

# Completing the FAFSA Step by Step



### **Housekeeping Items**

- Everyone will be on mute to avoid background noise
- If you have any "quick" questions, please ask them using the Q & A button
  - Please note Q&A questions are public. If you have a private question, make sure to select that you would like that option before sending
- ISAC Corps members will staff the Q & A Adriana and Elizabeth
- Make sure questions are addressed to all "panelists"
- We have saved time at the end for questions

#### **Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

#### What is a FAFSA?

- It is the first step in the financial aid process.
- The FAFSA is used to apply for federal student financial aid such as the Pell grant, direct student loans, and work-study.
- The FAFSA is used to apply for the Illinois MAP grant.
- Postsecondary schools use it to award non-federal financial aid (i.e. institutional aid).
- There is *no fee* to apply.







## **Snapshot as of Today**

Determines student's ability to pay for his/her education

- Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is calculated based on information entered on the FAFSA
- ➤ Use your 2019 federal tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned in 2019





### **Completing the FAFSA**

What information is needed?

- O Social Security Number. Be sure that it is correct!
- O Records of income, such as income earned from work and business, child support paid or received, and any other untaxed income. If available, refer to the W-2 Forms and the Federal Income Tax Return IRS 1040.
- O Information about assets, such as savings, certificates of deposit, stock options, bonds, 529 plans and other college savings programs, and investment real estate, business, and farm.
- O Driver's license number, if the student has one.
- O Alien Registration Number, if student is not a U.S. citizen.
- O List of Colleges



#### **Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID)**

- ➤ The FSA ID is your electronic signature for the FAFSA
- Students and parents have their own unique FSA ID
- You can use the FSA ID the day it is created; otherwise, it must be created at least 3 business days prior to completing the FAFSA
  - Takes 3 days to authenticate info provided when FSA ID was created
- Note: Parents who do not have a SSN cannot obtain an FSA ID but can print a signature page instead

#### **FSA ID Requirements**

- Username
- Password
  - Uppercase letters
  - Lowercase letters
  - Numbers
- Challenge questions



#### **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

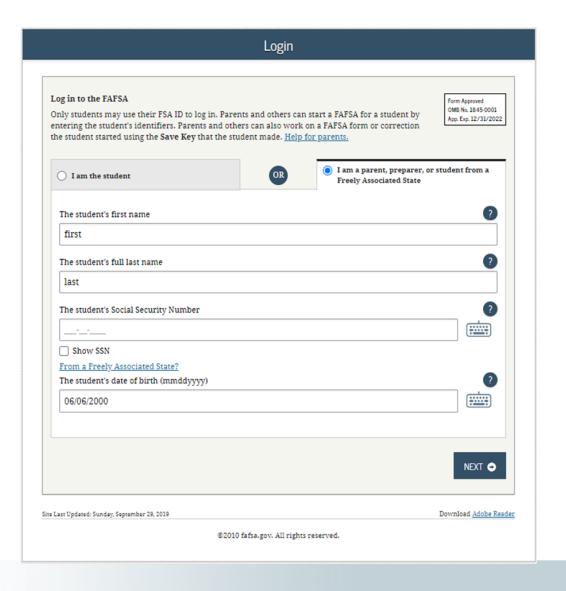
- First-time users will click on "Start Here" in "New to the FAFSA Process" section
- Returning users will click on "Log In"
  - In subsequent years, students can "renew" their FAFSA which will result in the demographic information from the prior FAFSA being transferred to a new FAFSA





#### **Starting the FAFSA**

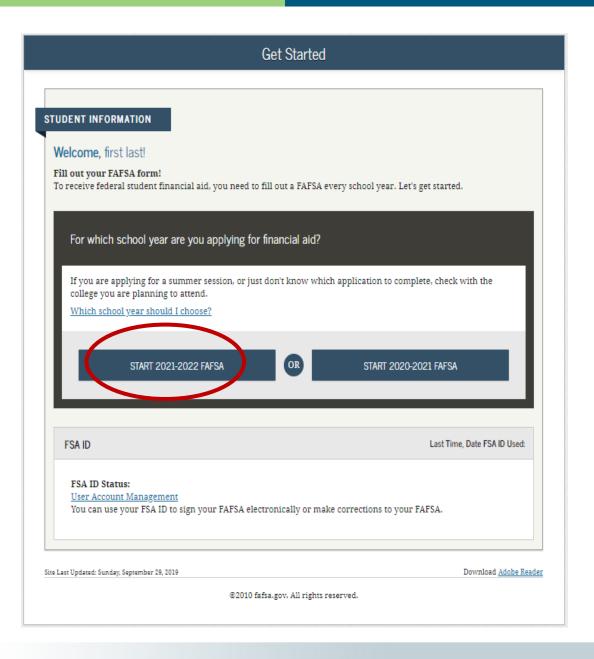
- A student can use a FSA ID to start the FAFSA or a parent can start it by entering the student's information.
- Student name must be entered as it appears on Social Security Card
- Make sure that the Social Security Number is correct
  - Correcting SSN is the hardest thing to correct



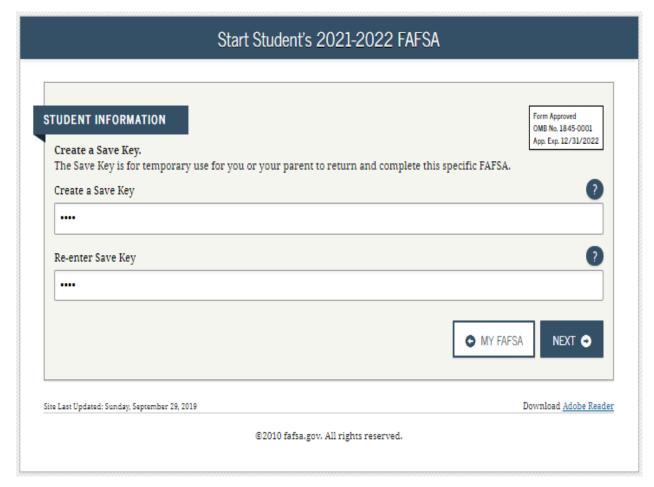


# **Starting the FAFSA**

- Always select the year that the student will be in college
- 2021 HS grads will complete the 2021 – 2022 FAFSA



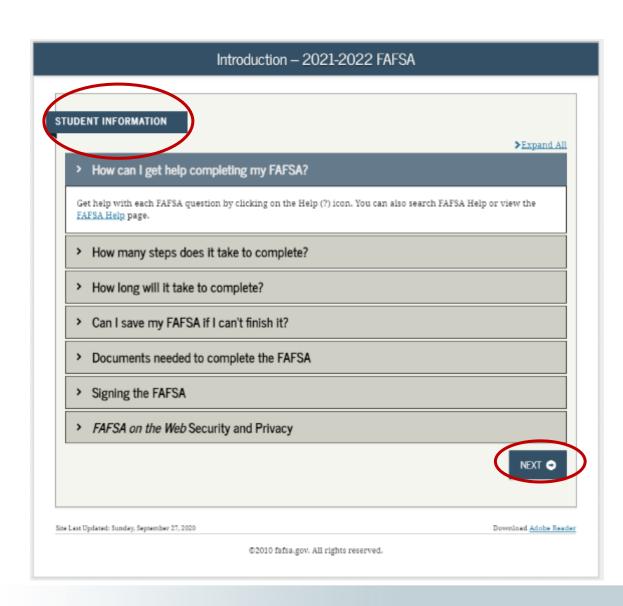




- > Save Key will enable student and/or parent to return to the same iteration of the FAFSA that was last saved.
- Eliminates need to start a new FAFSA.



- ➤ Be aware if you're in the student or parent section
- ➤ Always use the "Next" and "Previous" buttons.
- ➤ Do NOT use the browser's back and forward buttons.



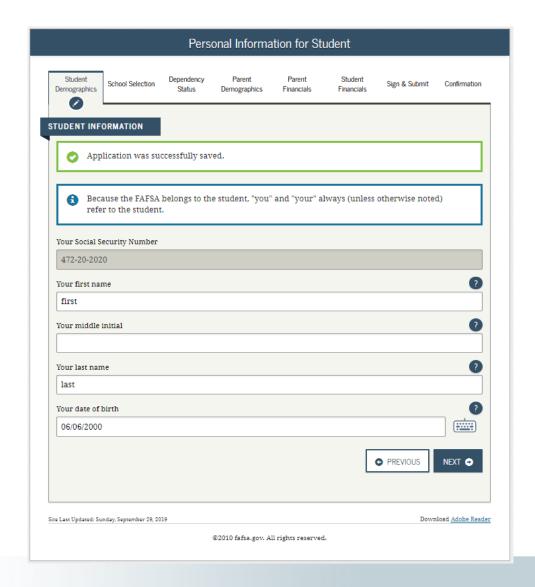


#### **Student Demographics**

If student uses FSA ID to start FAFSA, information will be prepopulated

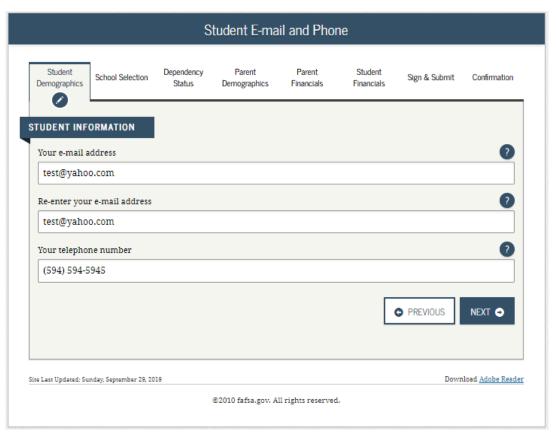
Make sure name is exactly as it appears on Social Security Card.

- If last name won't fit, enter as much of it as possible without abbreviating.
- ➤ If there is a hyphen in the last name as it appears on the Social Security Card, include the hyphen
- Double check date of birth





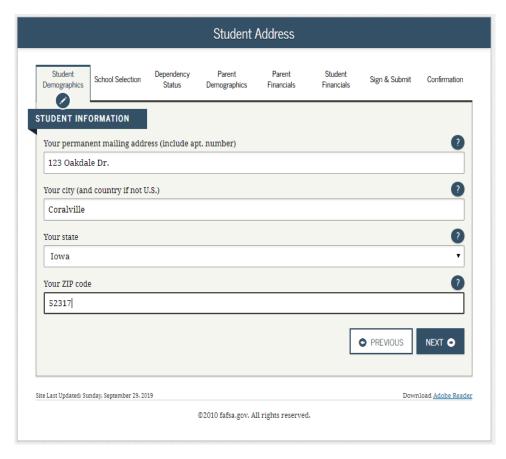
#### **Student Demographics: Contact Information**



- Email address should be professional/appropriate, since it will be seen by the college(s).
- Email should not expire at the end of the school year.
- Email should be one that the student checks consistently, since it's the most common form of communication for many colleges



#### **Student Demographics: State Residency**

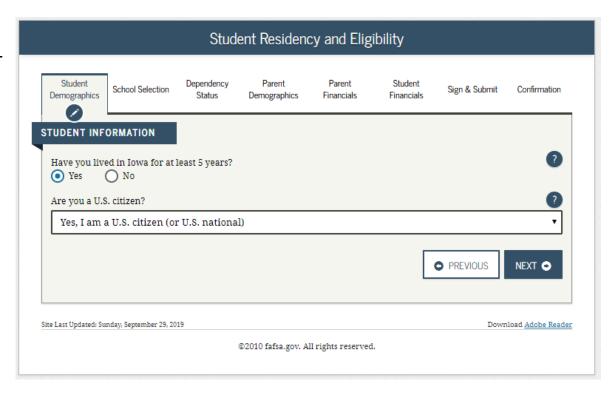


Address and where one lives can help determine eligibility for the MAP grant.



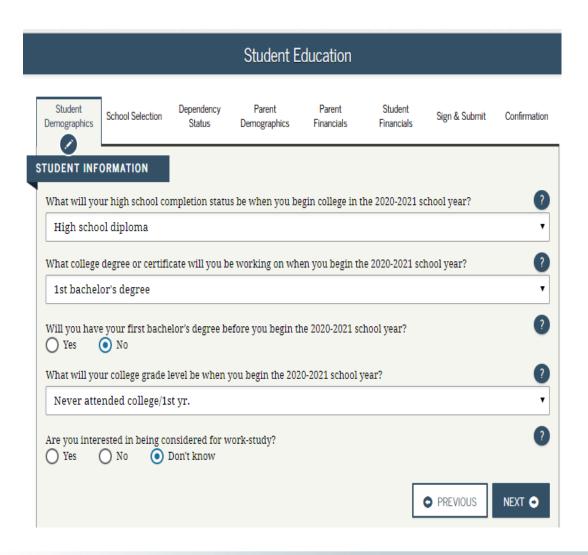
#### **Student Demographics: State Residency**

- ➤ DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) should complete Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid to be considered for MAP, since DACA students are not eligible for federal student aid
- Student must be US citizen or eligible noncitizen (e.g., US permanent resident, etc.) to be eligible for federal aid



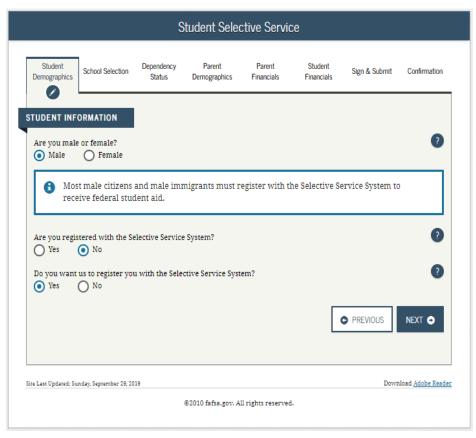
#### Student Demographics: High School and College Status

- ➤ Current HS students select HS diploma or GED for high school completion status
- Never attended college (i.e. not previously been in a degree seeking program in college)
- ➤ Only individuals pursing their first undergraduate degree are eligible for MAP and PELL
- ➤ Work-study may be limited at certain colleges. If student selects, "Don't Know," the student will most likely **not** be offered work-study.





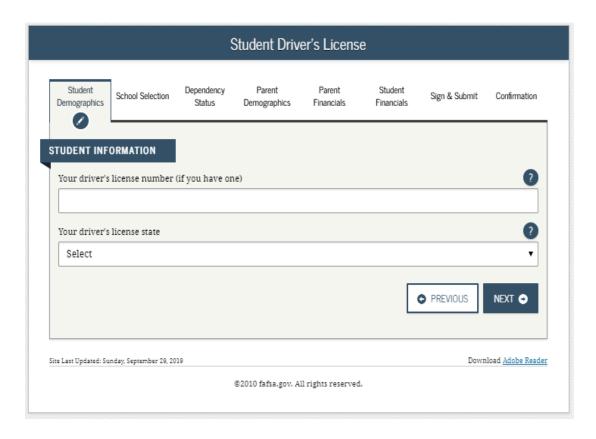
#### **Student Demographics: Selective Service**



- All males must register with Selective Service (federal law); not registering will disqualify student for federal financial aid. Transgender students may qualify for MAP if disqualified for federal due to not registering for selective service; will need to complete Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid
- Registering for Selective Service is **not** enlisting in the military
- Males can register via the FAFSA; question is not asked of individuals with designation of female at birth
- Males do not have to be 18 in order to select "register me" on the FAFSA



#### **Student Demographics: Driver's License**

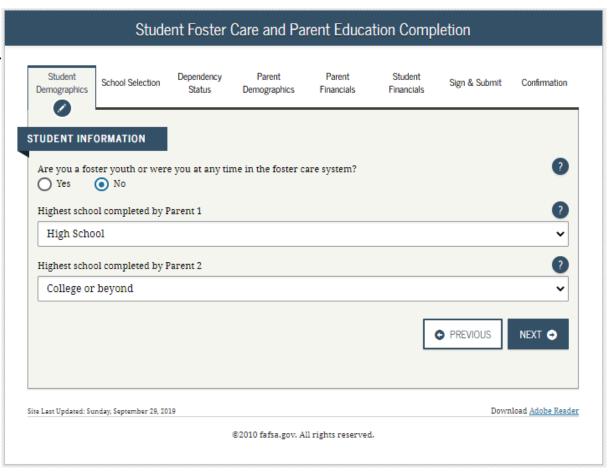


Listing driver's license is optional, but enter it if possible; will help with proof of Illinois residency for MAP eligibility

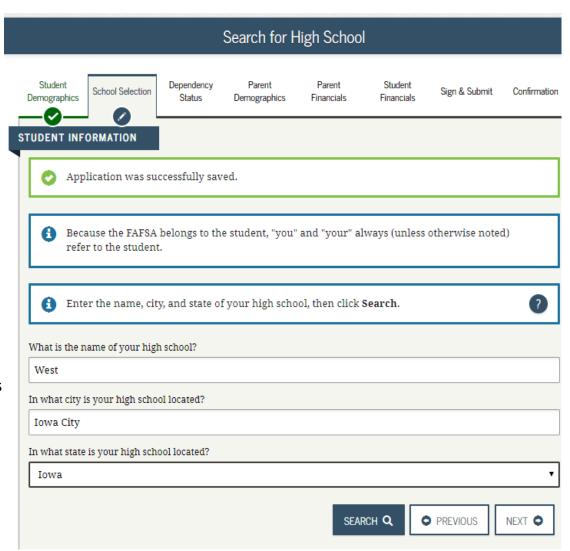


# Student Demographics: Student Foster Care and Parent Education Completion

- Youth-in care (i.e. foster care) students are eligible for additional benefits/programs
- Educational attainment of parents is optional; may be used by schools for consideration for any first-generation programs/awards



#### **Student Demographics: Searching for Colleges**



Can search a variety of ways

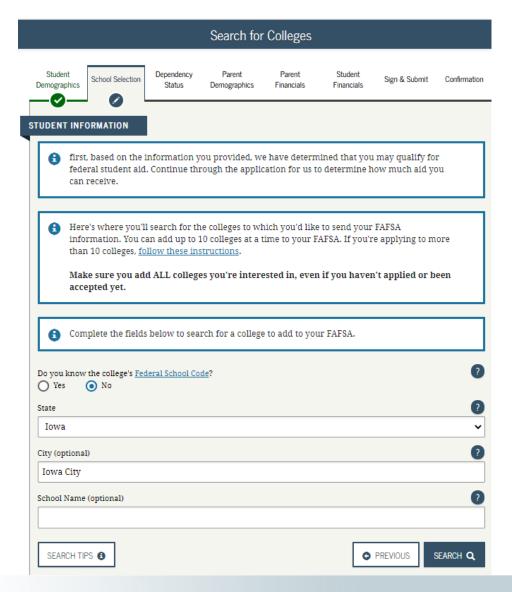
➤ Enter high school name

- Use city to search if town has few high schools
  - Use school name if city has lots of high schools



#### **Student Demographics: College Selection**

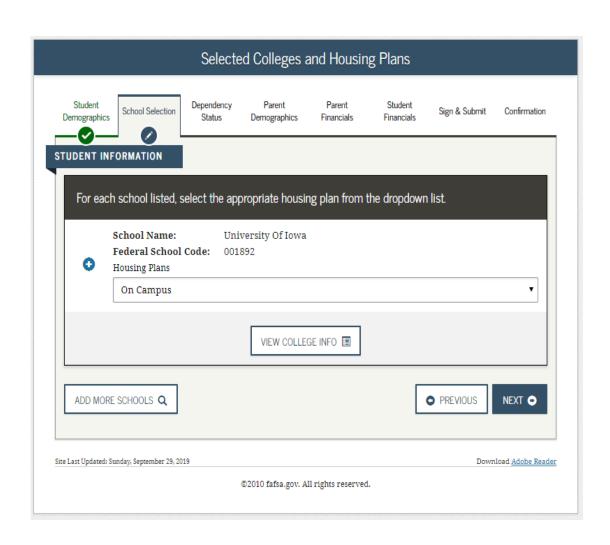
- Can select up to 10 colleges to receive FAFSA information
  - Colleges will not know order in which they're listed
  - ➤ If entering more than 10, FAFSA must be processed first and then colleges are swapped out with the additional ones
- ➤ Can search for college(s) by Federal School Code or state; can narrow search city and/or name
- ➤ Select college(s) by clicking the link





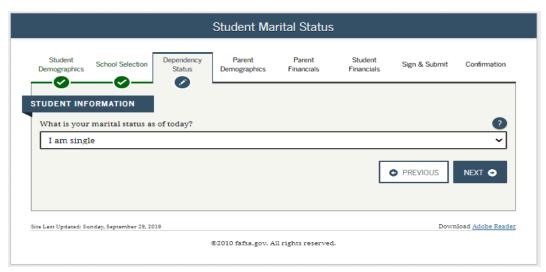
#### **Student Demographics: College Selection**

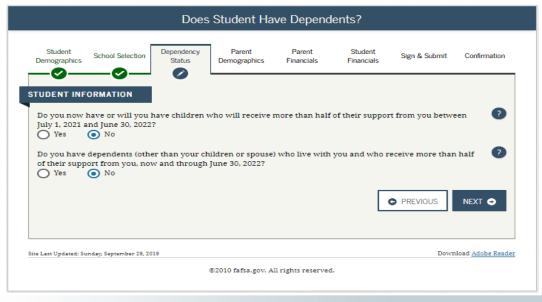
- Can view specific college information by clicking on "View College Info"
- ➤ Need to indicate desired type of housing for respective college selected





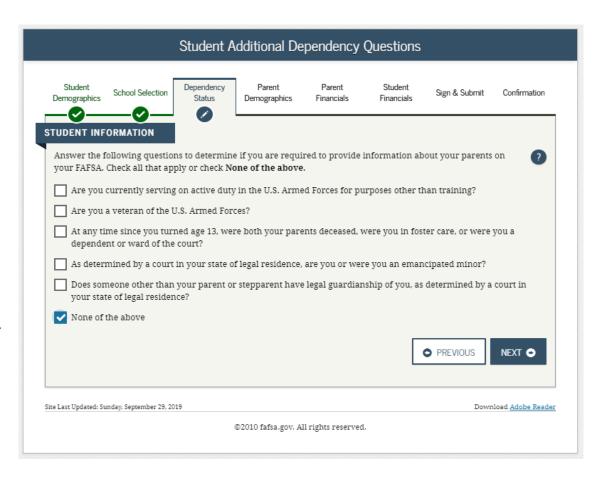
- ➢ If "yes" is selected at any time, the subsequent questions will not appear, and the student will be deemed independent for purposes of the FAFSA (i.e. parental information will not be required).
- ➢ If "yes" is selected with the dependency questions, the college will most likely select the student for verification (i.e. student will need to provide documentation to the college)
- ➢ If student has or will have a child for whom he/she will provide more than half of the financial support between 7/1/21 and 6/30/22, student may be asked to provide proof of student income for rent, bills, food, clothes, etc.







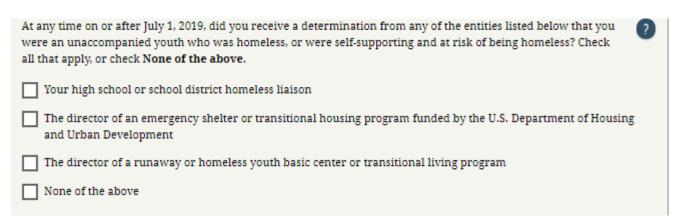
- ➤ Military service: Must be active service for other than training purposes.
- ➤ A copy of court decision will most likely be requested by college if student indicates that they are in legal guardianship or an emancipated minor.





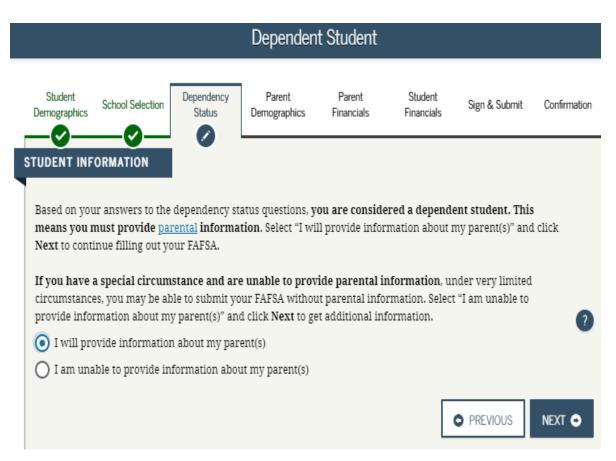


A third party must attest that the student is not in the presence of a parent and homeless or at the risk of being homeless.





- ➤ If student cannot answer "yes" to any of the preceding questions, parental information will be required.
- ➢ If student is unable to provide parental information, student will only be eligible for unsubsidized student loans.





#### What if You Can't Get Parent Information?

Under *very* limited circumstances, a dependent student can submit a FAFSA without parental information

Unacceptable Reasons to Not Provide Parental Information:

- Your parents do not want to provide their information
- Your parents refuse to contribute to your college expenses
- Your parents do not claim you as a dependent on their income taxes

Acceptable Reasons to Not Provide Parental Information:

- Parents are incarcerated
- Have left home due to an abusive family environment
- Do not know where your parents are and are unable to contact them



#### **Parent Information**

#### Whose information do you report?

- For purposes of the FAFSA, there are only three types of parents:
  - Biological
  - Adoptive
  - Stepparents, if remarried

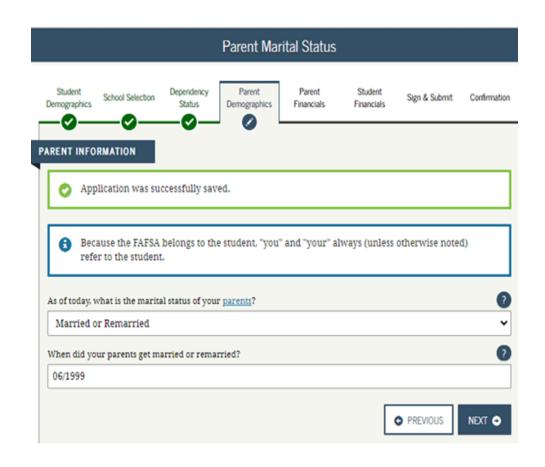
No one else should provide parental information on the FAFSA

- If parents are separated/divorced:
  - a) Parent with whom the student lived the longest in the last 12 months; if equal then . . .
  - b) Parent who provided the most financial support in the last 12 months; if equal, then . . .
  - c) Parent who made the most money



#### **Parent Info: Marital Status**

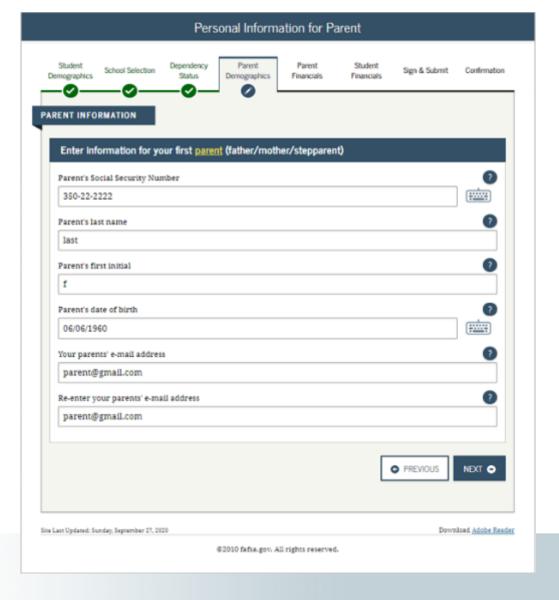
- ➤ If both parents are living together and not married, select unmarried & both legal parents living together.
- ➤ If parents are separated/divorced, answer the info for the respective parent.
  - ➤ Parent with whom the student lived the longest in the last twelve months
  - ➤ If time spent with each parent is equal, then it's the parent who provided the most parental support
  - ➤ It does **NOT** matter which parent claims the student on their tax return





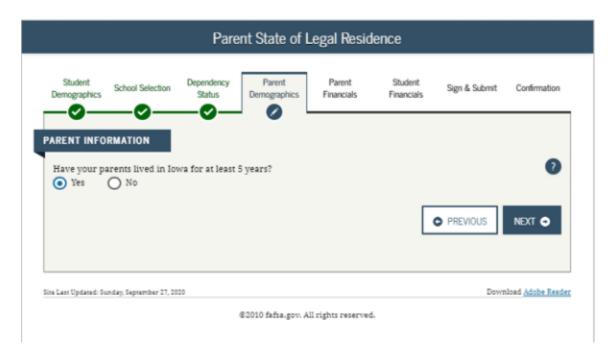
### **Parent Demographic Information**

- ➤ SSN, name, and date of birth of parent **must** match info in FSA ID for electronic signature to work.
- ➢ If a parent does not have a Social Security Number, all zeroes must be entered (i.e. "000-00-000"). If all zeroes are entered, the form will ask a couple of times if the info is correct, but eventually it will allow the user to proceed to the next page.
- ITINs (Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers) cannot be used. An ITIN will begin with the number "9."





#### **Parent Information: State Residency**



Legal residence" refers to where the parent lived and considers their permanent domicile; it's not referencing immigration status.

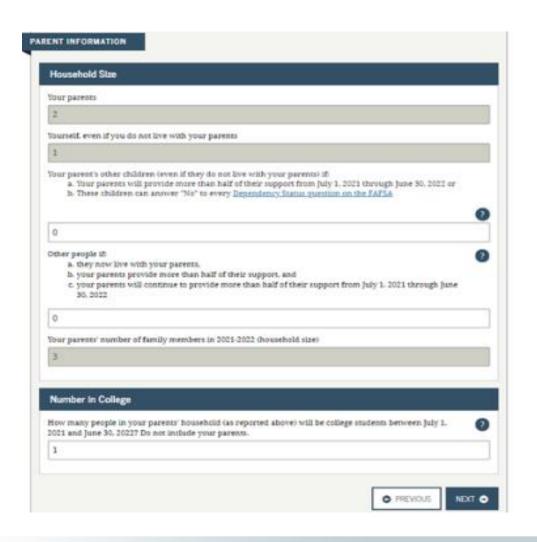


#### **Parent Information: Household**

#### >Include in household size:

- Other children that they support
- Other children that cannot say "yes" to any of the dependency questions
- Other individuals that live in parent's home that the parent support and will continue to support

➤ Exclude parents from number in college

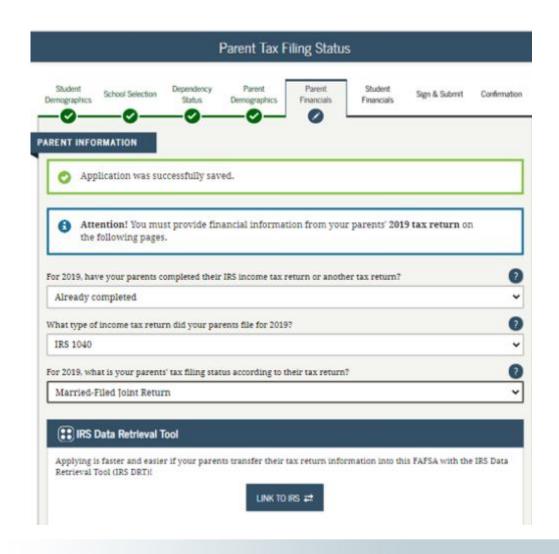




#### **Parent Information: Income Information**

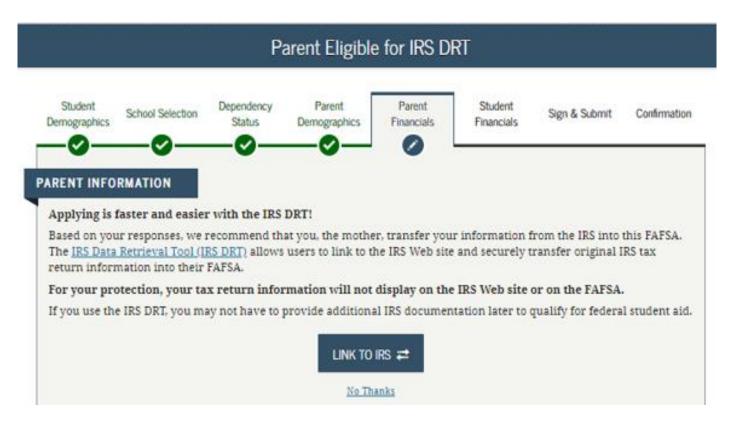
Who's required to file federal tax return?

- Single parent under 65 years--\$12,200 gross income
- Married parents under 65 years--\$24,400 gross income
- Must indicate filing status. If married, cannot file as Head of Household; that will cause issues.
- ➢ If parents are required to file and do not file a tax return, the student will not be able to complete the verification process and will not receive financial aid.





#### **Parent Info: IRS Data Retrieval Tool**



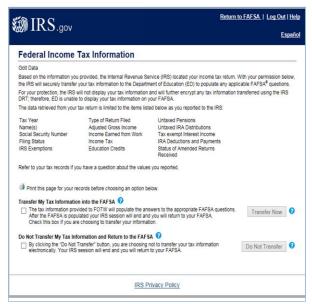
- Only individuals eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool will see the option to "Link to IRS"
- Allows you to transfer your tax data onto the FAFSA
- If IRS DRT is not used, income and tax information must be entered manually



#### **IRS Data Retrieval Tool**

- Must have an FSA ID to use IRS Data Retrieval Tool
- Information should be entered in pop up box as listed on tax return
- Will not be able to see data transferred; it will read "transferred from IRS."





Look up tax data

Transfer to FAFSA



#### **Parent Information: Income Information**

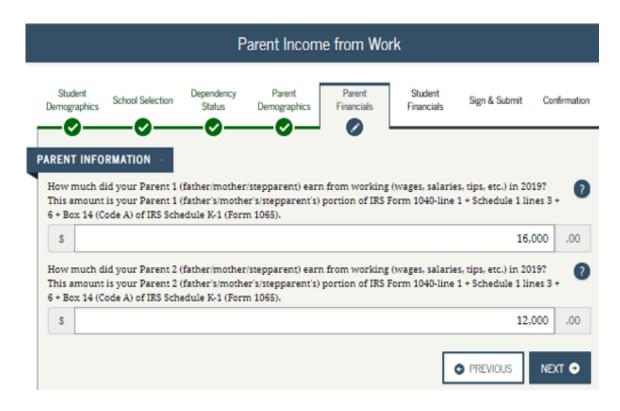


- FAFSA will indicate where on the IRS Tax Return the information can be found
- ➤ If parents are divorced/separated, but filed jointly in 2019, list only AGI and income from parent whose information is being reported on the FAFSA



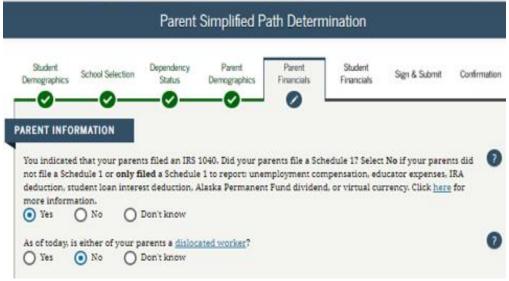
#### **Parent Information: Income Information**

➤ Income earned from working must be reported even if a tax return was not filed





### **Parent Information: Schedule 1**



- > IRS DRT will automatically populate the Schedule 1 question
- Answer "no" if you did not file a Schedule 1 or if you did file one but only for the following reasons:
  - Unemployment Compensation (line 7)
  - ➤ Other income to report an Alaska Permanent Fund dividend (line 8 may not be a negative value)
  - Educator Expenses (line 10)
  - IRA Deduction (line 19)
  - Student loan interest deduction (line 20)
  - Receiving, selling, sending, exchanging, or otherwise acquiring any financial interest in any virtual currency
- Dislocated worker: losing a job, being a displaced homemaker, etc.



#### **Federal Benefits Programs Parent's Household**

- ➢ If prompted, select if anyone in the parent's household received any of the benefits listed in the last two years (2019 & 2020)
- Filling out the FAFSA or answering these questions will **not** affect eligibility for these programs. They will **not** be taken away.
- > Check all that apply.
- You may not be able to update this at a later time.

	rmation.	in interest deduction, Alaska Permanent Fund dividend, or virtual currency. Click <u>here</u> for
Yes	O No	O Don't know
s of toda	y, is either of	f your parents a dislocated worker?
) Yes	● No	O Don't know
		), did you, your parents, or anyone in your parents' household receive benefits fro il benefits programs listed below?
parents	, or anyone i ive any of th	or check <b>None of the above</b> . If, at the time you are completing the FAFSA, you, your in your parents' household did NOT receive any of these benefits during 2019 or 2020, but sem on or before December 31, 2020, you must return to the FAFSA and update your
Answer	ring these qu	estions will not reduce eligibility for student aid or these programs.
	dicaid	
☐ Me		Security Income (SSI)
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#### **Federal Benefits Programs Parent's Household**

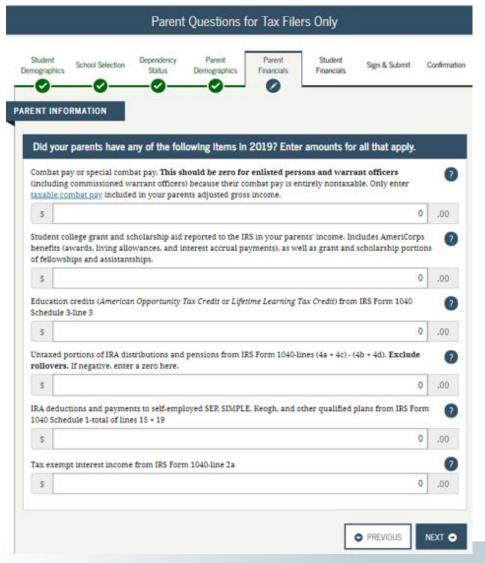


- ► Income tax paid is **not** the same as tax withheld on W-2
- ► IRS Form 1040-line 14 minus Schedule 2-line 2
- ➤ Will be populated automatically by IRS DRT



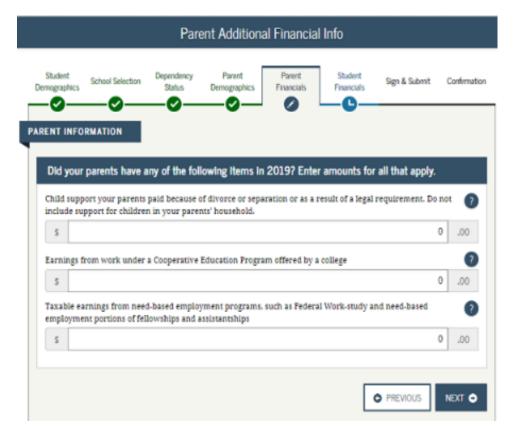
#### **Parent Information: Exclusions & Untaxed Income**

- ➤ Education credits additional benefits for certain families
  - Amounts entered will help reduce amount of income used in calculating the EFC
  - Parents may receive tax credit for children in college for which they pay qualified educational expenses
- Make sure to excluded any IRS or pension rollovers in amount reported.





### **Parent Information: Exclusions**



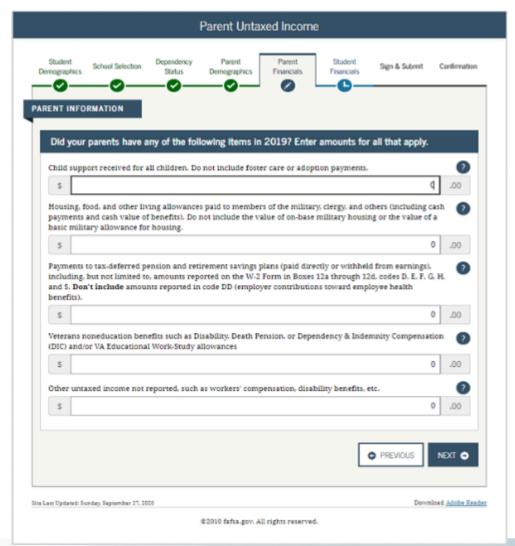
These items are money that is either leaving the household or money that will be excluded from the total income when calculating ability of family to pay for college



### **Parent Information: Other Income**

Money coming into the household or untaxed income will need to be reported.

- ➤ Include payments to taxdeferred plans retirement plans – box 12a to 12d, codes D, E, F, G, H, & S.
- ➤ Include pre-tax contributions to health savings accounts, flexible spending accounts, etc.
  - > Do not report value of plan





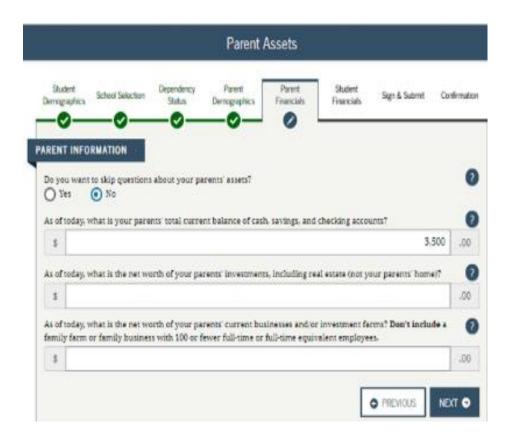
#### **Parent Information: Assets**

#### **Exclude:**

- ➤ Home in which the family lives
- ➤ Value of IRA, 401K, or pension plans
- ➤ Value of family-owned business with 100 or fewer full-time equivalent employees

#### Include:

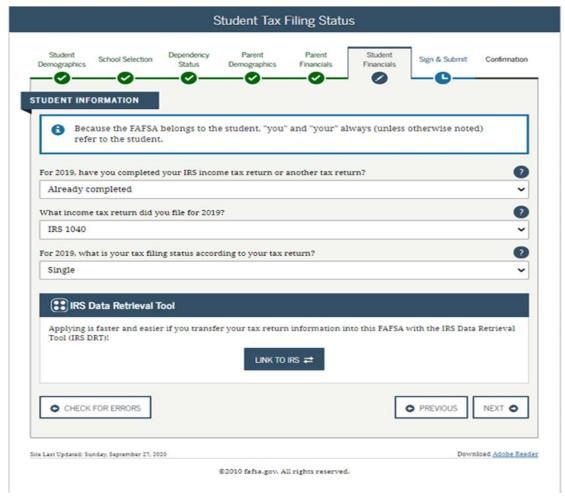
➤ Value of all 529 plans owned by parent(s) whose information is being used on the FAFSA





## **Student Information: Tax Filing**

- Make sure that you enter student information and not parent income
- Students that file an IRS tax return will be able to link to the IRS Data Retrieval Tool

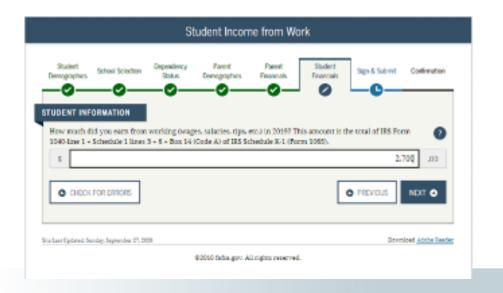




## **Student Information: Tax Filing**

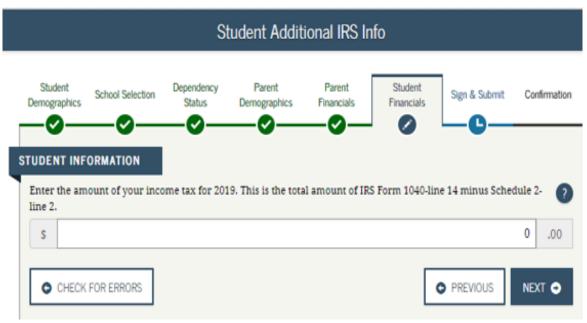
- This is student's adjusted gross income (AGI)
- Students who do not file a tax return will still be asked how much money was earned from working.







## **Student Information: Tax Filing**

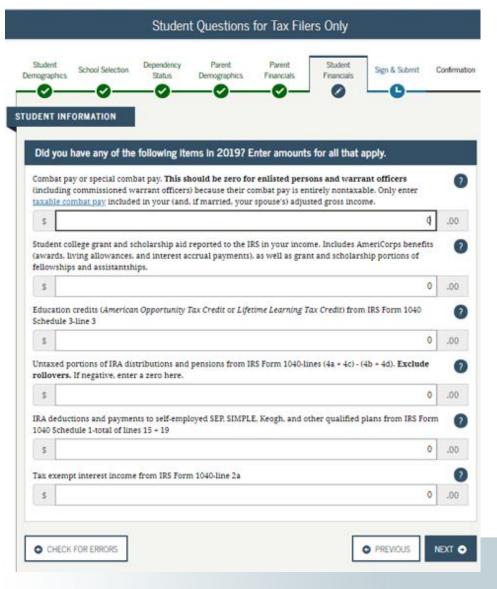


- Income tax paid is **not** the same as tax withholding on W-2.
- IRS Form 140-line 14 minus Schedule 2-line 2
- For most students it will be zero



## **Student Information: Other Income**

- For students who filed a tax return
- For most high school students, these questions will not be applicable

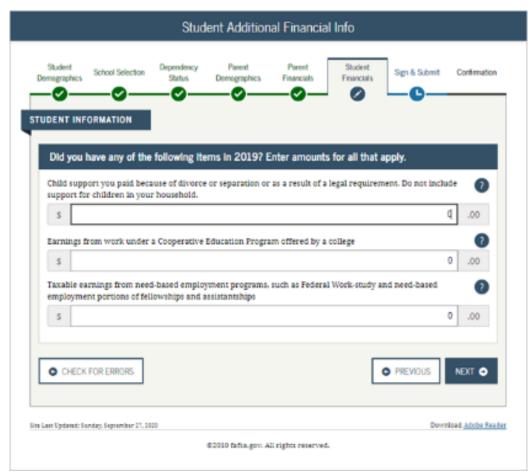




### **Student Information: Exclusions**

Money leaving the household or money to be excluded from calculating an EFC

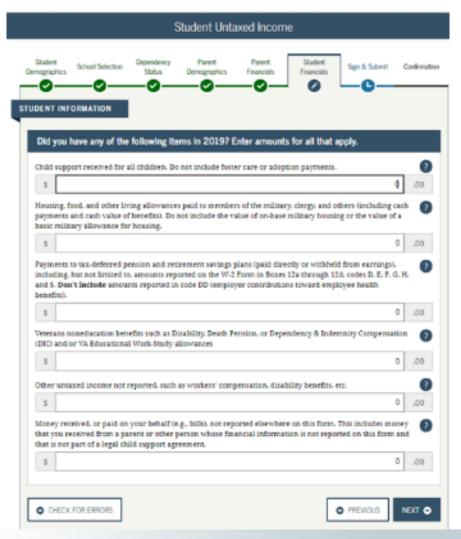
- For students doing a co-op in college will report earnings in subsequent FAFSA
- Following year make sure to report any taxable work-study money





#### **Student Information: Other Income**

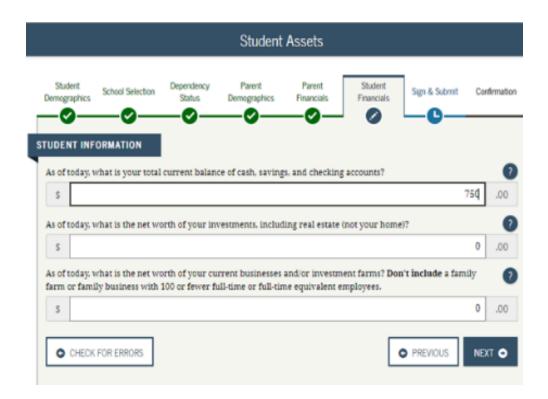
- Money received by the student or paid on the student's behalf in 2019 by someone other than the parent whose information is being used to complete FAFSA.
- When student receives a 529 distribution by someone other than the parent, it will be reported here for that specific year





#### **Student Assets**

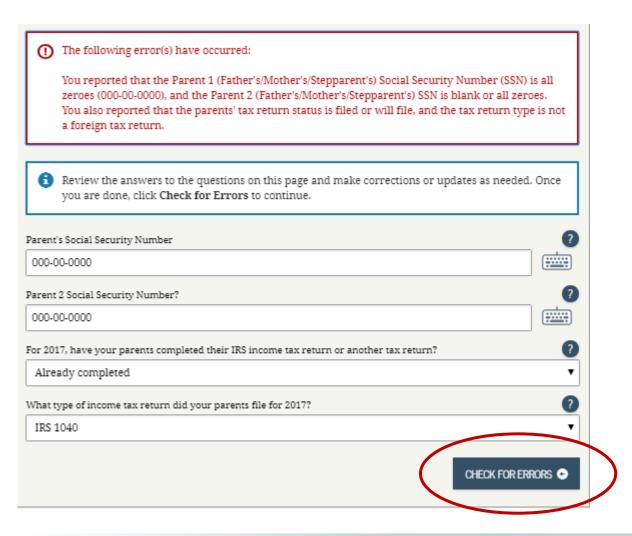
- ➤ Following year, don't include any money from work-study or student loans that is in a checking or savings account
- Assets owned by the student or assets of which they will be the owner (e.g., UGMA, UTMA, trust fund, etc.,) are reported as student assets.





## **Checking for Errors**

- FOTW will bring to your attention any potential errors.
- Make corrections if needed.
- Click "Check for Errors" if everything is correct.





## **FAFSA Summary**

➤ Prior to submitting a summary will appear.

➤ Double check information before proceeding.

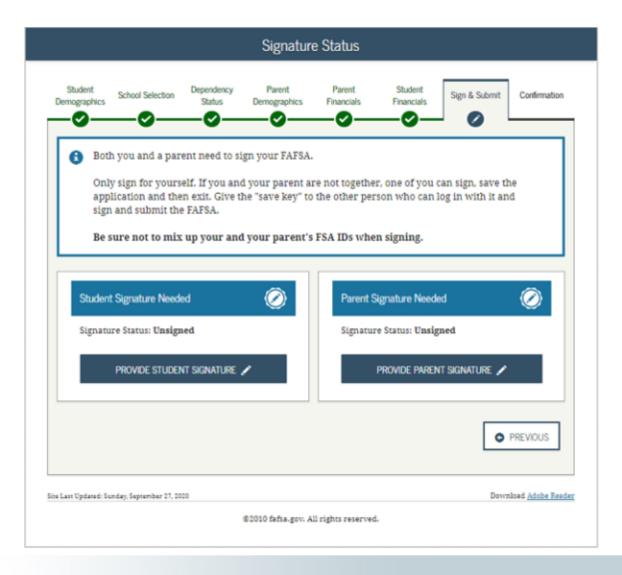






## **Signing the FAFSA**

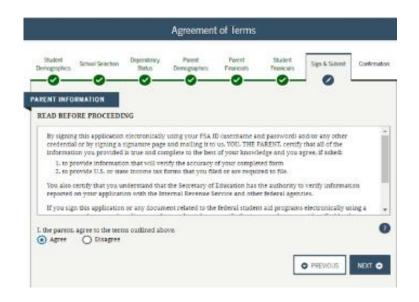
- A student signature and one parent signature is required to submit the FAFSA.
- Can be done using the FSA ID or printing out a signature page

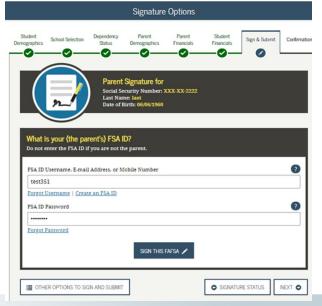




## **Parent Signature**

- ➤ Parent must sign if parental information was provided.
- ➤ Make sure the right parent box (parent 1, or parent 2) is checked when providing the FSA ID to sign
- ➤ Signing electronically will expedite the processing of the FAFSA.
- ➤ If a parent has multiple children in college, the same FSA ID can be used to sign each FAFSA.
- ➤ If error is generated with parent FSA ID, check parent demographics (name, SSN, DOB) to make sure it matches what was submitted when creating an FSA ID
- ➤ If parent cannot obtain an FSA ID, parent can print a signature page.

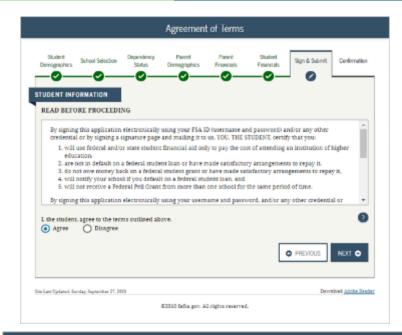






# **Student Signature**

- ➤ Student must also agree to the same conditions.
- ➤ If student used FSA ID to start FAFSA, student will not be prompted to re-enter it. They will just be asked to click button.
- Signing with FSA ID will expedite the processing of the FAFSA.

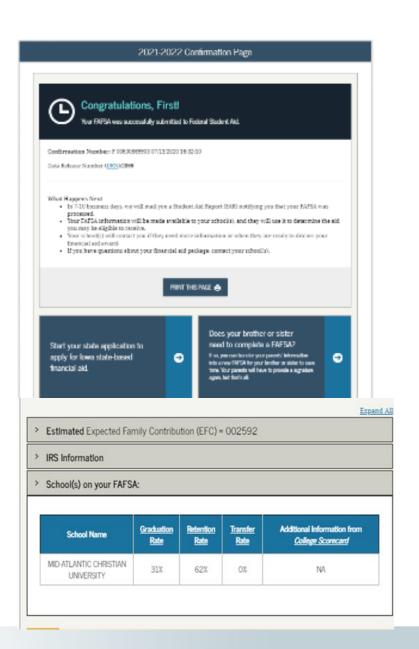






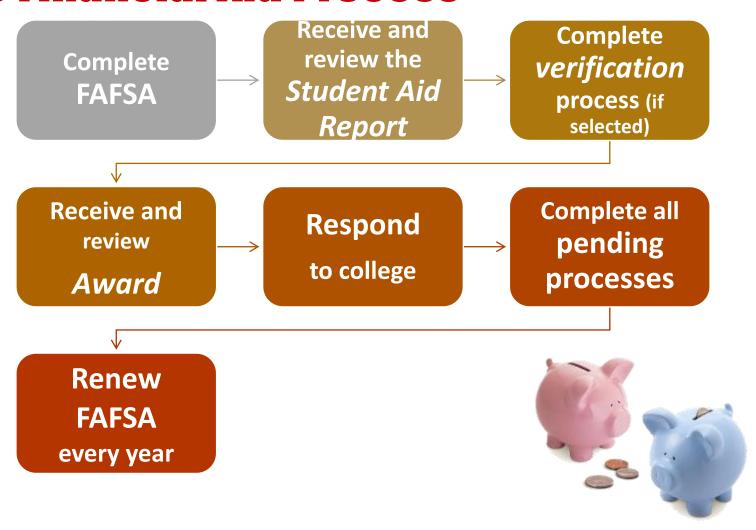
## **Confirmation Page**

- ➤ Data Release Number (DRN) can be used by colleges to look up the student's FAFSA.
- ➤ Parents can transfer their FAFSA info to another sibling's FAFSA by clicking on the transfer link. This option will not be shown again.
- ➤ A preliminary EFC is calculated.





## **The Financial Aid Process**





## **Questions?**

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