

Sacramento Cal-SOAP Consortium – Sacramento County Office of Education
Financial Aid Information for the Class of '09
Tips for Completing the 2009-2010 FAFSA on the Web Worksheet

PREPARATION

- Get documents you need. Gather all information into one place. Include 2008 tax returns for student and parent(s), if filed. If taxes aren't done yet, DON'T WAIT; use 2007 tax returns to make 2008 estimates, or use the December pay stub.
- Print FAFSA on the Web Worksheet.
- Plan how to sign your FAFSA-Speed the process with a PIN.
- Plan to spend 2 – 3 hours completing the form.
- **Do not mail the worksheet!** Read the instructions and follow them very carefully.

TIPS ON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Read these tips along with the questions and the instructions in the FAFSA on the Web worksheet.

Section 1-Student information

- Enter the name *exactly* the same as it appears on the Social Security card. Any other form of student name will cause major delays.
- Get the Social Security number correct. Check it twice. The application will not be processed without a Social Security number.
- Your drivers' license #, if you have one.
- If the student is not a U.S. citizen, enter the Permanent Resident Card #. Eligible non-citizens receive the same financial aid as U.S. citizens. If the number on the card is only eight digits enter "0" first.
- Marital Status-This refers to *student's* marital status on date of signing.
- Your state of residence
- Male students who haven't registered for the Selective Service yet and are 18 may check "YES" to get registered. If under 18, register soon after the 18th birthday to prevent delay in financial aid. You can register online at www.sss.gov.
- Convicted.... Answer this question, do not leave blank!
- Highest School your mother/father completed? The questions refer to biological or adoptive parents or legal guardians, not stepparents, regardless of who is reporting financial information. Enter the highest level completed. If the parent doesn't have a B.A. degree, mark high school, even if s/he completed some college.
- Degree or Certificate? Don't answer "2nd Bachelor's, teaching credential or Graduate or professional degree. Even if a Master's degree is an eventual goal. These answers can be changed at the college as goals, programs, and grade levels change.
- Mark "full-time" to maximize your aid offer. A later choice to go part-time can be reported to the college.
- Loans? Work-study? Families can mark "YES" to loans and still turn them down later. Mark "YES" to get the maximum offer of financial aid. Refusing loans will not increase your aid. Mark "YES" to Work-Study. It is very valuable. You are not committed to take it. Refusing it will not increase your chances for aid.

Section 2-Student Dependency Status

- For High School seniors, these answers to this section are usually all "NO." (Students are "dependent" by law for financial aid until they're 24, get a B.A. degree, get married, or become a veteran. If a student thinks his/her parents can't/won't/shouldn't fill out the FAFSA, the student should seek advice immediately.)

Section 3- Parental Information

- PURPLE shaded questions are about parent(s). Read the instructions on who is considered a parent in this Step?" Ask for advice if the family is unclear about the parent definition.
- *Parent Information*
Always include the student in the # of people in the household. Do not include parents if they are in College.

Section 4 – Student Finances

- Will the *student* file a tax return for 2008? Be careful to answer these questions correctly. Most students file a 1040AEZ. It is OK to answer tax questions by estimating from your December pay stub or your 2008 income tax return. You can correct later on the "Student Aid Report" (SAR).

Student Household

- If you answered "No" to all the questions in Section 2, skip to page 7.
- If you answered "Yes" to any question in Section 2, complete this section.

Student Assets

Gray shaded questions are about the student. Follow the directions carefully. It is okay to enter "0" if you had no income.

Section 5 – Schools to receive information

- Carefully enter the name and code # of every college under consideration. You can get the code numbers at the high school, from the college, or use the Internet www.fafsa.ed.gov to look up the code numbers. Some advice on listing colleges: Always have a California college on the list or the student won't be considered for Cal Grant. If there's any chance of going to a 4-year California college, put it on the list *above* the Community College choice. If there is any chance of going to a Community College, even if the student hasn't applied yet, include it on the form now. If the student intends to live on-campus, mark that box for each college, even if you haven't arranged housing yet. Special Note! If the student is applying to more than 10 colleges, seek advice from a high school counselor.
- **DO NOT MAIL THIS WORKSHEET**
- You and your parents can sign using your PINs. You will get a confirmation number if the transmission is successful. If you do not have a PIN, be sure to print and send a signature page.

ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE FORM

- Expect a "Student Aid Report" (SAR) within 3-4 weeks, 3-4 days if filing on the web. If you don't get one, call this number to check on your status: (1/800-433-3243) or check on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov. When you get the "Student Aid Report", review it IMMEDIATELY. Make changes as soon as possible.
- You will use the SAR to make corrections, add or change colleges, and to review the information you submitted. If you filed electronically, you can make corrections on the web. If you filed on paper you can make corrections on the web once you get a PIN. Or, you can contact a college financial aid office; they should be able to make the changes for you electronically.

FINANCIAL AID OFFICES AT EVERY COLLEGE ARE THERE TO HELP YOU.
CALL THEM IF YOU NEED ADVICE