



What does "Early FAFSA" mean?

"Early FAFSA" means that you can file your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) earlier than ever before! Thanks to new deadlines, the FAFSA and CA Dream Act application* for the 2017-18 school year will both be available October 1, 2016, which is a big change from previous years. With this new date, you no longer have to estimate your tax information when you file your FAFSA for financial aid. Simply use information from your 2015 tax return and you'll be good to go!

When should I apply for financial aid?

You should apply for financial aid as early as possible, starting October 1. From now on, the FAFSA will be available three months earlier than previous years, meaning you can start planning ahead to get the most aid possible for the next summer or fall. By filing early, you'll have a better idea of what your financial aid package will look like and be better prepared to pay for community college. It's good news all around!

The FAFSA filing period runs from October 1 to June 30 of each school year. If you're planning on applying for aid for the 2017-18 school year, your forms must be submitted no later than June 30, 2018. Be aware that some programs have much earlier deadlines so apply as early as you can. Please note, your FAFSA information must be received by the college prior to the last day of enrollment for that particular campus. When you fill out your FAFSA, you'll specify the college you plan to attend, and the FAFSA information will be automatically sent to that campus.

Also, be sure to check with your college for specific deadlines which may apply to funding programs. If you have questions, the financial aid office at your local college is a great resource!

What tax information do I need to complete my FAFSA?

For the 2017-18 FAFSA, you will use tax information from the 2015 year. This means when you file your FAFSA on October 1 you will use the tax information that you filed a few months before on April 15.





For example:

Award Year	FAFSA Available	Tax Filing Year to be Used
2017-18	October 1, 2016	2015
2018-19	October 1, 2017	2016

When you file your FAFSA, you will be asked to answer a few questions to determine your eligibility to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to input your tax information directly into the FAFSA form, which speeds up the application process. In the finances section of the FAFSA, you will see a "Link to IRS" button if you are eligible to use the tool. Click the "Link to IRS" button and log in to the IRS website to retrieve your tax information. Visit studentaid.ed.gov for more information.

Visit icanaffordcollege.com today to learn about the types of aid available at California's community colleges and to complete your FAFSA. Here, you'll also find information on application deadlines and eligibility requirements to help you determine the type of aid that's right for you. Or, visit your local community college financial aid office where you can get one-on-one help from start to finish with the application process. Begin your higher education journey today!

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*California Dream Act students are eligible to apply for state aid. Check with your local college financial aid, scholarship, EOPS, CARE or CalWORKS offices for assistance.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation, with 113 colleges annually serving 2.1 million students. For more information, visit CaliforniaCommunityColleges.cccco.edu.

Brought to you by the California Community Colleges, the "I Can Afford College" campaign informs current and prospective students and their families about the year-round availability of financial aid. For more information, visit icanaffordcollege.com.

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