

Financial Aid and Undocumented Students

Questions and Answers

The questions and answers that follow provide information about student financial aid for undocumented students as well as guidance for a specific group of undocumented students who have received Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). We have grouped the questions and answers into two categories: “Eligibility for Financial Aid” and “Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) Form.”

Eligibility for Financial Aid

1. As an undocumented or DACA student, am I eligible for federal student aid?

No. Undocumented students, including DACA students, are not eligible for federal student aid. However, you may be eligible for state or college financial aid, in addition to private scholarships.

2. As an undocumented or DACA student, am I eligible for in-state tuition?

It depends. In some states, undocumented students, or specifically DACA students, are eligible to receive in-state tuition. Please check with your high school or your college or career school’s financial aid office.

Completing the FAFSA® Form

1. How do I apply for state and college financial aid?

Most states and colleges use information collected on the FAFSA form to determine whether you’re eligible for aid. However, we first recommend that you check with your high school counselor or your college or career school’s financial aid office to see what types of financial aid you may be eligible to receive and whether completing the FAFSA form is required to apply for that aid.

2. To complete the FAFSA® form, do I need a Social Security number (SSN)?

Yes. An SSN is necessary to complete the FAFSA form. If you are completing a FAFSA form online at fafsa.gov or through the myStudentAid mobile app, an SSN is also required to create a username and password called the FSA ID, which can be used to electronically sign the FAFSA form and to access the myStudentAid mobile app.

Most undocumented students aren’t eligible for an SSN; thus, they cannot complete the FAFSA form. However, DACA students with SSNs can complete the FAFSA form. For information about obtaining an SSN, visit ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10009.pdf.

If your FAFSA form is rejected due to an issue with your SSN, contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY for the deaf or hard of hearing 1-800-325-0778).

Note: The remainder of the questions and answers in this document focus on completing the FAFSA® form, so the guidance applies only to DACA students with SSNs—not to all undocumented students.

3. Does my parents’ citizenship status affect my eligibility for federal student aid?

No. Your parents’ citizenship status doesn’t affect your eligibility for federal student aid. In fact, the FAFSA form doesn’t even ask about your parents’ status.

4. In order for me to complete the FAFSA® form, do my parents need SSNs?

No. Since your parents' citizenship doesn't affect your ability to complete the FAFSA form, they don't need SSNs. If your parents don't have SSNs, they must enter 000-00-0000 when the FAFSA form asks for their SSNs.

If your parents don't have SSNs, they won't be able to create FSA IDs and therefore won't be able to sign your FAFSA form electronically. You'll have to print out the signature page from the online FAFSA form so that your parents can sign it and mail it to the address indicated.

5. On the FAFSA® form, how do I answer the question that reads, "Are you a U.S. citizen?"

DACA students must answer that question by selecting the option "No, I am not a citizen or eligible noncitizen."

6. On the FAFSA® form, how do I answer the question that reads, "What is your state of legal residence?"

The state of legal residence is the state where you reside. The fact that you are a DACA student doesn't affect how you should answer this question for purposes of completing the FAFSA form. Note that each state determines legal residency differently, usually requiring a residence of five years or more. You should contact your high school counselor or college or career school's financial aid office for assistance with state of legal residence qualifications.

7. On the FAFSA® form, how do I answer the question that reads, "What is your parents' state of legal residence?"

Your parents' answer should reflect where they reside. Again, because each state determines legal residency differently, you should contact your high school counselor or college or career school's financial aid office for more assistance.

8. On the FAFSA® form, how do I submit my tax information?

If you are completing the FAFSA form online at fafsa.gov or through the myStudentAid mobile app and you filed your income tax return with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), you may be able to access your tax information through the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT). If you didn't file an income tax return with the IRS, enter the requested financial information manually on the FAFSA website or through the myStudentAid mobile app. If completing the FAFSA form on paper, follow the instructions that detail how to answer the financial information questions.

9. On the FAFSA® form, how do my parents submit their tax information?

If you are completing the FAFSA form online at fafsa.gov or through the myStudentAid mobile app and your parents filed their income tax returns with the IRS and they meet certain requirements such as having SSNs, they may be able to access their tax information through the IRS DRT. If your parents didn't file their income tax returns with the IRS, you can enter the requested information manually on the FAFSA website or through the myStudentAid mobile app. If completing the FAFSA form on paper, follow the instructions that detail how to answer the parental financial information questions.

For more information about the DACA program, visit uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-of-deferred-action-for-childhood-arrivals-daca.

For more information about federal student aid and the FAFSA® form, visit StudentAid.gov or call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

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