## Data Elements and Justification

## 2026-2027 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form

Purpose: The Data Elements and Justification is provided to accompany the review of the 2026-27 FAFSA form. It identifies the data elements associated with each FAFSA question and provides the justification for including each question on the FAFSA form.

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
1	Student Identity Information  • First name • Middle name • Last name • Suffix • Date of birth • Social Security number (SSN) • Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)  The ITIN is collected when the student doesn't have an SSN.	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended  Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)- Additional Data Element specific to Internal Revenue Code
2	Student Contact Information  Mobile phone number Email address Permanent mailing address City State ZIP code Country	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
3	Student Current Marital Status  Single (never married)  Married (not separated)  Remarried  Separated  Divorced  Widowed	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
4	<ul> <li>Student College or Career School Plans</li> <li>First year undergraduate (freshman)</li> <li>Second year undergraduate (sophomore)</li> <li>Other undergraduate (junior year and beyond)</li> <li>Master's, doctorate, or graduate certificate program (MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, etc.)</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended Pursuing Teacher Certification- Additional Data Element Required for Eligibility Determination

Question Numbers(s)	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
"	<ul> <li>Will they already have first bachelor's degree before 2026-2027 school year?</li> <li>Pursuing initial teacher certification at the elementary or secondary level?</li> </ul>	
	Student Personal Circumstances	
5	<ul> <li>Active duty</li> <li>Veteran</li> <li>Children or other people (excluding their spouse)</li> <li>Orphan</li> <li>Ward of court</li> <li>Foster care</li> <li>Emancipated minor</li> <li>Legal guardianship</li> <li>None of these apply</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
	Unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless	
6	<ul> <li>Entity who determined the student was homeless or at risk of becoming homeless:</li> <li>Director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness</li> <li>The student's high school or school district homeless liaison or designee</li> <li>Director or designee of a project supported by federal TRIO or GEAR UP program grant</li> <li>Financial Aid Administrator (FAA)</li> <li>None of these apply</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
7	Student Unusual Circumstances	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
8	Direct Unsubsidized Loan Only	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
9	Family Size  This question is N/A when the student has been determined to be dependent.	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
10	Number in College  This question is N/A when the student has been determined to be dependent.	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
11	Student Demographic Information	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
12	Student Race and/or Ethnicity	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
13	Student Citizenship  Citizenship status  U.S. citizen or national  Eligible noncitizen  Neither U.S. citizen nor eligible noncitizen  A-number	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
14	Student State of Residence	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
15	Parent Education Status  Neither parent attended college  One or both parents attended college, but neither parent completed college  One or both parents completed college  Don't know	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
16	Parent Killed in Line of Duty  • Yes • No	Additional Data Elements Required for Eligibility Determination
17	Student High School Information  • High school diploma	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
<i>"</i>	<ul> <li>State-recognized high school equivalent (e.g. GED certificate)</li> <li>Homeschooled</li> <li>None of the previous</li> </ul> If "high school diploma"	
	<ul><li>High school name</li><li>City</li><li>State</li></ul>	
	If "State-recognized high school equivalent"      GED     TASC     HiSET     Other     Issuing State	
18	Federal Benefits Received  Earned income credit (EIC) Federal housing assistance Free or reduced-price school lunch Medicaid Refundable credit for coverage under a qualified health plan (QHP) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) None of these apply  This question is N/A when the student has been determined to be dependent.	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
19	<ul> <li>Student Tax Filing Status</li> <li>Did or will student file 1040 or 1040-NR</li> <li>Did student either (1) earn income in a foreign country in 2024, (2) work for an international organization in 2024, (3) file a 2024 tax return with Puerto Rico or another U.S. Territory</li> <li>Did or will student file a 2024 joint tax return with their current spouse</li> </ul>	Required to Determine Accuracy

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
a	Filing status	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	
b	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
С	Tax exempt interest income  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
d	Untaxed portions of IRA distributions  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
e	IRA rollover into another IRA or qualified plan	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
f	Untaxed portions of pensions  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
g	Pension rollover into an IRA or other qualified plan	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
h	Adjusted gross income  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
i	Income tax paid  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
j	Did the student receive the earned income credit (EIC)?	Additional Data Elements Required for Eligibility Determination
k	IRA deductions and payments to self-employed SEP, SIMPLE, and qualified plans	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
#	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	
1	Education credits  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
m	<ul> <li>Did the student file a Schedule A, B, D, E, F or H?</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>Don't know</li> </ul> The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
n	Net profit or loss from IRS Form 1040 Schedule C amount  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
0	Amount of college grants, scholarships, or AmeriCorps benefits reported as income to the IRS	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
p	Foreign earned income exclusion	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
21	Annual Child Support Received	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
22	Student Assets  Current total of cash, savings, and checking accounts  Current net worth of investments, including real estate  Current net worth of businesses and farms	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
23	Colleges (Can enter up to 10 schools on FAFSA PDF, and up to 20 online)	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
24	<ul> <li>Student Consent, Approval, and Signature</li> <li>Consent and approval to transfer federal tax information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)</li> <li>Student signature</li> <li>Date signed</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
Student Spous	se Data Elements must be completed when the student is m	narried or remarried.
25	<ul> <li>First name</li> <li>Middle name</li> <li>Last name</li> <li>Suffix</li> <li>Date of birth</li> <li>Social Security Number (SSN)</li> <li>Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)</li> <li>The ITIN is collected when the student's spouse doesn't have an SSN.</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
26	Student Spouse Contact Information  Mobile phone number Email address Permanent mailing address City State ZIP code Country	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
Student Spous with their curr	se: The following data elements are N/A unless student is reent spouse.	married and did not file a joint tax return
27	• Did or will student spouse file 2024 IRS Form 1040 or 1040-NR  • Yes  • No  • Did the student spouse either (1) earn income in a foreign country in 2024, (2) work for an international organization in 2024 without being required to report income on any tax return, or (3) file a 2024 tax return with Puerto Rico or another U.S. Territory  • Yes  • No	Required to Determine Accuracy
Question 28: S	Student Spouse 2024 Tax Return Information	
a	Filing status  • Single	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
	<ul> <li>Head of household</li> <li>Married filing jointly</li> <li>Married filing separately</li> <li>Qualifying surviving spouse</li> </ul>	
	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	
	Income earned from work	
b	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	Tax exempt interest income	
С	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	Untaxed portions of IRA distributions	
d	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
e	IRA rollover into another IRA or qualified plan	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
	Untaxed portions of pensions	
f	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
g	Pension rollover into an IRA or other qualified plan	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
	Adjusted gross income	
h	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	Income tax paid	
i	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
j	IRA deductions and payments to self-employed SEP, SIMPLE, and qualified plans	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
π	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	
	Education credits	
k	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	Filed Schedule A, B, D, E, F or H?  • Yes • No	
1	• Don't know	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	
	Net profit or loss from IRS Form 1040 Schedule C	
m	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
n	Foreign earned income exclusion	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
	Student Spouse Consent, Approval, and Signature	
29	<ul> <li>Consent and approval to transfer federal tax information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)</li> <li>Student Spouse Signature</li> <li>Date signed</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
Parent: The fo	llowing data elements are N/A unless student has been det	ermined to be dependent.
	Parent Identity Information  • First name  • Middle name	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
30	<ul> <li>Last name</li> <li>Suffix</li> <li>Date of birth</li> <li>Social Security Number (SSN)</li> </ul>	Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)- Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)  The ITIN is collected when the parent doesn't have an SSN.	
31	Parent Contact Information	Data Elements Specific to Higher

Question Numbers(s)	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
T	<ul> <li>Mobile phone number</li> <li>Email address</li> <li>Permanent mailing address</li> <li>City</li> <li>State</li> <li>ZIP code</li> <li>Country</li> </ul>	Education Act of 1965, as amended
32	Parent Current Marital Status	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
33	Parent State of Residence  State Date of residence	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
34	Family Size	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
35	Number in College	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
36	<ul> <li>Earned income credit (EIC)</li> <li>Federal housing assistance</li> <li>Free or reduced-price school lunch</li> <li>Medicaid</li> <li>Refundable credit for coverage under a qualified health plan (QHP)</li> <li>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</li> <li>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</li> <li>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</li> <li>Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)</li> <li>None of these apply</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
37	Parent Tax Filing Status  Did or will the parent file a 2024 IRS Form 1040 or 1040-NR	Required to Determine Accuracy

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
	o Yes	
	o No	
	<ul> <li>If "no", which of the following situations</li> </ul>	
	applies to the parent for 2024?	
	O The parent filed or will file a tax	
	return with Puerto Rico or another	
	U.S. territory	
	O The parent filed or will file a foreign	
	tax return	
	O The parent either earned income in a	
	foreign country but did not and will	
	not file a foreign tax return, or	
	worked for an international	
	organization and was not required to	
	report income on any tax return	
	o The parent, even though they earned	
	income in the U.S., did not and will	
	not file a U.S. tax return because	
	their income was below the tax	
	filing threshold	
	O The parent did not and will not file a	
	U.S. tax return for reasons other	
	than low income	
	O Parent did not and will not file any	
	tax return because they did not earn	
	any income or they were not	
	required to file under the Internal	
	Revenue Code	
	Did or will the parent file a 2024 joint tax	
	return with their current spouse?	
	0 Yes	
	o No	
Question 38: I	Parent 2024 Tax Return Information	
	Filing status	
	• Single	
	Head of household	
	Married filing jointly	
а	<ul> <li>Married filing separately</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Internal
a	<ul> <li>Qualifying surviving spouse</li> </ul>	Revenue Code
	The response to this question may be available	
	through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	
b	Income earned from work	Data Elements Specific to Internal
	The response to this question may be available	Revenue Code
	through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
	Tax exempt interest income	
c	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	Untaxed portions of IRA distributions	
d	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
e	IRA rollover into another IRA or qualified plan	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
	Untaxed portions of pensions	
f	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
g	Pension rollover into an IRA or other qualified plan	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
	Adjusted gross income	
h	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	Income tax paid	
i	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
j	Did the parent receive the earned income credit (EIC)?  • Yes  • No  • Don't know	Additional Data Elements Required for Eligibility Determination
	IRA deductions and payments to self-employed SEP, SIMPLE, and qualified plans	Data Floments Specific to Internal
k	The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
1	Education credits (American Opportunity and Lifetime Learning credits)	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	The response to this question may be available	

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
π	through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	
m	Did the parent file a Schedule A, B, D, E, F or H?  • Yes • No • Don't know  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
n	Net profit or loss from IRS Form 1040 Schedule C amount  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
0	College grants, scholarships, or AmeriCorps benefits reported as income to the IRS	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
p	Foreign earned income exclusion	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
39	Annual Child Support Received	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
40	Current total of cash, savings, and checking accounts     Current net worth of investments, including real estate     Current net worth of businesses and farms	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
41	<ul> <li>Parent Consent, Approval, and Signature</li> <li>Consent and approval to transfer federal tax information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)</li> <li>Parent signature</li> <li>Date signed</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
Other Parent d	lata elements must be completed when the parent is marrie together.	ed, remarried, or unmarried and both legal
42	Parent Spouse or Partner Identity Information  • First name • Middle name • Last name	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
	<ul> <li>Suffix</li> <li>Date of birth</li> <li>Social Security Number (SSN)</li> <li>Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN)</li> <li>The ITIN is collected when the parent spouse or partner doesn't have an SSN.</li> </ul>	
43	Parent Spouse or Partner Contact Information  Mobile phone number  Email address  Permanent mailing address  City  State  ZIP code  Country	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
	or Partner: The following data elements are N/A unless the not file a joint tax return.	e parent and their spouse or partner listed
	Parent Spouse or Partner Tax Filing Status  • Did or will the parent spouse or partner file a 2024 IRS Form 1040 or 1040NR  • Yes  • No  If answer is "no", which of the following situations	

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applies to the parent spouse or partner for 2024? Filed or will file a tax return with Puerto Rico or another U.S. territory The parent spouse or partner filed or will file a foreign tax return The parent spouse or partner either earned income in a foreign country but did not and will not file a foreign tax return, or worked for an international organization and was not required to report income on any tax return The parent spouse or partner, even though they earned income in the U.S., did not and will not file a U.S. tax return because their income was below the tax filing threshold The parent spouse or partner did not and will not file a U.S. tax return for reasons other

than low income

The parent spouse or partner did not and will not file any tax return because they did not earn any income or they were not required to file under the Internal Revenue Code

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification	
Question 45: I	Question 45: Parent Spouse or Partner 2024 Tax Return Information		
a	Filing status  Single Head of household Married filing jointly Married filing separately Qualifying surviving spouse  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code	
b	Income earned from work  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code	
С	Tax exempt interest income  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code	
d	Untaxed portions of IRA distributions  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code	
e	IRA rollover into another IRA or qualified plan	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended	
f	Untaxed portions of pensions  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code	
g	Pension rollover into an IRA or other qualified plan	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended	
h	Adjusted gross income  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code	
i	Income tax paid  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code	

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
j	IRA deductions and payments to self-employed SEP, SIMPLE, and qualified plans  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
k	Education credits  The response to this question may be available	Data Elements Specific to Internal
K.	through the direct data exchange with the IRS.  Did the parent spouse or partner file a Schedule A, B,	Revenue Code
1	D, E, F or H with their 2024 IRS Form 1040?  • Yes  • No  • Don't know  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
m	Net profit or loss from IRS Form 1040 Schedule C amount  The response to this question may be available through the direct data exchange with the IRS.	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
n	Foreign earned income exclusion	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
46	Parent Spouse or Partner Consent, Approval, and Signature  • Consent and approval to transfer federal tax information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)  • Parent spouse or partner signature  • Date signed	Data Elements Specific to Internal Revenue Code
	Elements are required if someone other than the student, setes the form on the applicant's behalf.	student spouse, parent, or parent spouse or
47	Preparer Identity Information  • First name • Last name • Social Security Number (SSN) • Employer Identification Number (EIN)	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended

Question Numbers(s) #	Data Element(s)	Data Element(s) Justification
48	<ul> <li>Preparer Contact Information</li> <li>Affiliation/Organization</li> <li>Permanent mailing address</li> <li>City</li> <li>State</li> <li>ZIP code</li> </ul>	Data Elements Specific to Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended
49	Preparer Signature  Preparer signature Date signed	