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TAP/NYS DREAM ACT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Follow these steps to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the NYS Dream Act Application, and the NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) 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 in New York if any of the following are true about you:

· **If you are 35 years of age or older**, you are automatically considered independent

· **If you are 22 to 34 years of age**, you must establish financial independence by meetin the following criteria in 2026 and 2027:

- · Will not live in your parents' home or a building owned or leased by your parents even if you paid rent
- · **Will not be listed as a dependent of your parent on the federal or NY State tax returns, AND**
- · **Will not receive more than $750 in financial assistance (loans, gifts, etc.) from either or both parents**

· **If you are under 22 years of age as of June 30, 2026,** you must establish financial independence AND one of the following special conditions*:

- · Your parents are deceased or are totally and permanently disabled or have been declared incompetent by a court
- · **You are a ward of the court**
- · You are receiving public assistance under your own name**, **OR**
- · **You are financially independent due to a special circumstance that prevents you from providing parental information**

*You do not have to meet the special conditions if he/she:

- · Was married on or before December 31, 2026
- · Is enrolled as a graduate student in the 2026-2027 academic year
- · Received TAP as an independent student in the prior award year

** This does not include food stamps or unemployment insurance

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.

- ☐ NYS Dream Act account password (if applicable)
- ☐ TAP user ID and pin (also called HESCPIN user ID and pin)
- ☐ 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, perm. residency card)
- ☐ Your 2025 NYS tax return (Form IT-201 or IT-203)
- ☐ Income earned from work in 2025 $ _____
- ☐ List of colleges you will apply to or current college you will continue attending

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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) ☐ Picture of parent driver's license or state ID card

	PARENT 1	PARENT 2
Full name (same as FSA ID):		
Social Security number or ITIN:		

Tax and Financial Information

- ☐ 2025 NYS tax return (Form IT-201 or IT-203)
- ☐ 2025 federal tax forms (only if NYS taxes were not filed)
- ☐ If 2025 taxes were not filed, how much income did parents earn in 2025?
- ☐ If parents are divorced/separated, amount of support provided by noncustodial parent for this student: $ _____

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

- Your family's income has significantly changed since 2025 or after submitting your FAFSA
- 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

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