

FAFSA.ED.GOV

School Code: **041921**

Complete the **2015-2016** Application, you can complete the 2016-2017 as well if you like because you will be a crossover student. However, the most important right now is the 2015-2016 because that is the award year that we are currently in.

Most common mistakes:

First Bachelor's Degree by 7-1-2014: If you do not have a Bachelor's Degree please answer no to this question.

Grade Level in College: If you answered (no) to the above question your answer should be 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year, depending on the level you have completed. If you have never attended college before then your response should be 1st year, never attended college.

Have Children You Support?: There are cases where you may have children but your income does not show how you are able to not only support yourself but your child as well. The only time you should answer yes to this question is if you do indeed have a child and you are able to show proof of income that you are able to provide 50% or more of the support to your child. If you did not have any income in 2013 and you have a child then your answer to this question should be (NO).

Dependents Other Than Children/Spouse?: This is another very common mistake. If you have someone living with you, that does not always mean you are able to claim them as a Dependent. A Dependent is someone whom you provide 50% or more of your support to. This person is also someone who did not have any income in the Calendar Year of 2013, (ex: Your grandmother lives with you and does not work. You claimed your grandmother on your taxes but she actually received either Retirement or Social Security benefits throughout the year. You will be asked to add up the total household monthly expenses individually, which would be groceries, utilities and etc. Then we would divide that within the amount of people in the household. If the individual amount comes out to less than what your grandmother receives monthly from her Retirement or Social Security then you are not able to claim her as a Dependent).

Tax Return Filing Status: I will list each filing status and how you would consider yourself to fall under that category.

Head of Household: If you file Head of Household you must have an eligible person that you claim living in the household with you. If you are married and both of you receive an income but you receive more does not qualify you to file as Head of Household. You must be either single with a child or eligible Dependent or Married

but your spouse does not work and provides no income to the household and does not file taxes. He/she would then be considered your Dependent at that time since he/she receives his/her support from your income.

Single: If you filed single then you must not be married. This is only for those who have either never been married before or are divorced. This is not for those who are separated and have not yet been legally divorced.

Married Filing Separate Return: This is one of the most common mistakes of them all. If you filed Married Filing Separate Return this means you are indeed married but have been **SEPARATED** from your spouse for some time. This does not mean that you are married but filing individual returns because you do not want to file your taxes together. When filing this way and you were chosen for verification you will have to show proof that both you and your spouse live in separate homes and that each of you receive utility bills or equivalent to their household.

Married Filing Joint Return: This is for those who are married, live together and file their taxes together with their spouse.

When completing the FAFSA application and you arrive to the taxes portion, after answering the first series of questions you will the majority of the time be presented with the option to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. The only time you will not be presented with this option is if there were some unusual circumstances when filing your taxes. I strongly advise to use this tool if you are eligible to since this will save you from lots of manual entries and possible verification.

If you are not eligible to use the Data Retrieval Tool then please make sure when completing your application that you have your Tax Return at hand so that you can enter all the information correctly.

Make sure all personal information is entered correctly, especially your Social Security number. Please enter a valid email address so that we can email you as soon as we receive the application so that we can set up an appointment for you to come in and complete the process. Also, do not forget to enter your Driver's License number so that when we enter you into our system we can have all that information at hand already.

You must have a valid High School Diploma from an accredited High School or equivalent.