

Filing the FAFSA is a critical first step in the financial aid process, but not the last. Understanding what happens next, and when, will make navigating the rest of the process easier!

What Happens After I Submit My FAFSA?

Your FAFSA will be processed in 1–3 days. An email will be sent notifying you that your FAFSA has been processed.

What Do I Need to Do Next?

REVIEW YOUR FAFSA SUBMISSION SUMMARY (FSS)

Once your FAFSA has been processed, go to [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) and log in with your (the student's) FSA ID (username and password).

- Under the “My Activity” section, click on the “2025-26 FAFSA Form.” Next, click on the FAFSA Submission Summary link in the “Status Tracker” section. Review your FSS carefully to check for and correct any errors.
- If tax information was transferred directly from the IRS that information will not be visible but was sent to the schools listed on your FAFSA.
- Be sure to review the information under the “Next Steps” tab.
- Click on “Print FAFSA Submission Summary” in the upper right hand corner, “print” your FSS to a PDF, and save it to your computer so you'll have it available to share with scholarship organizations.

ADD ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS OR MAKE CORRECTIONS, IF NECESSARY

- To make corrections or add additional schools, go to [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) and log in with your (the student's) FSA ID (username and password).
- Under the “My Activity” section, click on the “2025-2026 FAFSA Form.” Next, click on the “Actions” box on the right side of the page.
 - To add schools click “Add or Remove Schools.”
 - To make a correction to the student section of the FAFSA, click on “Make Corrections.” If a correction needs to be made to the parent section of the FAFSA, your parent must sign into [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) using their FSA ID and make the correction.

WATCH FOR REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FROM YOUR SCHOOL(S)

- Your school(s) may ask you to verify the information you provide on your FAFSA. This process is referred to as verification and does not mean you did anything wrong!
- Activate your student portal and school email for all of the schools you listed on your FAFSA. This is the primary way you will receive updates and information from the Financial Aid Office.

KEEP THESE THINGS IN MIND

- Your FSS may list your estimated eligibility for Federal Pell Grants and/or Federal Direct Student Loans. These are the only types of aid that can be estimated when filing the FAFSA.
- You will find out about any other types of aid available in the financial aid offer that will come directly from your school after you have been offered admission.

When Will I Receive My Financial Aid Offer?

Most schools won't begin sending financial aid offers until at least January. Also, you must be accepted for admission before the school will offer financial aid. There's often a gap in time from when the FAFSA is submitted until a financial aid offer is sent.

What Should I Do Once I Receive My Financial Aid Offers?

- If you are applying to multiple schools, review and compare your financial aid offers from all schools **before** making a final decision about which school to attend. The school with the highest tuition and fees may not be the most expensive.
- Use FAME's “Comparing Costs & Financial Aid Offers” on the back of this sheet to help you get an “apples-to-apples” comparison of the offers you have received.

HAVE QUESTIONS? Watch our informational videos, search for scholarships, and learn more about comparing financial aid offers at FAMEmaine.com/Affording-Education/.



Comparing Costs & Financial Aid Offers

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Use this worksheet to compare estimated college costs and financial aid awards. Find the information you need to complete this worksheet on your financial aid award notice or your school's website. Costs and financial aid offers can vary significantly from one college or university to another.

College Name	Example	School 1	School 2	School 3
	School X			
Direct Costs to Attend				
Tuition & Mandatory Fees	\$12,900			
On-Campus Housing & Food	+ \$13,200	+	+	+
Direct Costs (Billed by School)	= \$26,100	=	=	=
Financial Aid - Grants & Scholarships				
Grants & Scholarships	- \$13,893	-	-	-
Net Cost Before Loans	= \$12,207	=	=	=
Financial Aid - Loans				
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	\$3,500			
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	+ \$2,000	+	+	+
Total Loan Amount ¹	= \$5,500	=	=	=
Estimated Total Cost				
Balance Due (Direct Costs minus grants, scholarships, & loans)	= 6,707	=	=	=
Indirect Costs (Books, supplies, travel)	+ \$1,500	+	+	+
Estimated Total Cost ² (Out-of-pocket cost)	= \$8,207	=	=	=
Financial Aid - Work Study				
Work Study	\$1,500			

¹ Most schools do not list Federal Parent PLUS or private loan eligibility on the award, as these loans are credit-based and may not be approved for everyone. If Parent PLUS or private loan eligibility is listed, please exclude for the purposes of comparing awards.

² Estimated Total Cost would be the amount paid by the student and/or the student's family using savings, outside scholarships and/or loans.

³ Federal Work Study funds are earned throughout the year so not available to help pay the fall balance.