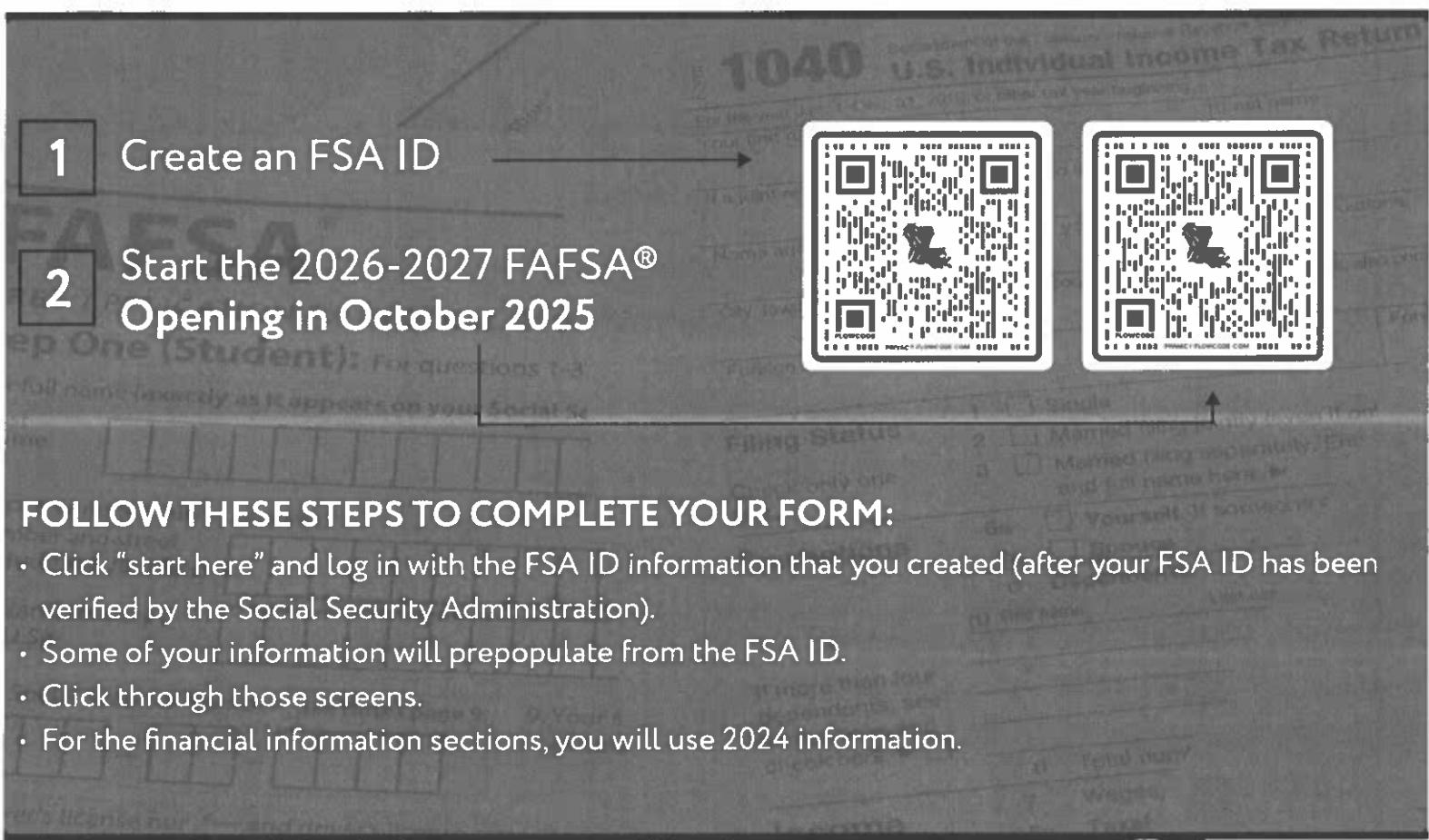




FAFSA® GUIDE

HOW TO COMPLETE THE FAFSA® AT A GLANCE



FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO COMPLETE YOUR FORM:

- Click "start here" and log in with the FSA ID information that you created (after your FSA ID has been verified by the Social Security Administration).
- Some of your information will prepopulate from the FSA ID.
- Click through those screens.
- For the financial information sections, you will use 2024 information.



SCAN HERE
TO ACCESS LOSFA'S
FAFSA® WEBSITE



SCAN HERE
TO ACCESS LOSFA'S
ACT WEBSITE

AVOIDING COMMON FAFSA® ERRORS

- 1 You must create your FSA ID and password before you can begin the FAFSA®. This will be used to sign the FAFSA® and to provide consent for the use of your Federal Tax Information (FTI) on the application.
- 2 Do not leave questions blank. Use "0" if the answer is zero.
- 3 Do not use commas or decimal points in numeric fields.
(Ex. \$4,000.52 should be 4001)
- 4 If your parent does not have a social security number (SSN), they should check that option when creating an FSA ID. Do NOT enter a Taxpayer Identification Number or zeroes in the SSN field.
- 5 When the parent has multiple children going to college or in college, parents will fill out a separate FAFSA® for each student. However, the parent will have only ONE FSA ID to sign each student's FAFSA®.
- 6 Remember to sign the FAFSA®. Take your time, so you do not accidentally submit the form without signatures.
- 7 Your name must be listed on your FAFSA® as it appears on your Social Security card. Do not use a nickname. This is especially important for students who have a suffix (Jr., Jr., Sr., III, etc.)
- 8 The parent and student must have separate working emails.
(Example: Student email: student@gmail.com, Parent email: parent@gmail.com)
- 9 Do NOT use your high school or college email.

WHAT IF I CANNOT PROVIDE PARENT INFORMATION?

YOU MAY BE CONSIDERED A PROVISIONALLY INDEPENDENT STUDENT

What does it mean to be provisionally independent?

If you indicate that you have unusual circumstances that prevent you from providing parent data, you are considered a provisionally independent student and are not required to provide parent information. You will be able to sign and submit your FAFSA® form and will be provided with a provisional Student Aid Index (SAI) and estimate of federal student aid eligibility. You will need to follow up with the school you plan to attend to see what supporting documentation you need to provide. A financial aid administrator will make a final determination on whether you receive a dependency override. Until your circumstances are verified, FSA will only provide an estimate of your federal student aid eligibility.

What is a dependency override?

A dependency override is a status granted by your school's financial aid office that allows you to exclude your parent's information from your FAFSA®, even if you're originally considered dependent.

Examples of circumstances that would qualify for a dependency override include, but are not limited to the following:

- Parental incarceration
- Abusive family environment that threatens a student's health or safety
- Parental abandonment

A parent's refusal to complete the FAFSA® or to provide financial support **does not** warrant an unusual circumstance, and students will still be required to invite their parent(s) as contributors on the FAFSA® form.

FOR FAFSA® ASSISTANCE, CONTACT GEAUXFAFSA@LA.GOV OR



**SCAN HERE TO SCHEDULE
VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS WITH LOSFA**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why should I complete the FAFSA®?

- It can be used to apply for TOPS.
- It can help pay for college or career school: The Louisiana class of 2024 left **\$63 million** in Pell Grants unclaimed by not completing a FAFSA®. Not only is the FAFSA® needed to be considered for some federal and state financial aid programs, but many colleges also require it for students to be considered for institutional aid.*
- The 2026-27 FAFSA® form will open in October 2025. You must submit a FAFSA® form for each school year to maximize the amount and types of aid you could receive.
- The form is simpler with past issues resolved and takes as little as 10 minutes to fill out.

*NCAN, 2025. "Pell Dollars Left on the Table"

What documents do parents need to complete the Free Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA®)?

- Your social security number
- Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)

What is the number for FAFSA®?

1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

When I attempt to create an FSA ID, I receive a message that my social security number or birth date is already in use. What should I do?

A previous child who is attending or has attended a postsecondary institution may have completed an FSA ID for you. If this is the case, you can attempt to answer security questions, contact the child who entered the information, or contact Federal Student Aid for help.

What if my parent doesn't have a social security number?

If your parent doesn't have a social security number (SSN), they should check that option when creating an FSA ID. **Do NOT enter a Taxpayer Identification Number in the SSN field.**

Who is a parent?

Biological and adoptive parents ONLY

(Note: If you are in a legal guardianship, you do not need to add parent information)

What if my marital status as of today is different than the marital status reported on my 2024 tax return?

- If you filed a joint tax return for 2024, but you're no longer married when you fill out the FAFSA® form, you'll need to subtract your former spouse's tax return information to correctly answer the FAFSA® questions only about yourself.
- If you didn't file a joint tax return for 2024, but you're married when you fill out the FAFSA® form, you'll need to add your current spouse's 2024 tax return information to correctly answer the FAFSA® questions about yourself and your current spouse.