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FAFSA/CADAA CHECKLIST

Follow these steps to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA) each year to apply for most types of financial aid.

1 Determine if you are an independent or dependent student

Independent: only report information about yourself and not your parent(s)
Dependent: report information about yourself and your parent(s) — most common

You are an **independent** student if at least **one** of the following is true about you:

- You will be 24 years of age or older as of Jan 2027
- You have a child or other dependent for whom you provide the majority of financial support
- You have a court-ordered legal guardian who is not your biological or adoptive parent
- You were in foster care at any point after age 13
- You were a ward of the court at any point after age 13
- You are married (but not separated or divorced)
- You are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- Your parents are incarcerated or deceased
- You are currently on active duty or are a veteran of the U.S. armed forces

If none of the above apply, you're a **dependent** student. If special circumstances prevent you from providing parental information, contact your college financial aid office.

2 All students need to collect the following information

Gather as many items on the list as you can, even if you're unable to collect them all.

- [ ] Student FSA ID or CADAA username and password
- [ ] Picture or copy of your social security card (if applicable)
- [ ] Picture or copy of your green card (if applicable)
- [ ] Photo ID, if you have one (ex. drivers license, state ID, passport, permanent residency card)
- [ ] Your 2025 federal tax forms (if applicable)
- [ ] Total current amount in your checking and savings accounts: $ _____
- [ ] Net worth of your investments: $ _____
- [ ] List of colleges you will apply to or current college you will continue attending

3

If you're a dependent student, collect this info for your parent(s). If your parents are divorced/separated, include info about the parent who provides the majority of your financial support. If that parent is remarried, include your stepparent.

General Information

Parent's current marital status: ☐ Single ☐ Married/Remarried ☐ Divorced/Separated ☐ Unmarried & living together ☐ Widowed

☐ FSA ID for one or both parents (if applicable)

	PARENT 1	PARENT 2
Full name (same as FSA ID):		
Date of birth:		
Social Security number or ITIN:		
Email address:		
Parent's move date to current state:		

Tax Information

☐ 2025 federal tax forms (1040 and all schedules)

☐ If 2025 taxes were not filed, what was the reason? _____

Financial Information

☐ Total current amount in checking and savings account(s): $ _____

☐ Net worth (value minus debt) of current stocks, bonds, mutual funds, 529 plans, etc.: $ _____

☐ Net worth of investment/rental property/rented portion of your home: $ _____

☐ Net worth of parent-owned business(es) and/or family farm(s): $ _____

☐ Amount of child support received in the past year for all children: $ _____

☐ Federal benefits (SNAP, WIC, TANF, etc.) received in 2025/2026: _____

Certain situations may impact how you report information on the FAFSA or CADAA. Contact your college(s) if:

- Your family's income has significantly changed since 2025 or after submitting your FAFSA or CADAA
- You and your family are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- Your parent's marital status has changed since 2025
- You have concerns about your or your parents' citizenship status
- Other major life/financial changes have occurred recently

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