

# College Goal FAFSA Talking Points



*These talking points are great to use for Radio, TV, or for short print articles.*

For questions or further information please contact:  
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## Questions and Answers

**Q:** *What is College Goal FAFSA?*

**A:** College Goal FAFSA is a financial aid initiative that the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education has been proud to coordinate for the last 20 years. College Goal FAFSA provides information and **FREE** professional assistance to students and families seeking college financial aid. High school seniors or returning adults who are planning to enter college this year can get free help to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is the 1<sup>st</sup> critical step in applying for financial aid.

There will be over 300 higher education professionals and community members at sites across the state available to provide face to face help. For those who are not able to make it, there is no need to worry as we have line by line FAFSA instructions on the Arizona College Goal FAFSA website [www.collegegoal.az.gov/college-goal-fafsa](http://www.collegegoal.az.gov/college-goal-fafsa).

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**Q:** *What is the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education?*

**A:** We connect students and families with money for college! The Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education (ACPE) is a State Agency that administers Arizona State student aid programs and the Arizona Family College Savings Program (529 Plans). The Commission provides help to students and families in preparing for and succeeding in college, especially with financial aid. Lastly, the Commission has 16 commissioners that represent all sectors of higher education who come together to solve problems and help students succeed in college.

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**Q:** *Why is it important that students and families complete the FAFSA?*

**A:** Over 80% of all student financial assistance is provided by the federal government, totaling over \$150 billion each year. The FAFSA is the 1<sup>st</sup> critical step in applying for financial aid. Additionally, the FAFSA is often required in order for students to apply for state aid, scholarships or financial assistance from their institution.

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**Q:** *When should students complete the FAFSA?*

**A:** Right now! The FAFSA for the 2017-18 academic year became available October 1<sup>st</sup> at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). It may be filled out any time during the academic year, however, we urge students to have their FAFSA filed by their college's and university's priority filling deadlines. It is to a student's advantage to receive their financial aid award offers as early as possible.

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**Q:** *What information will students and parents need to have when they sit down to fill out the FAFSA?*

**A:** In order to complete the FAFSA you will need to have your social security number (SSN). If you did not file taxes for 2015, then you will also need your income information for the 2015 calendar year. This could include W-2 forms, federal tax returns, records of untaxed income (e.g. child support, worker's compensation) and veteran's non-education benefits. Additionally, you will need current checking/savings account balances, investment values (e.g. stocks, saving bonds), business value, and investment farm value. Students who are considered "dependent" for financial aid purposes will need to provide their parents financial information as well. Students can get a complete list of what is needed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

For additional help, use our 2017-2018 checklist: <https://collegegoal.az.gov/sites/default/files/2017-2018%20FAFSA%20Checklist.pdf>.

If you want to sign your FAFSA electronically, you will need an FSA ID. Visit <https://fsaid.ed.gov> to obtain one for the student and one for the parent.

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**Q:** *Where can students and families find the location nearest to them and get additional information?*

**A:** Families may find the locations and helpful financial aid resources such as how to search and apply for scholarships, wise student loan borrowing and identify theft information on the College and Career Goal Arizona website [www.collegegoal.az.gov](http://www.collegegoal.az.gov) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/CollegeGoalArizona](http://www.facebook.com/CollegeGoalArizona). For those who are not able to make it to a workshop, there is no need to worry as there are line by line FAFSA instructions available on the website as well.

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**Q:** *What are the top three mistakes students make when completing the form on their own that they should be aware of?*

**A:** The most common error, believe it or not, is related to general data entry. Too often, students and parents do not review and check their FAFSA before submitting it. It is important that you use your full legal name as it appears on your social security card. No nicknames. You will want to make sure that you also double check to make sure that your SSN and date of birth (DOB) are correct as well. Sometimes parents accidentally enter their SSN instead of the student's SSN. Review the FAFSA to make sure you do not have data entry errors such as adding an extra zero to income information. General data entry errors can result in a delay in your FAFSA being processed.

Another common error is answering the income/tax information incorrectly. It is important to carefully read the questions and make sure you are providing the requested information. If you are not sure of what a question is asking, you can get help by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) or by using the online "Chat with us" option at [https://studentaidhelp.ed.gov/app/chat/chat\\_launch/chat\\_data/cv9pZD0xJnN0YXRiPTYm/request\\_source/7](https://studentaidhelp.ed.gov/app/chat/chat_launch/chat_data/cv9pZD0xJnN0YXRiPTYm/request_source/7).

Additionally, students often make errors when answering the questions related to their dependency. Students believe that if they are not living at home and are financially independent that they are "independent" for federal financial aid purposes as well. Most likely this is not the case. When reviewing the questions it is important that students answer correctly as errors here can result in long delays. If a student has an extenuating circumstance that they cannot reflect on the FAFSA then they need to speak with the financial aid office at their college, university or vocational school to learn what they can do to have this information taken into consideration.