2023-2024 FAFSA
The Essentials

Presented by:

CASFAA Financial Aid Administrators

CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION

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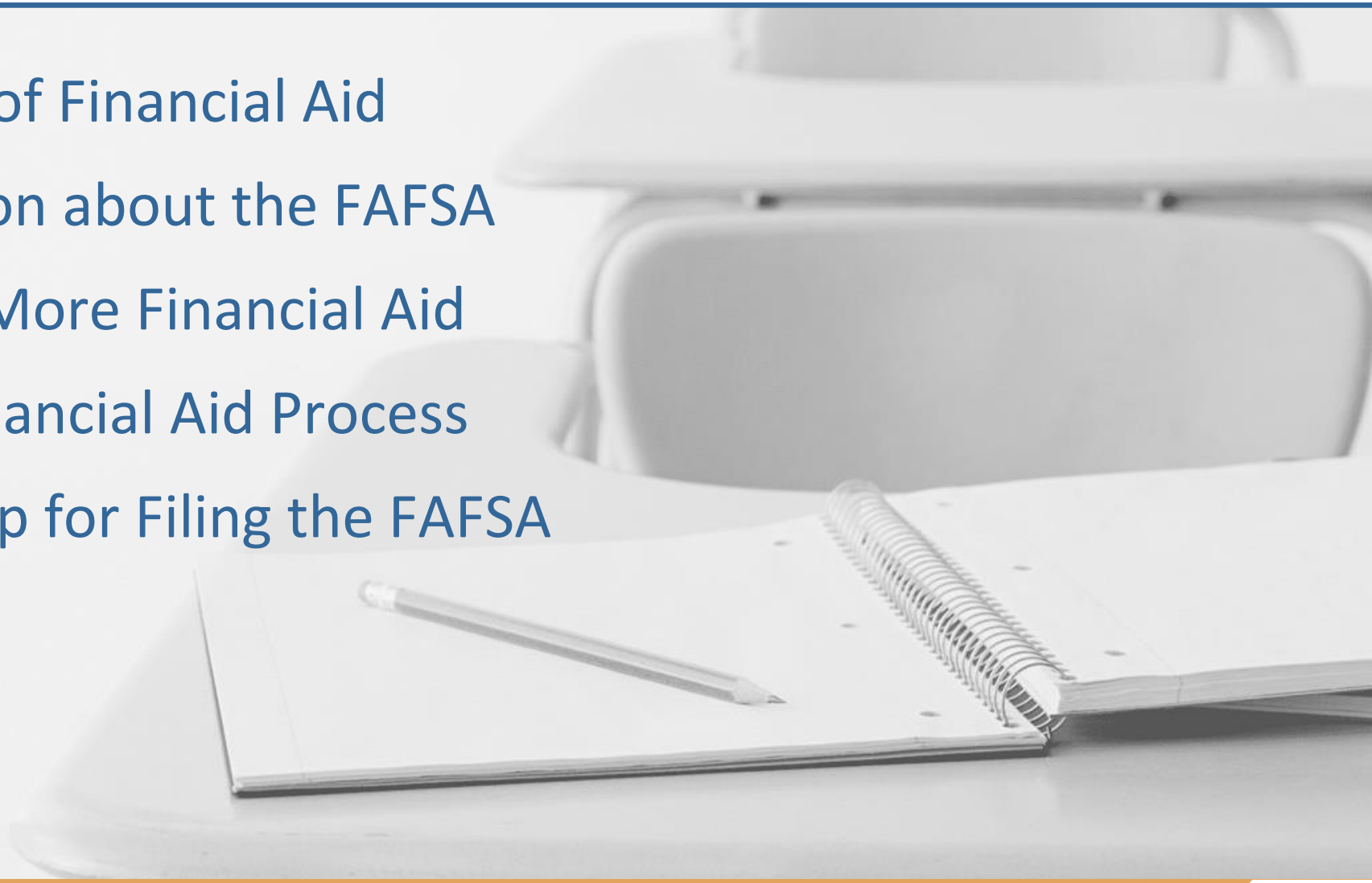
Presentation Authors

- **Mark Kantrowitz**
  - Co-author of *Filing the FAFSA*
  - Author of *How to Appeal for More College Financial Aid*
  - Helped develop the online FAFSA in 1996
- **David Levy**
  - Co-author of *Filing the FAFSA*
  - Served as Director of Financial Aid at many of the nation's leading colleges
- **California Financial Aid Administrators**

What Will You Learn at this Workshop?

1. Types and Sources of Financial Aid
2. Essential Information about the FAFSA
3. How to appeal for More Financial Aid
4. Summary of the Financial Aid Process
5. Sources of Free Help for Filing the FAFSA



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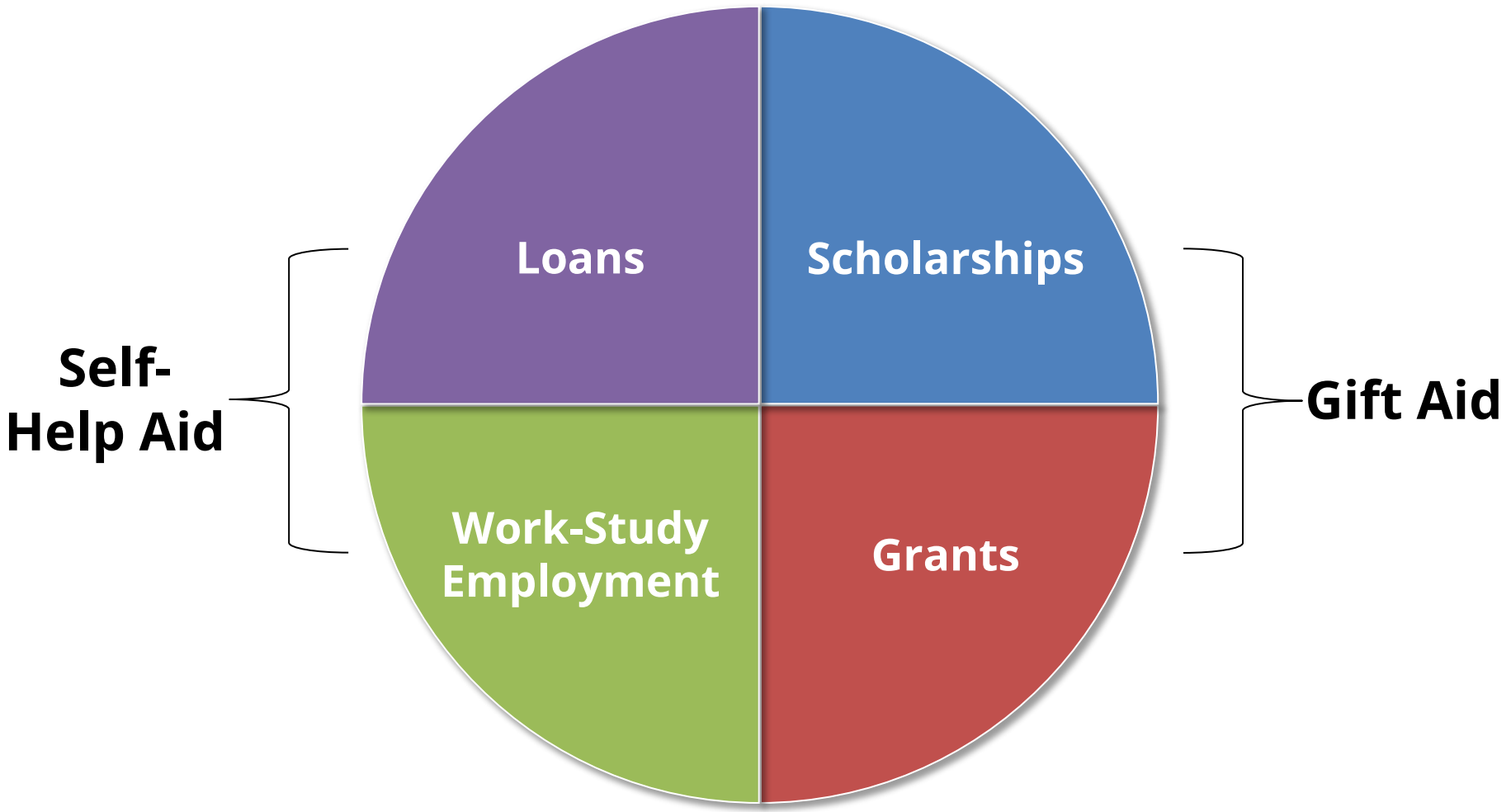
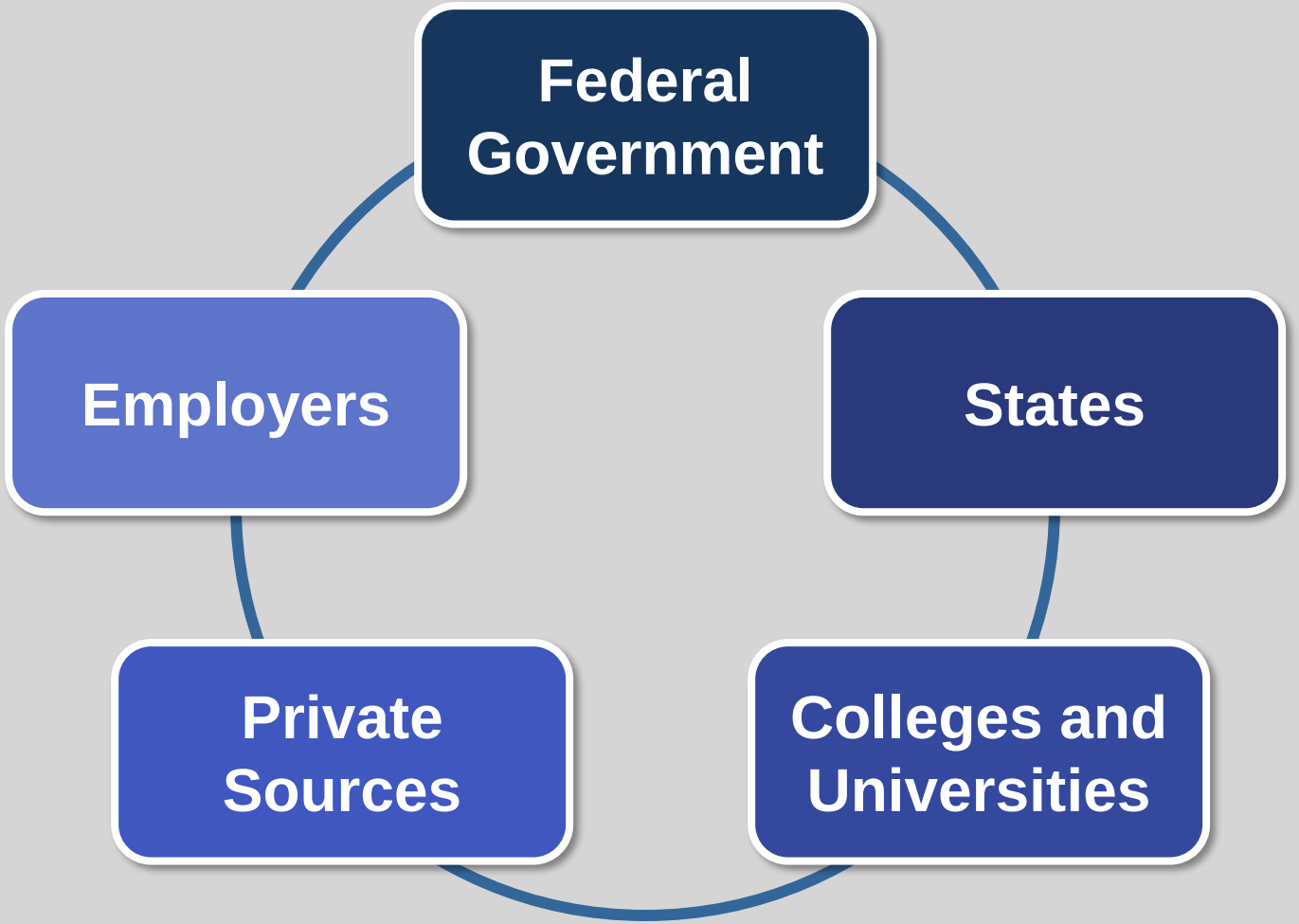
Types and Sources of Financial Aid

Types of Financial Aid



Sources of Financial Aid



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Federal Student Financial Aid Programs

Program	Award Amount	Notes
Pell Grant	Up to $6,895	Lifetime Eligibility 600% (max)
FSEOG (grant)	Up to $4,000	Priority to Pell eligible students
TEACH Grant	Up to $3,728*	Requires service contract otherwise converts to unsubsidized loan
Iraq & Afghanistan Service Grant	Up to 5,717.11*	Equal to Pell Grant – 6.8%
Work Study	Varies by school	On and off-campus employment
Direct Student Loan	$3,500- $12,500 (undergrad level)	Interest subsidy during periods of enrollment of at least half-time for Subsidized Direct Loan

2

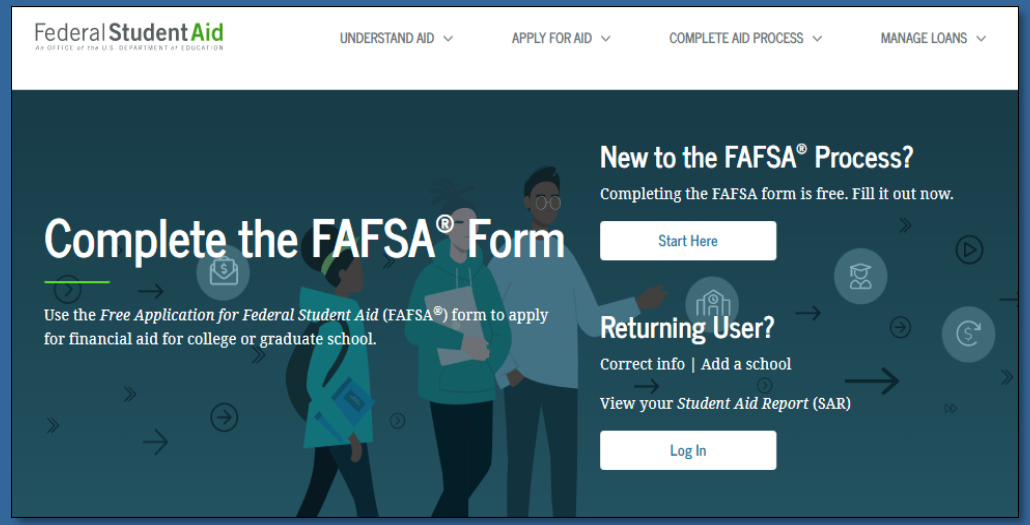
Essential Information about the FAFSA

What is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- Collects student and parent(s) income, assets and household information
- Calculates the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), a measure of the family's ability to pay for college
- Need-based student financial aid from:
  - Federal government
  - State government, and
  - Most colleges and universities

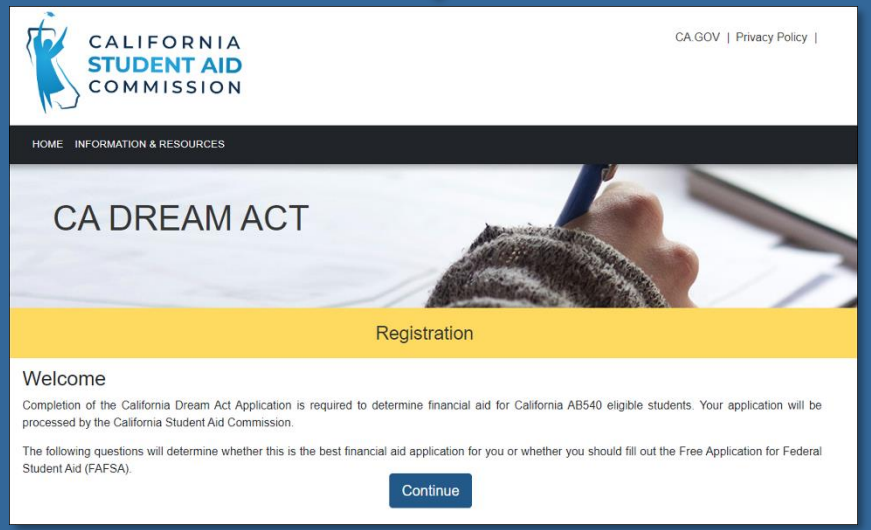
Which Financial Aid Application to Submit?

- ❑ U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen



studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa

- ❑ No SSN or DACA SSN
- ❑ TPS status, U Visa
- ❑ With AB 540 status



www.caldreamact.org

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Where to File the FAFSA?

studentaid.gov

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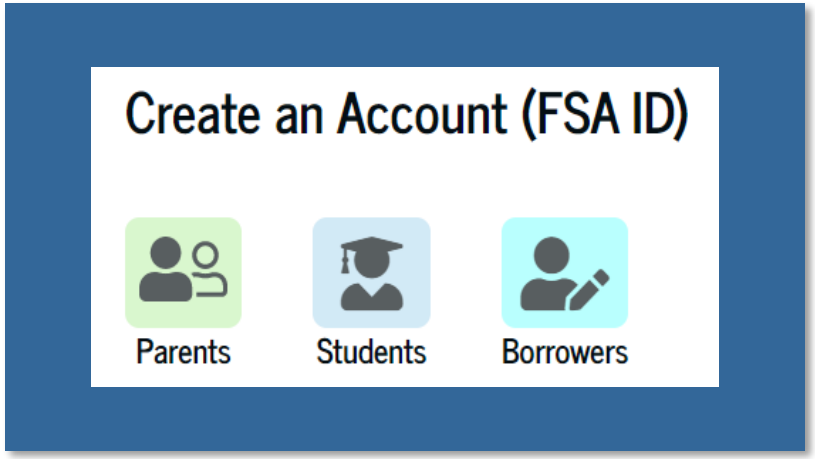
When to File the FAFSA?

- File the FAFSA on or after October 1st of the senior year in high school and annually after that
- File the FAFSA as soon as possible to qualify for more grants
- File the FAFSA even before submitting college admissions applications
- In California, there is a March 2nd deadline to file the FAFSA to qualify for specific state grants

FSA ID

The FSA ID is a digital signature used to sign the FAFSA, Direct Loan and Parent PLUS loan Master Promissory notes, and to access federal student aid sites.

- Student creates their own
- Parent creates their own
  - SSN and Date of Birth needed
- Common mistakes:
  - SSNs switched
  - Parent creates password for student, or
  - Student creates one for parent
- Can log in with a verified mobile phone number
- FSA ID Help: (800) 433-3243



Sections of the FAFSA

1 – Student Demographics

2 – School Selection

3 – Dependency Status

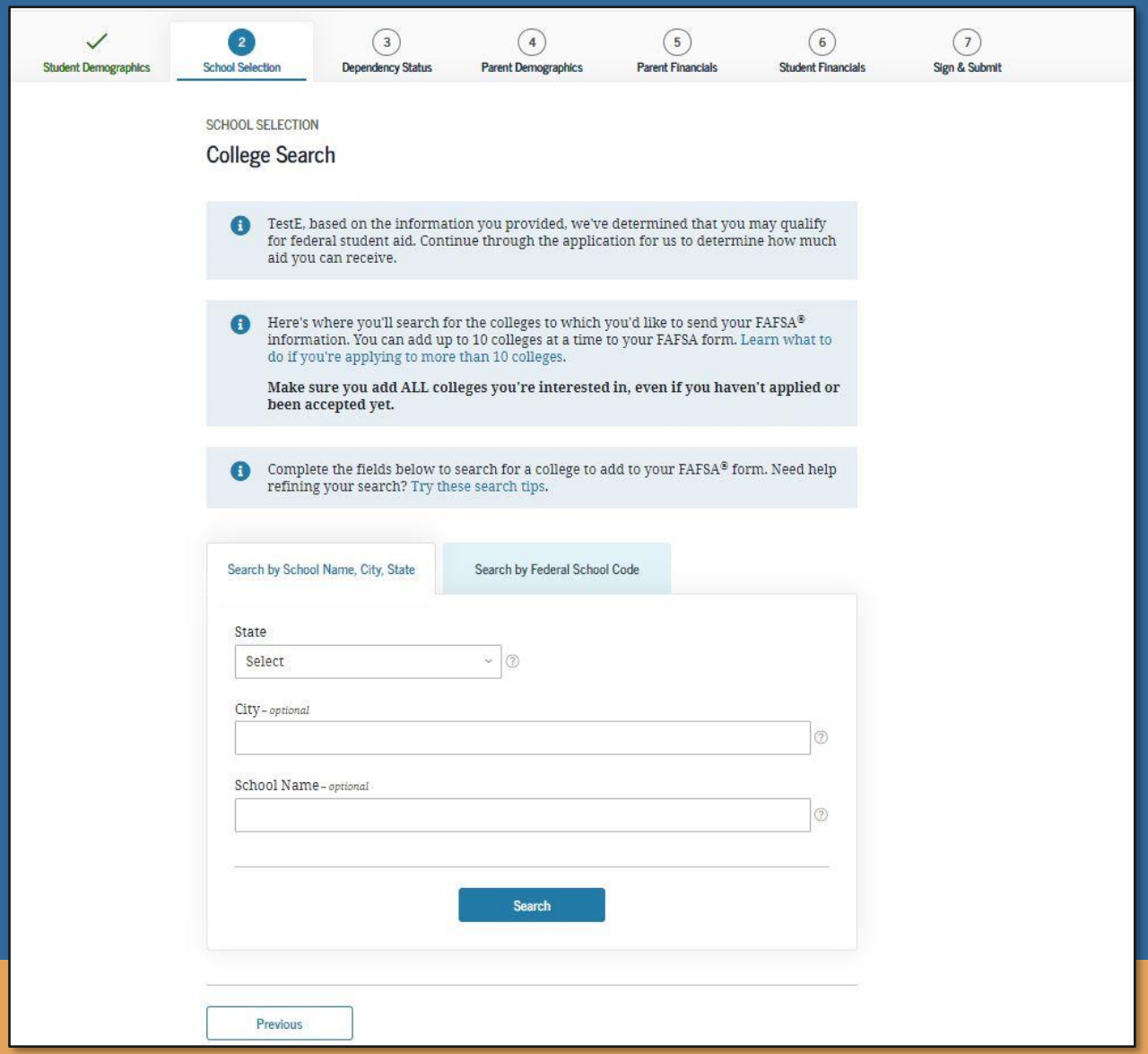
4 – Parent Demographics

5 – Parent Financials

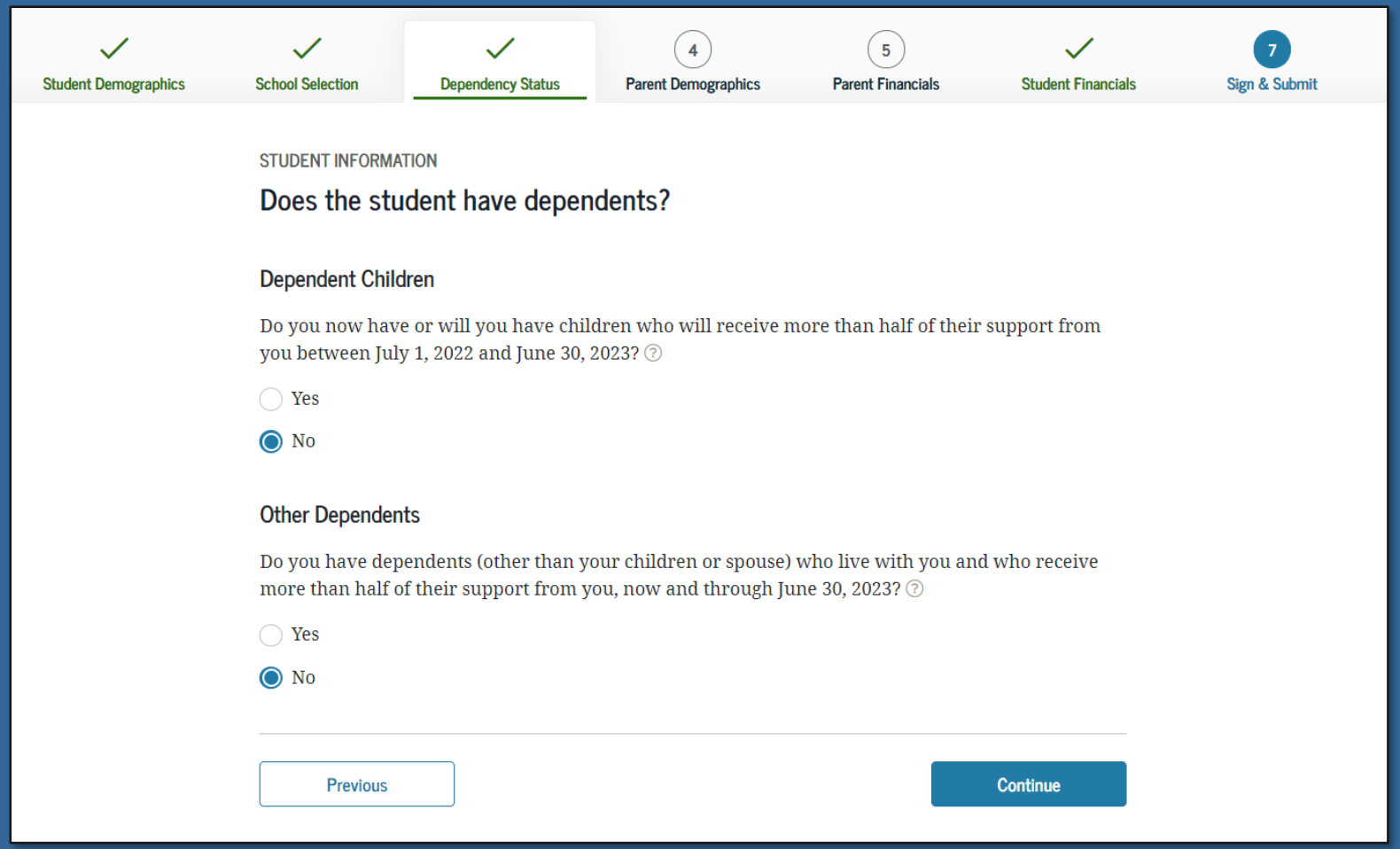
6 – Student Financials

7 – Sign and Submit

School Selection



Dependency Determination



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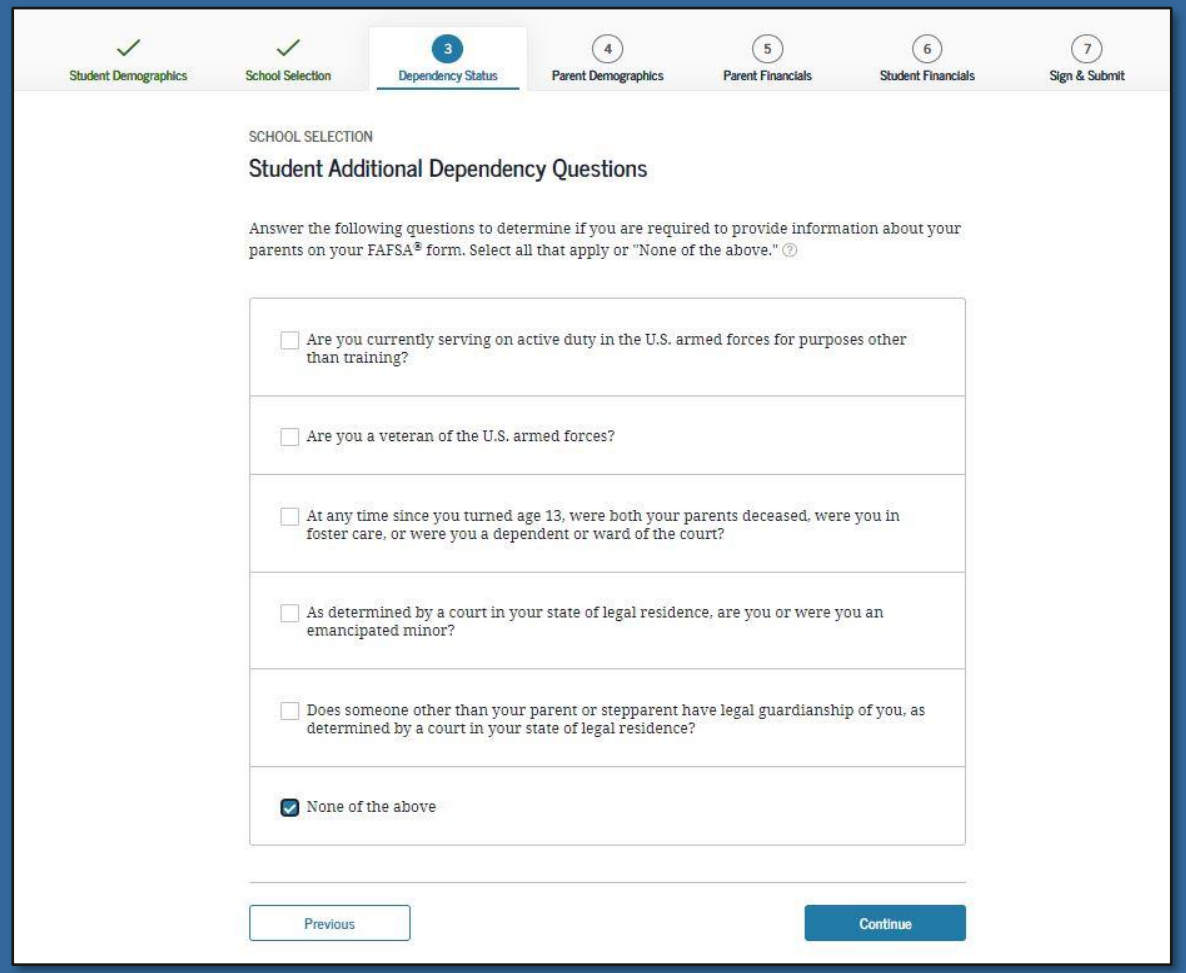
Dependency Determination



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Foster Youth, Orphan

Answer **YES** (mark the box) if at any time since the student turned age 13, he/she was in foster care, even if they are no longer in foster care today due to:

- Adoption
- Reunification
- Reached the age of majority (18 yrs.) in California

Note: Documentation may be required

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Emancipated Minor

Answer **YES** (mark the box) if the student:

- As of today, is an emancipated minor, or
- Was an emancipated minor immediately before turning 18 years old

Note: Documentation (issued from a court in the student's state of legal residence) may be required

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Legal Guardianship

YES

- Students can provide a copy of a court's decision that, as of today, they are in a legal guardianship
- Students can provide a copy of a court's decision that they were in a legal guardianship immediately before he or they reached the age of being an adult in their state
- The court was located in the state of legal residence for the student at the time the court's decision was issued

NO

- Student is still a minor and the court decision is no longer in effect
- Court decision was not in effect at the time the student became an adult
- Guardianship was established by an attorney but not ordered by a court

Homeless, Unaccompanied Youth

Select **YES** if any time after **July 1, 2022**, the student is an unaccompanied youth who is-

- Homeless OR
- Self-supporting and at risk of homelessness

"Homeless" or "Risk of being Homeless"

Lacking fixed, regular and adequate housing. Includes living in shelters, parks, motels, hotels, public spaces, camping grounds, cars, abandoned buildings, or temporarily living with other people because the student has no where else to go.

"Unaccompanied"

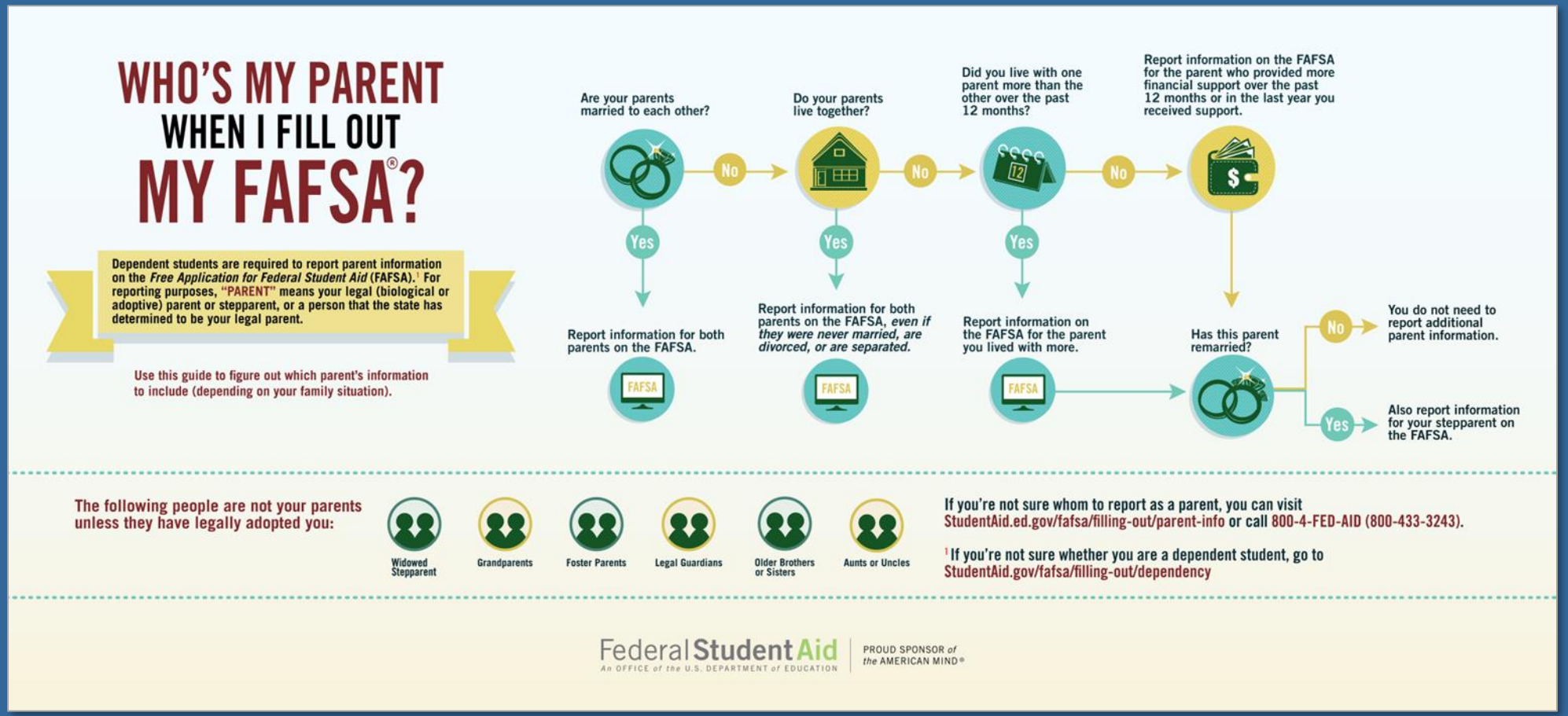
Not living in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

"Youth"

Under 24 years of age

Resources for homeless students: NAEHCY.org

Whose Information Goes on a FAFSA?



studentaid.gov/help/who-is-parent

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Did you live with one parent more than the other over the past 12 months?

No

Report information on the FAFSA for the parent who provided more financial support over the past 12 months or in the last year you received support.

Yes

you lived with more.

FAFSA

FAFSA

this parent remarried?

No

You do not need to report additional parent information.

Yes

Also report information for your stepparent on the FAFSA.

The following people are not your parents unless they have *legally adopted* you:

IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT)

The DRT imports federal tax return information onto the FAFSA

- Must have valid Social Security Number and own email address

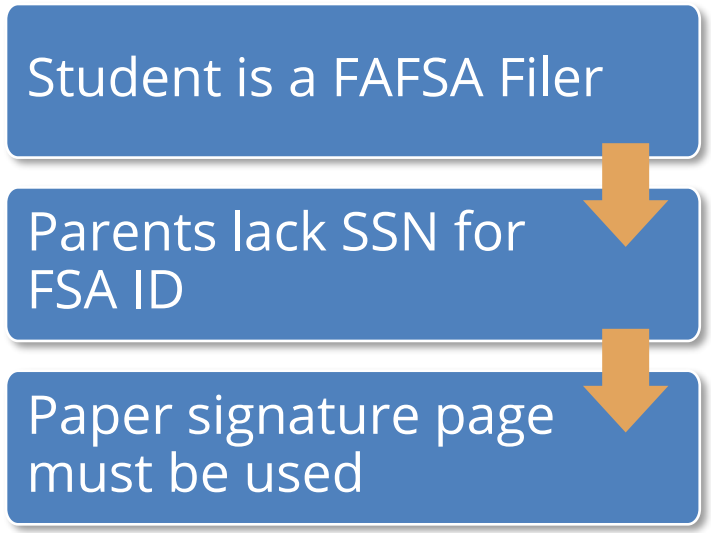
Who isn't eligible to use it?

- Victim of Identity Theft
- Married student or parent who –
  - Filed as Married Filing Separately or Head of Household
- Parent's marital status is "Unmarried" and both legal parents are living together

Which Year's Information is Reported?

- Assets are reported as of the date the FAFSA is filed
- Income is based on the second previous tax year (the prior-prior year)
  - Example: The 2023-2024 FAFSA is based on income and tax information from 2021
  - Do not substitute 2022 income and tax information for 2021 income and tax information
  - If the family income has changed, file an appeal with the college financial aid office

Parent Signature Page for FAFSA Filers

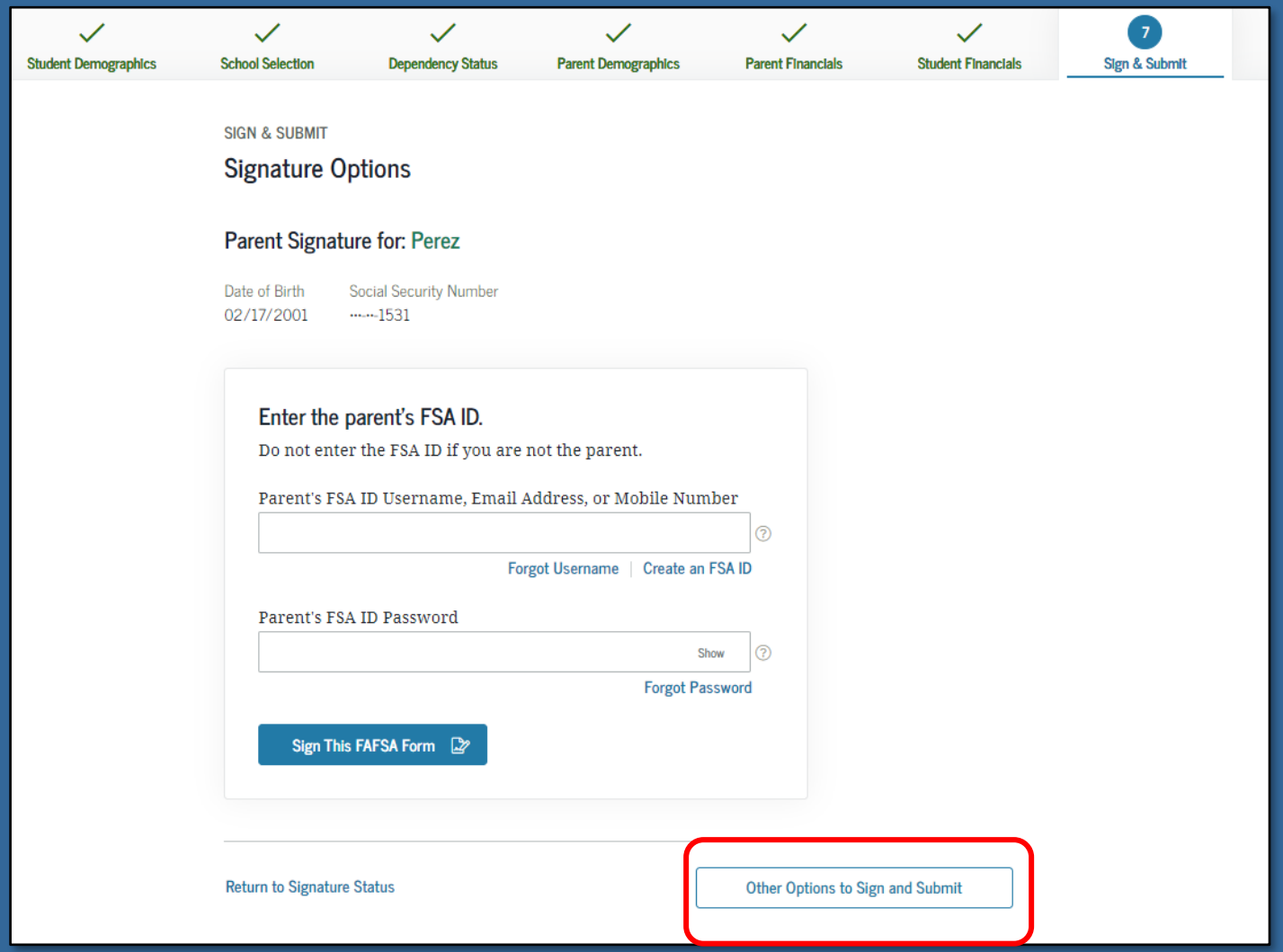


If a student is a FAFSA filer but the parent does not have or is unable to create an FSA ID, they can print a signature page by selecting **Print Signature Page** on the “My FAFSA” or “Signature Status” page.

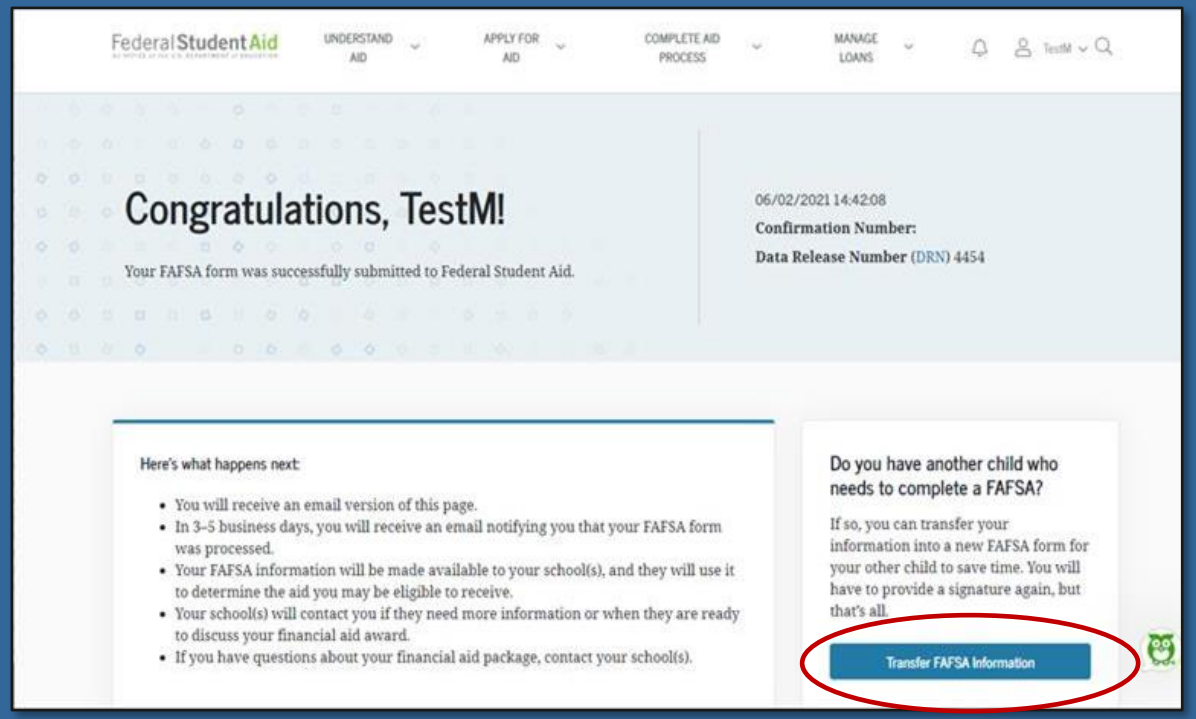
Use **regular mail** (tracking or special handling may result in the signature page not being processed), the completed signature page must be mailed to the address listed on the printed page.

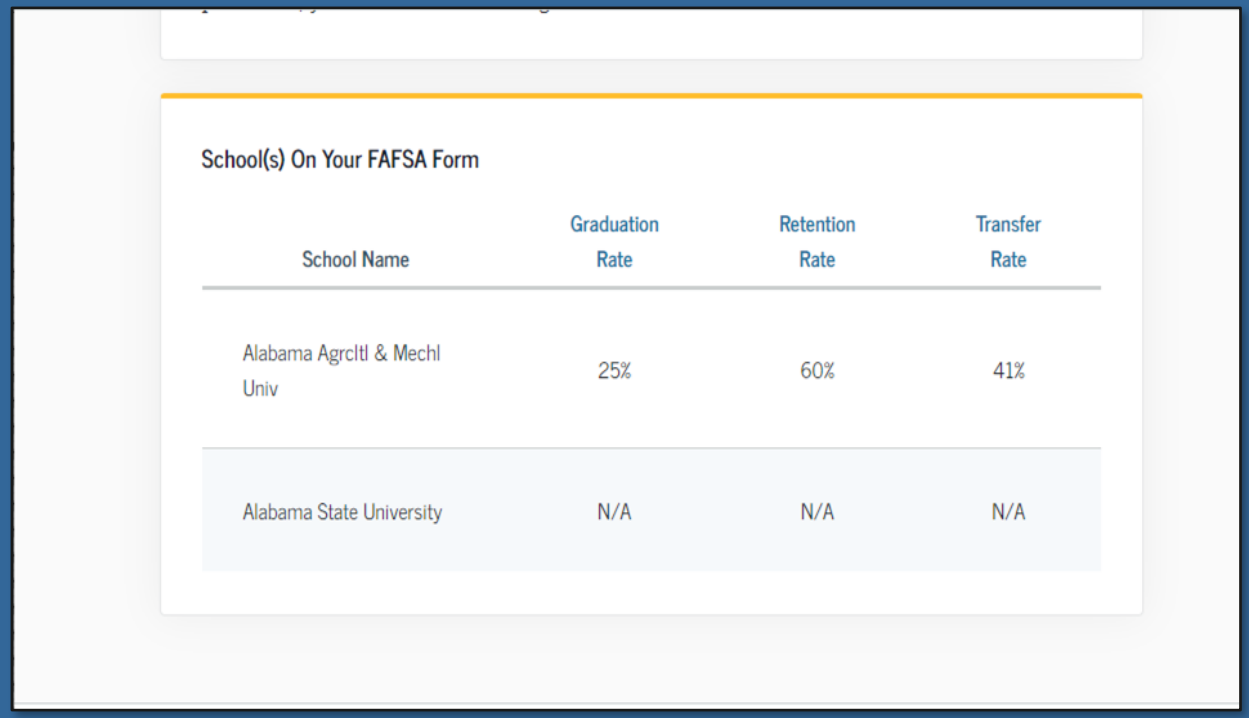
Signature pages are rejected if they don’t contain applicant or parent signatures, or if the signatures on the page don’t meet specific rules and guidelines.

Signature Option



Confirmation Page





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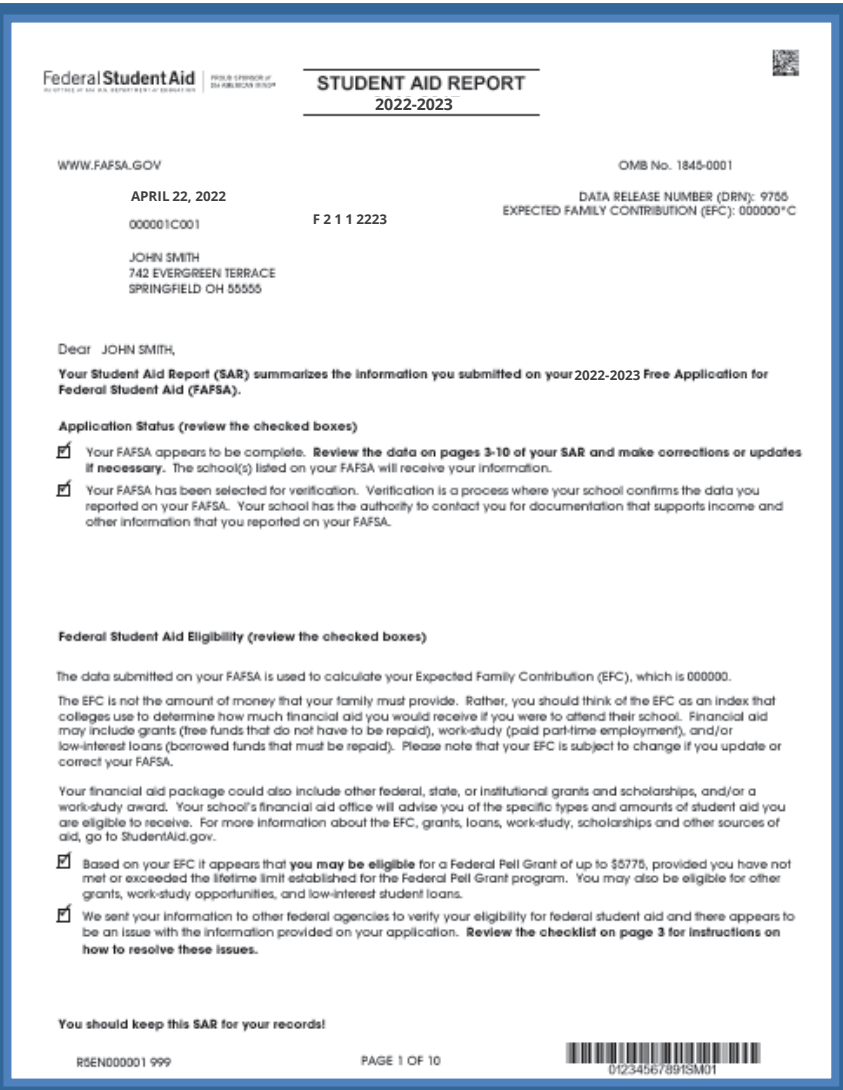
Common Errors on the FAFSA

- Confuse student and parent information. I/You/Your refers to the student, not the parent
- Include cents when reporting dollar amounts
- Double-check even basic demographic items, such as name, date of birth, Social Security Number, address and zip code
- Swap child support *paid* with child support *received*
- Head of Household tax filing status is prone to error and may trigger verification
- Reporting qualified retirement plans, the family home and small family businesses as assets
- 529 plans are reported based on the owner, not the beneficiary

Student Aid Report (SAR)



Federal Student Aid

STUDENT AID REPORT
2022-2023

WWW.FAFSA.GOV

OMB No. 1845-0001

APRIL 22, 2022

DATA RELEASE NUMBER (DRN): 9755
EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION (EFC): 000000*C

000001C001

F 2 1 1 2223

JOHN SMITH
742 EVERGREEN TERRACE
SPRINGFIELD OH 55555

Dear JOHN SMITH,

Your Student Aid Report (SAR) summarizes the information you submitted on your 2022-2023 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Application Status (review the checked boxes)

☑ Your FAFSA appears to be complete. **Review the data on pages 3-10 of your SAR and make corrections or updates if necessary.** The school(s) listed on your FAFSA will receive your information.

☑ Your FAFSA has been selected for verification. Verification is a process where your school confirms the data you reported on your FAFSA. Your school has the authority to contact you for documentation that supports income and other information that you reported on your FAFSA.

Federal Student Aid Eligibility (review the checked boxes)

The data submitted on your FAFSA is used to calculate your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is 000000.

The EFC is not the amount of money that your family must provide. Rather, you should think of the EFC as an index that colleges use to determine how much financial aid you would receive if you were to attend their school. Financial aid may include grants (free funds that do not have to be repaid), work-study (paid part-time employment), and/or low-interest loans (borrowed funds that must be repaid). Please note that your EFC is subject to change if you update or correct your FAFSA.

Your financial aid package could also include other federal, state, or institutional grants and scholarships, and/or a work-study award. Your school's financial aid office will advise you of the specific types and amounts of student aid you are eligible to receive. For more information about the EFC, grants, loans, work-study, scholarships and other sources of aid, go to StudentAid.gov.

☑ Based on your EFC it appears that **you may be eligible** for a Federal Pell Grant of up to $6775, provided you have not met or exceeded the lifetime limit established for the Federal Pell Grant program. You may also be eligible for other grants, work-study opportunities, and low-interest student loans.

☑ We sent your information to other federal agencies to verify your eligibility for federal student aid and there appears to be an issue with the information provided on your application. **Review the checklist on page 3 for instructions on how to resolve these issues.**

You should keep this SAR for your records!

R6EN000001 999

PAGE 1 OF 10

01234567891SM01

- After the student completes the online FAFSA, a SAR will be sent to the student
  - An electronic SAR Acknowledgement will be sent if student provides an e-mail address
  - A paper SAR will be mailed if no student e-mail address is provided
- An electronic copy of the data will be sent to each college or university listed by the student in Section Two
- Student should keep a copy of the SAR with other financial aid documents

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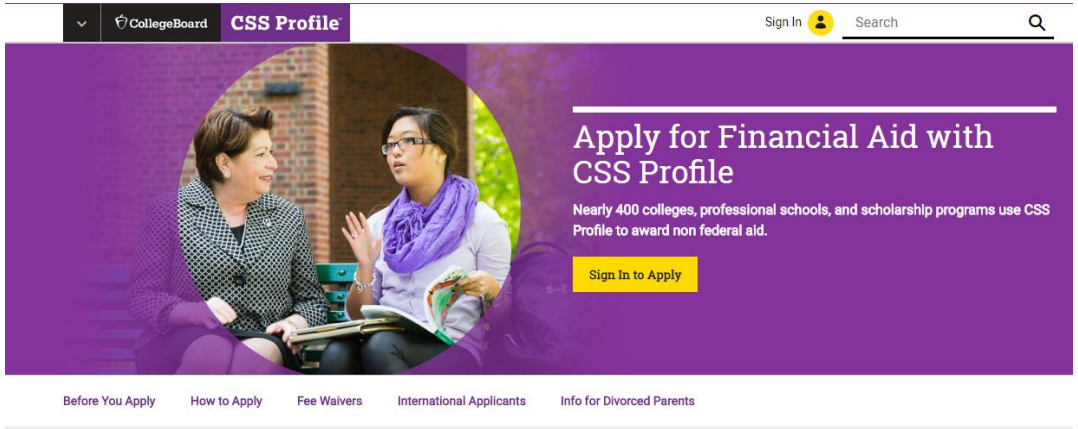
CSS Profile (for institutional aid)

- Some private colleges and non-CA public college systems, as well as some scholarship competitions, ask for additional information such as home equity, income and assets from non-custodial parents, retirement plans, etc.
- Not used for awarding federal or state financial aid - only aid from the colleges/universities
- Cost - $25 for registration & one college, $16 for additional colleges
- Online Registration only
  cssprofile.collegeboard.org



3

How to Appeal for More Financial Aid

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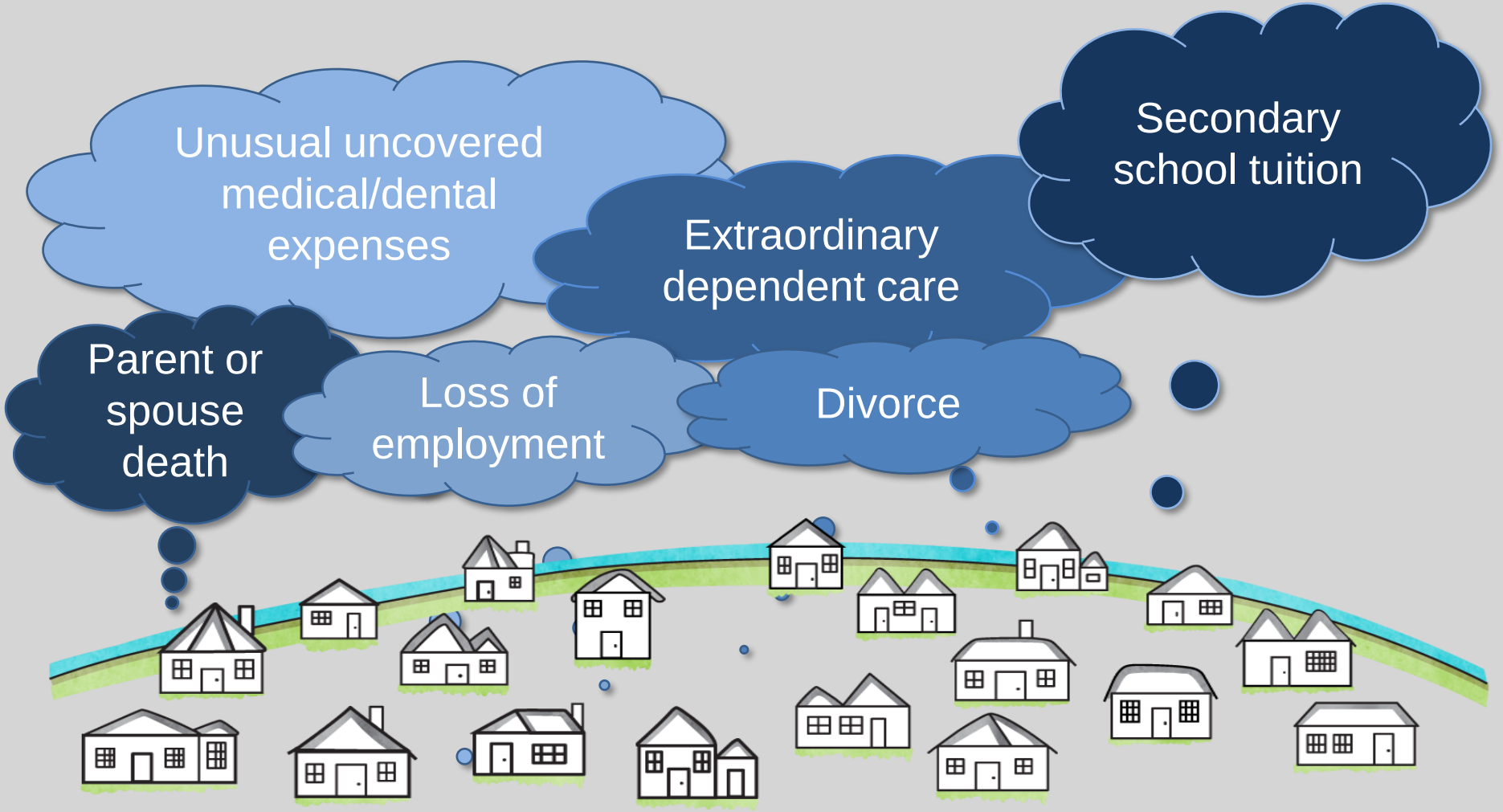
Special Circumstances



Special Circumstances

Income Adjustments

- Reduction of earnings
  - Employment status
  - COVID-19 Pandemic
  - Loss of benefits
  - Marital status
  - Medical/Dental expenses not covered by insurance
  - Unusual dependent care expenses

Dependency Status

- Make a dependent student independent if unusual circumstances exist
  - Abusive family environment
  - Abandonment by parents
  - Inability to locate parents

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Financial Aid Appeals

- Appeal for more aid if the family is affected by special financial circumstances
- Provide documentation of the special circumstances and their financial impact
- Adjustments are more likely if the circumstances were beyond the family's control
- Families can appeal for more aid at any time, even in the middle of the academic year
- A free tip sheet about how to appeal for more financial aid is available at kantrowitz.com/books/appeal/

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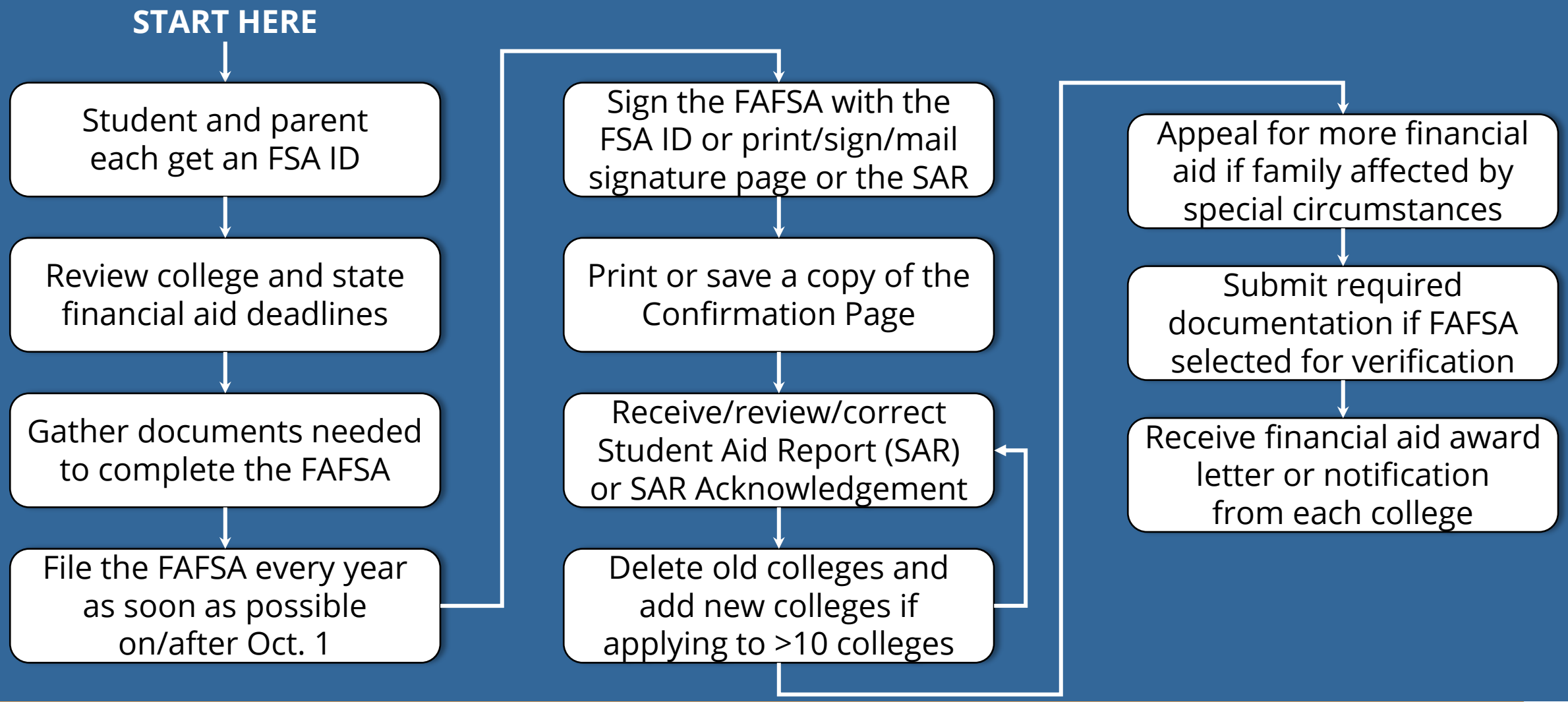
Summary of the Financial Aid Process

Summary of the Financial Aid Process



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Student's Responsibility

- Student completes FAFSA or CA Dream App (CADAA)
- College determines eligibility, evaluates need, notifies student if selected for verification, and requests additional documentation
- Students must check their email and the college portal and submit all requested documentation

INCOMPLETE FILE = NO MONEY!

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5

Sources of Free Help

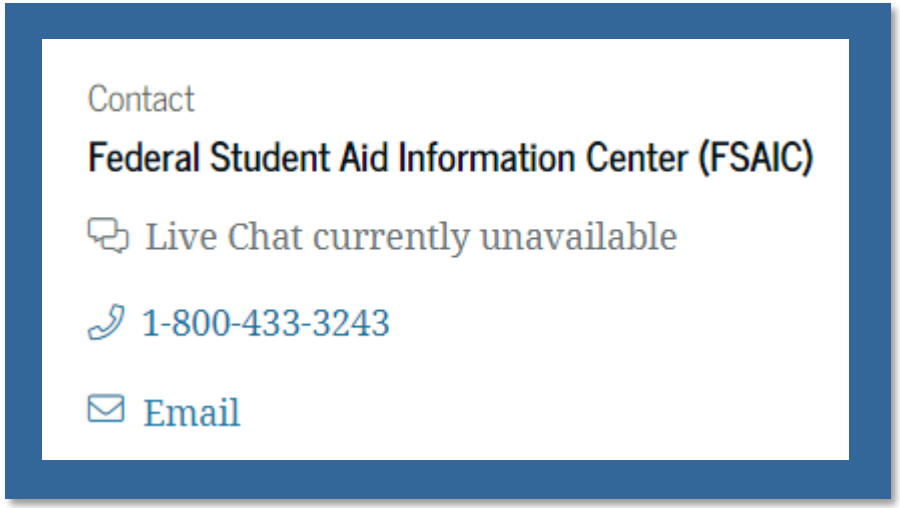
Financial Aid Toolkit for Counselors

financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov

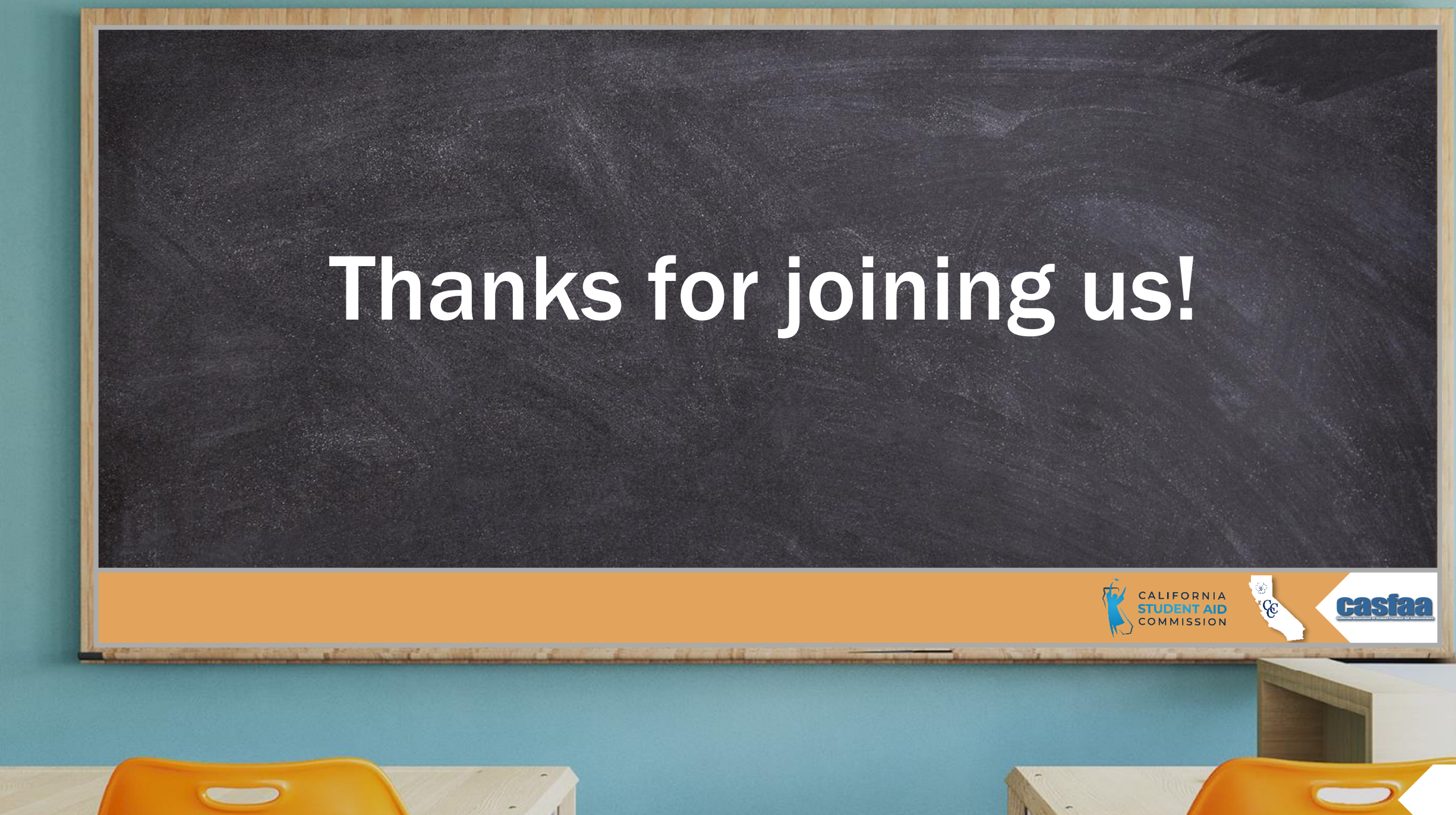
- Host an event
- Make a presentation
- Target specific audiences
- Use social media
- Write articles and emails
- Share Public Service Announcements

Federal Student Aid Assistance

- Find Answers to Common Questions About the FAFSA® Process https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out/help
- Online assistance and contact information for Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC)
  - 1-800-433-3243
  - https://studentaid.gov/help-center/contact



Coming in 2024-2025…
FAFSA Simplification!

Q&A

Thanks for joining us!