



# Tips to Help You Complete the FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is made available January 1 of each year for completion for the upcoming academic year. It can be completed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). You must create a PIN at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) to sign the FAFSA, and this PIN carries over through your entire college career.

**Tip #1:** Do not pay to file your FAFSA. This is a FREE application at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

**Tip #2:** Take your time and read each question.

**Tip #3:** Use the help box to the right side of the screen when completing FAFSA on the Web (FOTW) if you do not understand what is being asked.

**Tip #4:** Take your time and enter Social Security numbers accurately.

**Tip #5:** When answering the marital status question for yourself or your parent, you must answer this as of the date you first complete the FAFSA. Ex: If your parents are separated and planning on getting a divorce when you are completing the FAFSA, you would indicate that parent is “divorced or separated” and the date they became separated. This is not to be changed as long as initially answered correctly.

**Tip #6:** If your parents are divorced, you should report information for the parent with whom you live with. If that parent is re-married, you must include step-parent’s information.

**Tip #7:** The household size includes only people in your parents’ household who they more than half support.

**Tip #8:** Include yourself in the number in the household who are in college as well as anyone else (brothers, sisters, etc.) who is enrolled at least part time EXCEPT your parents; parents cannot be included in college on the student’s FAFSA even if they are attending.

**Tip #9:** If you are completing the FAFSA before filing a Federal Tax Return and are planning to estimate the figures, estimate the answer to the question about income tax (paid) as \$0.

**Tip #10:** If you estimated when initially filing the FAFSA you must make a correction once the Federal Tax Return is filed. You should use IRS Data Retrieval, if able, to possibly reduce the amount of paperwork the Financial Aid Office may require of you and to make your FAFSA more accurate.

If you need help completing the FAFSA or making corrections you can always contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance. We can be contacted by phone at 304-696-3162, e-mail at [sfa@marshall.edu](mailto:sfa@marshall.edu) or in Old Main, Room 116. You can also ask your general questions on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/marshallsfa](http://www.facebook.com/marshallsfa)) by posting your question on the wall and someone from our office will reply.