

Preparing to Complete the FAFSA

This lesson is designed for students to learn about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and prepare to complete the form

OBJECTIVES

Students will...

1. Identify the colleges they are applying to and research each school's financial aid requirements
2. Learn about the FAFSA
3. Learn how to create an FSA ID prior to completing the FAFSA

ACTIVITIES

PART 1

Content Knowledge

Pre-class activity

Students should complete the *Understanding College Affordability* lesson to research the cost of postsecondary education and identify the different ways of paying for it.

Students should watch MEFA's *Understanding the FAFSA* webinar to learn about the FAFSA and become familiar with key terms included in the worksheet below.

PART 2

Applying Information

Students should watch MEFA's [90-second tutorial](#) on creating an FSA ID.

Students should then create an FSA ID on [Studentaid.gov](#). Both the student and one custodial parent will need to create an FSA ID.

Students should save their FSA ID and password in a safe place, as they will need this information to access the FAFSA and sign the form electronically. The student is now ready to complete the FAFSA when it becomes available on October 1st.

PART 3

Evaluating Information

Have students log in to MEFA Pathway and navigate to their *My College List* page under the *Search Colleges* tab. For each college they are applying to, have students click on the college to view the details page. Students should scroll to the bottom and click on the college's website link to check admissions and financial aid deadlines. Add all of the colleges' admissions and financial aid deadlines, along with all additional required forms, to the *College Application Manager* included below.

Grade Level: 11

MEFA PATHWAY SECTIONS WITHIN THIS LESSON:

- My College List

DOMAIN:

- Financial Literacy

TIME:

- 45 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Internet connection to work with the MEFA Pathway website
- College Timeline/Checklist (included)
- MEFA's [Understanding the FAFSA](#) webinar

VOCAB:

- FAFSA
- FSA ID

FUTURE READY SKILLS:

- Time Management
- Communication
- Organization



LESSON PLAN

College Application Manager

As you explore schools and build your college list, keep track of your details here. Remember that deadlines are critical when applying to college and requesting financial aid, so set reminders to ensure you submit all applications on time.

School Name	Admissions Deadline	Send SAT, ACT, or Neither	Required Financial Aid Forms	Financial Aid Deadline	Notes

*If you're applying Early Action or Early Decision to a school, your admissions and financial aid deadlines will be earlier than the standard admissions and financial aid deadlines. Make sure to note these earlier deadlines here if applicable.

Key FAFSA Terms

- **FSA ID:** A username and password that allows a student to log in to federal financial aid websites. Both the student and one custodial parent will need an FSA ID to submit the FAFSA. You can learn more about the FSA ID [here](#).
- **Federal School Code:** A unique number assigned to each college and university that provides federal financial aid to students. Families will need to list these codes on the FAFSA to indicate the schools to which the student is applying. You can learn more about listing schools on the FAFSA [here](#).
- **Custodial Parent:** For families with divorced or separated parents, the parent with whom the student has lived the most over the previous 12 months. You can learn more about the custodial parent [here](#).
- **Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** A calculated number intended to reflect the monetary amount that a family can pay for one year of college costs. A family's EFC will appear immediately on the confirmation page once the FAFSA is submitted, and each college will use the EFC to determine the student's financial aid offer. You can read more about the EFC [here](#).
- **Student Aid Report (SAR):** A summary of the information that a family has provided on the FAFSA, as well as notification of basic federal financial aid eligibility. Students receive a SAR soon after submitting a FAFSA. Read more about the SAR [here](#).
- **IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT):** A resource provided by the Department of Education and IRS that allows a family to pull tax return data electronically into the FAFSA from the IRS website. You can learn more about the IRS DRT [here](#).