



Inform Students Experiencing Homelessness of the FAFSA: Use This Email Template

It is important to remind students that the FAFSA is available so they can pursue postsecondary education with as much financial aid as possible. Direct outreach to unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness is crucial.

The email template below can be used by liaisons, service providers, and financial aid administrators to inform students experiencing homelessness that the 2022-2023 FAFSA is now available, and specific steps to help them complete the application. We make this resource available as a template that may be edited to meet the specific needs of your students and your organization/school.

Subject Line: It's FAFSA Time!

The 2022-2023 FAFSA is now open! **Did you know that the earlier you apply, the more money for school you can get?**

Please see below for steps you should take and things to consider. Reach out to **[INSERT NAME HERE]** if you'd like help completing your application.

1. Gather the Documents You Need

- Your Social Security number
- Your driver's license number if you have one
- Your Alien Registration number if you are not a U.S. citizen

- Federal tax information or tax returns including IRS W-2 information, for you (and your spouse, if you are married), and for your parents if you are a dependent student: IRS 1040
- Records of your untaxed income, such as child support received, interest income, and veterans non-education benefits, for you, and for your parents if you are a dependent student Information on cash; savings and checking account balances; investments, including stocks and bonds and real estate (but not including the home in which you live); and business and farm assets for you, and for your parents if you are a dependent student
- If you are with your family, you will need your parents' Social Security numbers (see Step 3 to determine if you will need to provide this information)

2. Login to FAFSA.GOV and Begin your Application

- Visit <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
- If this is the first time you're filling out the FAFSA, click on the New to the FAFSA button. Remember and keep your login information safe. Use an email address that you can check often (avoid using a high school email address because access may be disabled)
- If this isn't the first time you're filling out the FAFSA, click on the Returning User Login button and enter your login information
- Start a 2022-2023 FAFSA Application

3. Determine if You are Experiencing Homelessness and if you Need to Include Parental Information

You do NOT need to provide your parents' information if you are:

- Under the age 24 (if you are over 24 you are independent due to age and will not need to include parental information); and

- Experiencing unaccompanied homelessness on or after July 1st, 2021.

Unaccompanied homelessness means you are staying:

- with other people temporarily because you lost your housing or similar reason;
- in a shelter
- in a motel/hotel due to lack of alternatives
- in a car or other unsheltered situation
- living in a campus residence hall but otherwise would have nowhere else to go;
and
- **not in the physical custody of your parents or guardians.**

If you are in the physical custody of your parents or guardians or if you are not experiencing homelessness, you DO need to include parental information and you will fill out the FAFSA as it instructs you to and include your parent or guardians' information in the parent section.

Resource: [How to Answer FAFSA Questions About Homelessness](#)

4. If You're NOT Including Parental Information, Request a Determination Letter

If you meet all of the criteria above, you are considered an independent student for the FAFSA, because you meet the definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth. To complete your FAFSA, you will need one of the following three people to determine your status as an unaccompanied homeless youth.

1. McKinney-Vento liaison or another high school staff member.

If you were identified as homeless in high school by a McKinney-Vento liaison or another high school staff member who knew about your homelessness, you

might have received a determination letter in high school. **Your liaison can write a letter for you each year of college if you continue to meet the definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth, and if the liaison knows enough about your situation to make a determination.** Financial aid administrators are required to accept this letter, unless they have conflicting information. Reach out to your high school and ask for the McKinney-Vento liaison's contact information. Use this [email template](#) to request a determination letter from the liaison.

If you are the liaison sending out this email, include your email address so students can reach out to you for a letter

2. Shelters that are HUD-funded or a youth or transitional program.

If you stayed at a shelter, you may be able to request a letter from this shelter. Shelters that are HUD-funded or a youth or transitional program are authorized to write a determination letter. Financial aid administrators are required to accept this letter, unless they have conflicting information. Reach out to the shelter or program you stayed at and ask for the Director's contact information. Use this [email template](#) to request a determination letter.

If you are a director of a HUD-funded or youth or transitional program shelter, include your email address so students can reach out to you for a letter

3. Financial aid administrator.

If you do not have, and cannot obtain, a determination letter from the people above, your financial aid administrator must make a determination based on the definitions of unaccompanied and homeless, or unaccompanied, self-supporting, and at risk of homelessness. Financial aid administrators can make a determination based on a [documented interview](#) with you. The goal of this conversation is to determine if you meet these definitions, not to determine or assess the reasons why you are experiencing homelessness. Please use this

[email template](#) to request a documented interview with your financial administrator.

If you are the financial aid administrator sending out this email, include your email address so students can reach out to you for a letter

Lastly, If You're Unsure About a Question, ASK!

It's very important that the information you enter on the FAFSA is accurate, so it's best to take it slow and ask for help. Feel free to contact me at [\[INSERT EMAIL/PHONE NUMBER.\]](#)

[For Additional FAFSA Resources and Information, Click Here.](#)