

1. Create an account (FSA ID)

- **Student:** An FSA ID is your personal username and password needed to sign the FAFSA form online. If you don't have an FSA ID, you will need to create one (only takes about 10 minutes). If this is your first time filling out the FAFSA, you'll be able to use your FSA ID right away to sign and submit your FAFSA online. If this is not your first time filling out the FAFSA, you may need to wait 1 to 3 days before you can use your FSA ID to renew your FAFSA form and sign it online.
- **Parent:** If your child is required to report parent information on the FAFSA form, you need to create your own FSA ID in order to sign your child's FAFSA form online.

IMPORTANT: Some of the most common FAFSA errors occur when the student and parent mix up their FSA IDs. If you don't want your financial aid to be delayed, it's extremely important that a parent and a student create his or her own FSA ID and that they do not share it.

How to create an FSA ID

The FSA ID (Federal Student Aid ID) username and password will serve as your signature for the FAFSA and federal student loans.

Follow these steps to get your FSA ID. If you're a dependent student, you and a parent will each need one.

1. Go to fsaid.ed.gov.
 - Create a username and password. Both you and a parent will need active email accounts. Don't use a high school email.
2. Enter personal information.
 - Name, Social Security number, date of birth
 - Mailing address, email address, cell number
3. Create challenge questions and answers. Select answers that are easy to remember and won't change over time.
4. Submit your FSA ID information and verify your email address and cell phone number with the sent security code.

USE THIS FORM TO KEEP TRACK:

Student Information:

Email Address: _____

Use an address you will access **throughout** college and beyond – Do **not** use your high school email.

Username: _____

Password: _____

Cell #: _____

Challenge Questions (answers are case sensitive):

Answer 1: _____

Answer 2: _____

Answer 3: _____

Answer 4: _____

Parent Information:

Email Address: _____

Use an address you can access to today and will continue to use for years to come.

Username: _____

Password: _____

Cell #: _____

Challenge Questions (answers are case sensitive):

Answer 1: _____

Answer 2: _____

Answer 3: _____

Answer 4: _____

2. Start the FAFSA® form at fafsa.gov

The student should click “Enter your (the student’s) FSA ID.” Then enter your FSA ID username and password, and click “Next.”

Create a save key.

- Unlike the FSA ID, the save key is meant to be shared. A save key is a temporary password that allows you and your parent(s) to “pass” the FAFSA form back and forth. It also allows you to save the FAFSA form and return to it later. This is especially helpful if you and your parent are not in the same place.

3. Fill out Student Demographics section.

This is information such as your name, date of birth, etc. If you have completed the FAFSA in the past or if you log into the FAFSA with your FSA ID, this info may auto-populate. If not, make sure you enter your personal information exactly as it appears on your Social Security card - DO NOT USE nicknames!!!

Parents: Remember that the FAFSA is the student’s application, not yours. When the FAFSA says “you” or “your,” it’s referring to the student. Pay attention to whether you’re being asked for student or parent information. When in doubt, the banner on the side will indicate whether you’re on a student or parent page.

4. List schools to which you want your FAFSA information sent.

In the School Selection section, list **Washington State Community College’s School Code = 010453** on the FAFSA. You can add up to 10 schools.

5. Answer dependency status questions.

In the dependency status section, you’ll be asked a series of specific questions to determine whether you are required to provide parent information on the FAFSA. Even if you live on your own, support yourself, and file taxes on your own, you may still be considered a dependent student for federal student aid purposes. If you are determined to be a dependent student, you’ll be required to report information about your parent(s).

6. Fill out Parent Demographics section.

This is where your parent(s) will provide basic information. Remember that it doesn’t matter if you

don’t live with your parent(s); you still must report information about them if you were determined to be a dependent student in the step above.

"Parent" means your legal (*biological or adoptive*) parent and/or stepparent, or a person that has been determined by the state to be your legal parent. Report both parents on the FAFSA if your parents live together, even if they have never married, divorced or separated. If your parents do not live together, provide the information for the parent who you lived with more in the past 12 months or who provided more financial support. If that parent is remarried you must also report information for your stepparent on the FAFSA.

7. Complete your financial information.

Here is where you (and your parent(s), if applicable) will provide your financial information. The IRS DRT allows you to import or link your IRS tax information into the FAFSA form with just a few clicks. Using this tool also may reduce the amount of paperwork you need to provide to your school. So if you’re eligible, use it! To access the tool, you’ll see a “LINK TO IRS” button. Choose that option and follow the prompts.

- The FAFSA is based off the prior, prior year tax return. For example the 2019-20 FAFSA uses the 2017 tax return information. 2020-21 FAFSA uses the 2018 tax return information.

8. Sign and submit your FAFSA.

You’re not finished with the FAFSA until you (*and your parent, if you’re a dependent student*) sign it. The quickest and easiest way to sign your FAFSA is online with your FSA ID.

Note: Be sure to sign and agree to terms before submitting your FAFSA. There will be NO pop-up warnings alerting you that you have not done so.

- Make sure the parent who is using his or her FSA ID to sign the FAFSA chooses the right parent number from the drop-down menu. If your parent doesn’t remember whether he or she was listed as Parent 1 or Parent 2, he or she can go back to the parent demographics section to check.
- We recommend signing the FAFSA with an FSA ID because it’s the fastest way to get your FAFSA processed.