

**Summary of Enhancements to the
2015-2016 Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

The U.S. Department of Education and Federal Student Aid are dedicated to continuously improving the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) and associated applicant products. The changes listed below include resolution of public feedback from the comment period announced in the Federal Register on August 28, 2014. Additionally, in compliance with the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, the Department will message to Foster Care Youth or those who were in the foster care system of their potential eligibility for Federal student aid, including postsecondary education programs through the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and any other Federal programs under which such students may be eligible to receive assistance.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)
Revised Question 4 to read: "Your permanent mailing address"
Added text to the Notes for Question 8 on page 2 to read: "Enter your Social Security Number (SSN) as it appears on your Social Security card."
Removed "permanent" from Question 10 so it reads: "Your telephone number"
Removed the prefilled "@" from the e-mail Questions 13 and 69.
Bolded " Yes to any " in Step Three (Student) to read: "Answer the questions in this step to determine if you will need to provide parental information. Once you answer " Yes " to any of the questions in this step, skip Step Four and go to Step Five on page 8."
Added "Do not include siblings who are in U.S. military service academies." to Question 74.
Added two new bullets after the original third bullet for Notes for Questions 84 and 102 on page 9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the spouse of an active duty member of the Armed Forces and has experienced a loss of employment because of relocating due to permanent change in duty station; or • Is the spouse of an active duty member of the Armed Forces and is a displaced homemaker (as described below);
Added a new introductory phrase to start the first paragraph after bullets, "Except for the spouse of an active duty member of the Armed Forces, ..."

FAFSA on the WebSM (FOTW)
Clarified guidance to students who are from the Freely Associated States to make sure they use the same SSN assigned to them when completing the FAFSA each year.
Clarified help text for which option a student should select if he/she received or will receive a foreign high school diploma to read: <p>"High school diploma means you have received or will receive a U.S. high school diploma before the first date of your enrollment in college or you have received or will receive a foreign school diploma that is equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma before the first date of your enrollment in college."</p>

Updated the existing filtering questions and help text to better define the term “amended tax return.” Specifically, revised the student filtering question to read: “Did you file a Form 1040X amended tax return?” and the parent filtering question to read: “Did you, the parents/father/mother, file a Form 1040X amended tax return?”

Added the sentence: “The Form 1040X is used to correct your original filed tax return.” to the help text.

Added text to the “What is your marital status?” and the “As of today, what is the marital status of your legal parents (biological and/or adoptive)?” help topics to define “separated” as follows:

“For FAFSA purposes, a married couple is separated if the couple is considered legally separated by a state, or if the couple is legally married but has chosen to live separate lives, including living in separate households, as though they were not married. If you and your spouse are separated but living together, select “I am married / remarried,” not “I am separated.”

NOTE: When two married persons live as a married couple but are separated by physical distance (or have separate households), they are considered married for FAFSA purposes.”

Updated the messaging that displays in the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) section on the “Parent Finances 1,” “Student Finances 1,” “Parent Finances – Correction,” and “Student Finances – Correction” pages when a user is eligible to use the IRS DRT to read:

“Based on your response, we recommend that you transfer your information from the IRS into this FAFSA. [How you filed your taxes](#) can affect whether your tax return information is available to transfer.”

“How you filed your taxes” will link to the “When will my tax return information be available using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool” help topic.

Changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)	Related changes to FAFSA on the WebSM (FOTW)
<p>Revised the second paragraph in the Notes for Questions 14 and 15 on page 2 to read: “If you are in the U.S. and have been granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), an F1 or F2 student visa, a J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa, or a G series visa (pertaining to international organizations), select “No, I am not a citizen or eligible noncitizen.” You will not be eligible for federal student aid. If you have a Social Security Number but are not a citizen or an eligible noncitizen, including if you have been granted DACA, you should still complete the FAFSA because you may be eligible for state or college aid.</p>	<p>Added references to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to the “Student’s Citizenship Status” and the “Are you a U.S. citizen?” instructional text to read:</p> <p>“Select Neither citizen nor eligible noncitizen if you are in the U.S. and have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) • A F1 or F2 student visa • A J1 or J2 exchange visitor visa • A G series visa (pertaining to international organizations) • Other categories not included under U.S. citizen and eligible noncitizen <p>“If you are neither a citizen nor an eligible noncitizen, you are not eligible for federal student aid. If you have a Social</p>

Changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)	Related changes to FAFSA on the Web SM (FOTW)
	Security Number but are not a citizen or an eligible noncitizen, including if you have been granted DACA, you should still complete the FAFSA because you may be eligible for state or college aid. You should check with your college's financial aid office to see what kind of financial aid you may be eligible to receive"
Revised Question 20 to read: "If the answer to question 19 is "No," give month and year you became a legal resident of that state."	Revised the Question to read: "When did you become a legal resident of <state>? Enter the month and year. (mmyyyy)" Where <state> is the state displayed for Question 19.
<p>Revised Question 22 to read: "If female, skip to question 23. Most male students must register with the Selective Service System to receive federal aid. If you are male, age 18-25 and not registered, fill in the circle and we will register you. See Notes page 2.</p> <p>Added text to the Notes for Questions 21 and 22 to read: "Notes for questions 21 and 22 (page 3): To be eligible for federal student aid, male citizens and male immigrants residing in the U.S. aged 18 through 25 are required to register with the Selective Service System, with limited exceptions. This requirement applies to any person assigned the sex of male at birth. The Selective Service System and the registration requirement for males preserve America's ability to provide resources in an emergency to the U.S. Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard). For more information about the Selective Service System, visit www.sss.gov. Forms are available at your local U.S. Post Office."</p>	<p>Revised the filtering question to read: "Are you registered with the Selective Service System?" and the Question to read: "Most male citizens and male immigrants must register with the Selective Service System to receive federal student aid. If you are not registered, select Register me."</p> <p>Added the sentence "This requirement applies to any person assigned the sex of male at birth." to instructional text to read: "Your gender is used to determine if you need to register with the Selective Service System. Most male citizens and male immigrants must register with the Selective Service System to receive federal student aid. This requirement applies to any person assigned the sex of male at birth."</p>
Added reference to non-custodial parents to Notes for Questions 42 and 43, 45j, and 91 and 92 on page 2 to read: "Money received, or paid on your behalf, also includes distributions to you (the student beneficiary) from a 529 plan that is owned by someone other than you or your parents (such as your grandparents, aunts, uncles, and non-custodial parents). You must include these distribution amounts in question 45j."	Added reference to non-custodial parents to the note in the "What other money has been paid on your behalf?" help topic to read: "This includes distributions to you (the student beneficiary) from a 529 plan that is owned by someone other than you or your parents (such as your grandparents, aunts, uncles and non-custodial parents)."
Updated text to Step Four (Parent) to read "Answer all the questions in Step Four even if you do not live with your legal parents (biological, adoptive, or as determined by the state [for example, if the parent is listed on the birth	Updated relevant help text to further clarify the definition of a parent with: "A legal parent includes a biological or adoptive parent, or a person that the state has determined to be your parent (for example, when a state allows

Changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)	Related changes to FAFSA on the Web SM (FOTW)
<p>certificate)). Grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, widowed stepparents, aunts and uncles are not considered parents on this form unless they have legally adopted you. If your legal parents are married to each other, or are not married to each other and live together, answer the questions about both of them. If your parent was never married or is remarried, divorced, separated or widowed, see Notes page 9 for additional instructions.”</p> <p>Updated the first bullet in the Notes for question 53 on page 9,” to read: “You had no living parent, even if you are now adopted;”</p> <p>Updated the first sentence in the second bullet in the Notes for Step Four, questions 59-94 on page 9, to read: “If your legal parents (biological, adoptive, or as determined by the state [for example, if the parent is listed on the birth certificate]) are not married...”</p> <p>Updated the third bullet to read: “If your legal parents are married, select “Married or remarried.” Consistent with the Supreme Court decision holding Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional, same-sex couples must be reported as married if...”</p>	<p>another person’s name to be listed as a parent on a birth certificate). Grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, older brothers or sisters, widowed stepparents, and aunts and uncles are not considered parents unless they have legally adopted you.”</p> <p>A link to the new “Who is my parent when I fill out my FAFSA?” infographic will be added to the “Who is considered a parent?” help topic in FAFSA on the WebSM</p>
<p>Added text to Step Six instructions to read: “Enter the six-digit federal school code and your housing plans. You can find the school codes at www.fafsa.gov or by calling 1-800-433-3243. If you cannot obtain the code, write in the complete name, address, city and state of the college. The information you report on the FAFSA is sent to each college listed, including the names of the other colleges listed. If you do not want this information sent to a particular college, do not list that school. For federal student aid purposes, it does not matter in what order you list your selected schools. For state aid, you may want to list your preferred college first. To find out how to have more colleges receive your FAFSA information, read What is the FAFSA? on page 10.”</p>	<p>Added text to the “School Selection” page to read: “All of the information you report on the FAFSA will be sent to each college listed, including the names of the other colleges listed. If you don’t want this information sent to a particular college, do not list that school on your FAFSA.”</p> <p>Added text to the “School Selection Summary” page to read: “For federal student aid purposes, it does not matter in what order you list your selected schools. However, placing a school that participates in your state’s student grant programs first may help you obtain state grant aid. Check with your state grant agency for more information.”</p>

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and Student Aid Report (SAR)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and Student Aid Report (SAR)

Reordered text so that “grants”, “work-study” and “loans” text appears in that order on the FAFSA and Student Aid Report (SAR). For example: “Financial aid may include grants (free funds that do not have to be repaid), work-study (paid part-time employment), and/or low-interest loans (borrowed funds that must be repaid).”