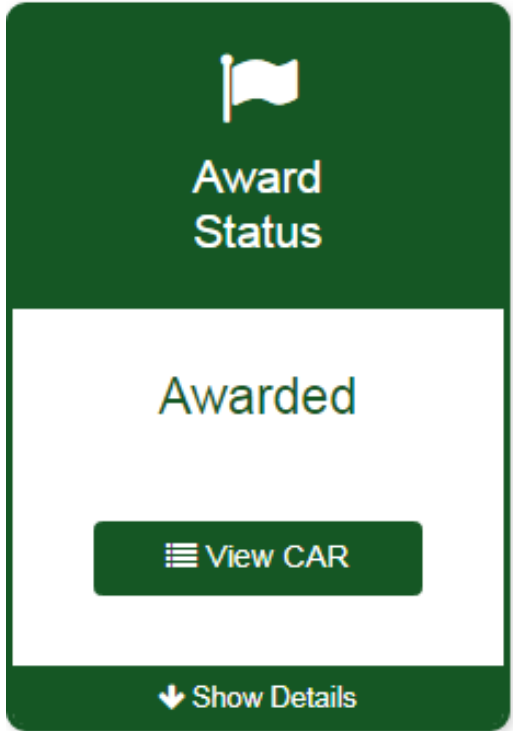


Enter high school graduation date (available on the 1st day of the month of graduation month).



If you applied for a Chafee Grant, check that "Department of Social Services Record" is verified.

Check Your Award Status



If an Award Status is pending, students should click on their "To Do" list to determine next steps. If the Award Status is "Not Awarded," click on "Reason" to learn more and consult with the financial aid office or CSAC if you believe there is an error.

Example: Award Pending for Chafee Grant

Note that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) verification for the Chafee grant only happens monthly and may therefore not appear immediately.

Chafee Grant Application Status (2019-2020)		
FAFSA		
Status	Received	
Complete	10/08/2018	
Chafee Application		
Status	Received	
Complete	10/08/2018	
Department of Social Services Record		
Status	County	
Incomplete	Complete your Foster Care Eligibility Certification Form	BUTTE



Claim Your CalKIDS Account



- CalKIDS is a college savings account that was set up for you by the State of California.
- If you attended a California public K–12 school during the 2021–22 school year, you may have up to \$1,000 in free money in your CalKIDS to use at an eligible college, university, technical or vocational institution.
- Once funds are requested, they are sent to your institution and treated like a scholarship. They can pay for qualified higher education expenses like tuition and fees, books and supplies and computer equipment. You can use these funds up to the age of 26.

Claim Your CaKIDS Account



To claim your account at **calkids.org**, you'll need the following info:

1. California county where you attended school in the 2021–22 school year.
2. Your date of birth.
3. Statewide Student Identifier (SSID). You can find your SSID on your high school transcript or ask your counselor for help.

Congrats! You Did It!

Remember:

- Continue to check your email and college student portal weekly. The college will communicate with you if they need more information. Even after college starts, continue to check it often.
- Respond promptly to any information requests, such as a verification of homeless youth status or additional income verification.
- Update all your accounts if your address, email or phone number changes (e.g. WebGrants, college portal, FAFSA/CADAA, etc.)
- Apply for other scholarships and campus support programs such as NextUp, Guardian Scholars, EOP, EOPS, or Disability Student Services.
- Maintain your grades and don't drop too many classes. Once you receive financial aid, there are academic requirements you need to meet to keep receiving it. Check online for your college's "Satisfactory Academic Progress" policies.
- Reapply for aid by submitting the FAFSA every year!

11.

Resources

JBAY Financial Aid Resources

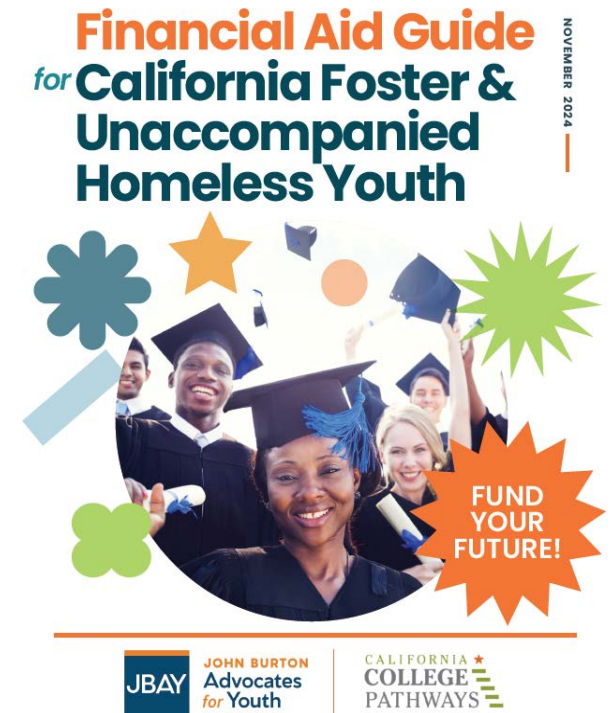
Financial Aid Guide (English & Spanish)

FAFSA/CADAA Visual Guides

High School Counselor Toolkits

FAFSA/CADAA Overview Webinar Recording

jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide

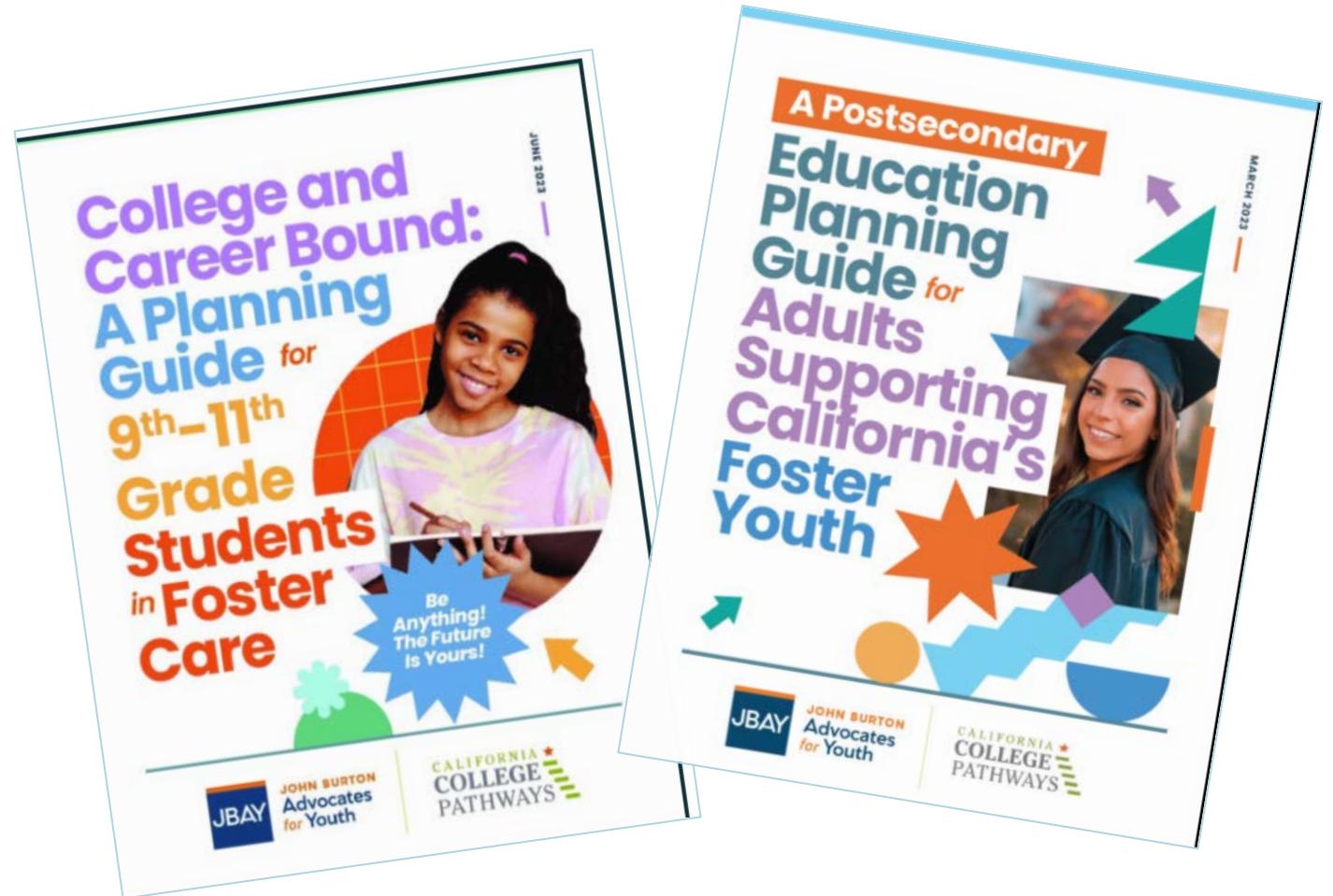


JBAY's Step-by-Step Postsecondary Education Planning Guides for Foster Youth

jbay.org/resources/ed-planning-guide/

- Available in English and Spanish for adult supporters of youth in grades 6–12 and for youth in grades 9–12.
- Includes downloadable checklists & student spotlight videos!

Visit cacollegepathways.org for comprehensive college planning information for current and former foster youth.



Resources for Homeless Youth

- School House Connection
www.schoolhouseconnection.org/fafsa/

- ✓ Sample Verification Letters
- ✓ Screening tools
- ✓ Flowcharts
- ✓ And more!

- National Center for Homeless Education
nche.ed.gov/higher-education/
-

Other Resources

- ICanGoToCollege.com
ICanGoToCollege.com
 - National College Attainment Network
www.ncan.org/page/better-fafsa
 - Financial Aid for Justice-Involved Youth
ylc.org/resource/financial-aidfor-jj-youth
 - Immigrants Rising
immigrantsrising.org
-

John Burton Advocates for Youth

(415) 348-0011 | info@jbay.org | jbay.org



JOHN BURTON
Advocates
for Youth