



Introduction

This toolkit is designed to provide educators and students with resources to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)) and take an important step in the college-going process.

The FAFSA becomes available online on October 1st of the year before you plan to go to college. However, college, state, and private financial aid deadlines vary, so make sure to check with your college to find out their FAFSA submission deadline. It's highly recommended that you complete the FAFSA as close to October 1st as possible in order to qualify for federal, state, and institutional aid.

RI FAFSA Initiative

Rhode Island's statewide goal to increase FAFSA completion is underway for the 2019-2020 FAFSA cycle. The [FAFSA national tracker](#) tracks FAFSA completion rates by state. For the 2019-2020 cycle, the Rhode Island state goal is 85% completion rate with a minimum goal of 70% for each high school. Last year, Rhode Island had 65% of high school seniors complete the FAFSA, ranking eighth in the country.

The statewide initiative includes both a [FAFSA Completion Dashboard](#) and a [FAFSA Portal](#) to monitor students' and schools' progress. The dashboard is a way to check how schools are doing in terms of

completion rates. The portal allows school administrators and counselors to monitor individual students' FAFSA progress. In order to use the portal, schools must submit a data-sharing agreement. Reach out to Onna Holland (onna.holland@ride.ri.gov) at RIDE for more information.

For more information about Rhode Island's FAFSA initiative, visit the [PrepareRI website](#).

Types of Financial Aid

[Click here](#) to learn more about financial aid. Students can receive up to \$6,195 per year in Federal Pell grants during the 2019/2020 cycle.

Types of financial aid

Grants

Grants are free money — they don't have to be repaid. Grants come from the State and Federal Government as well as from colleges. Generally, grants are based on financial need, which means that they are awarded based on your family's size and financial circumstances.

Scholarships

Scholarships are also free money and don't need to be repaid. Scholarships can come from a variety of places, from state and federal governments, to colleges, to private companies. Scholarships may be awarded based on your financial need, academic achievement, community service, athletic talent, and many other factors.

Loans

Loans are money that you borrow from a bank, government, or private lending company. A loan must be repaid with interest. Loans offered by the government often have lower interest rates and can be repaid over an extended period of time. Visit www.studentloans.gov for more information.

Work study programs

Work study allows you to receive funds through part-time employment while you are enrolled in college and can help you pay part of your college costs. Unlike other campus jobs, students apply for work study by submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Community FAFSA Support

Numerous community-based organizations in Rhode Island offer resources to assist students and families during the college application process, especially with FAFSA completion.

- Book a free appointment with the [College Planning Center of Rhode Island](#) to receive help filling out the FAFSA.
- [College Visions](#) assists low-income and first-generation college-bound students.
- [College Advising Corps](#) places college advisers in high schools across Rhode Island to provide college application and financial aid guidance. Ask your school counselor for more information.

- [The College Crusade of Rhode Island](#) hosts Financial Aid Nights. Call 401-854-5500 for more information.

How do I fill out the FAFSA?

To Receive Federal Aid Or State Aid, A Student Must...

OR

Be a U.S. CITIZEN or U.S. NATIONAL

You are a U.S. citizen if you were born in the United States or certain U.S. territories, if you were born abroad to parents who are U.S. citizens, or if you have obtained citizenship status through naturalization. If you were born in American Samoa or Swains Island, then you are a U.S. national.

OR

Have a GREEN CARD

You are eligible if you have a Form I-551, I-151, or I-551C, also known as a green card, showing you are a U.S. permanent resident.

OR

Have an ARRIVAL-DEPARTURE RECORD

Your Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services must show one of the following:

- Refugee
- Asylum Granted
- Cuban-Haitian Entrant (Status Pending)
- Conditional Entrant (valid only if issued before April 1, 1980)
- Parolee

OR

Have BATTERED IMMIGRANT STATUS

You are designated as a "battered immigrant-qualified alien" if you are a victim of abuse by your citizen or permanent resident spouse, or you are the child of a person designated as such under the Violence Against Women Act.

OR

Have a T-VISA

You are eligible if you have a T-visa or a parent with a T-1 visa.

AND

SOCIAL SECURITY

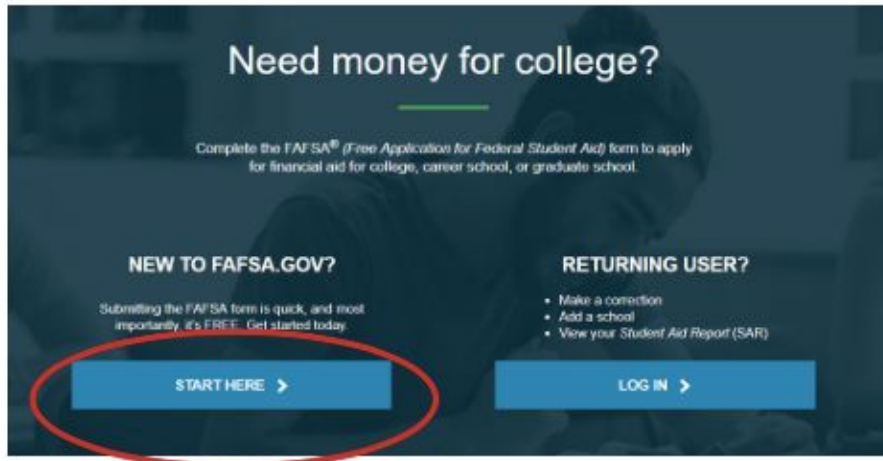
Have a valid Social Security number unless you are from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau

The FAFSA Homepage and Getting Started

Over the summer, the www.fafsa.gov page was redesigned in an effort to create a more user-friendly experience for students, parents, and financial aid professionals.

Now, visiting www.fafsa.gov allows visitors to choose from two options: New To FAFSA.GOV? or RETURNING USER?

New users will be most high school seniors and adult learners who are planning to enroll in higher education for the 2019-2020 school year. Returning users will be currently enrolled higher education students who are looking to correct their current academic year's FAFSA or send their completed FAFSA to a new school.



New users are given two options for beginning the FAFSA. They can select "I am the student" or "I am a parent, preparer, or a student from a Freely Associated State."

A screenshot of the FAFSA login page. The page has a dark blue header with the word "Login" in white. Below the header, there is a white box with a dark blue border. Inside this box, the text reads "Log in to the FAFSA" and "Only students may use their FSA ID to log in. Parents and others can start a FAFSA for a student by entering the student's identifiers. Parents and others can also work on a FAFSA form or correction the student started using the Save Key that the student made. [Help for parents.](#)". To the right of this text is a small box that says "Form Approved OMB No. 1845-0001 App. Exp. 12/31/2019". Below the text, there are two radio button options: "I am the student" and "I am a parent, preparer, or student from a Freely Associated State", separated by an "OR" in a dark blue circle. A blue button labeled "NEXT >" is positioned to the right of the second option. At the bottom of the page, there is a small text "Site Last Updated Tuesday, July 23, 2019" and a "Download Adobe Reader" link. The copyright notice "©2010 fafsa.gov. All rights reserved." is at the very bottom.

If you are a new user, both the student and parent will need to create a FSA ID. Go to <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa> to get started.

Create an FSA ID Manage My FSA ID

Please enter your:

E-mail

Confirm E-mail

Username

Password

✓ Numbers ✓ Uppercase Letters ✓ Lowercase Letters ✓ Special Characters ✓ 8-30 Characters Show Text

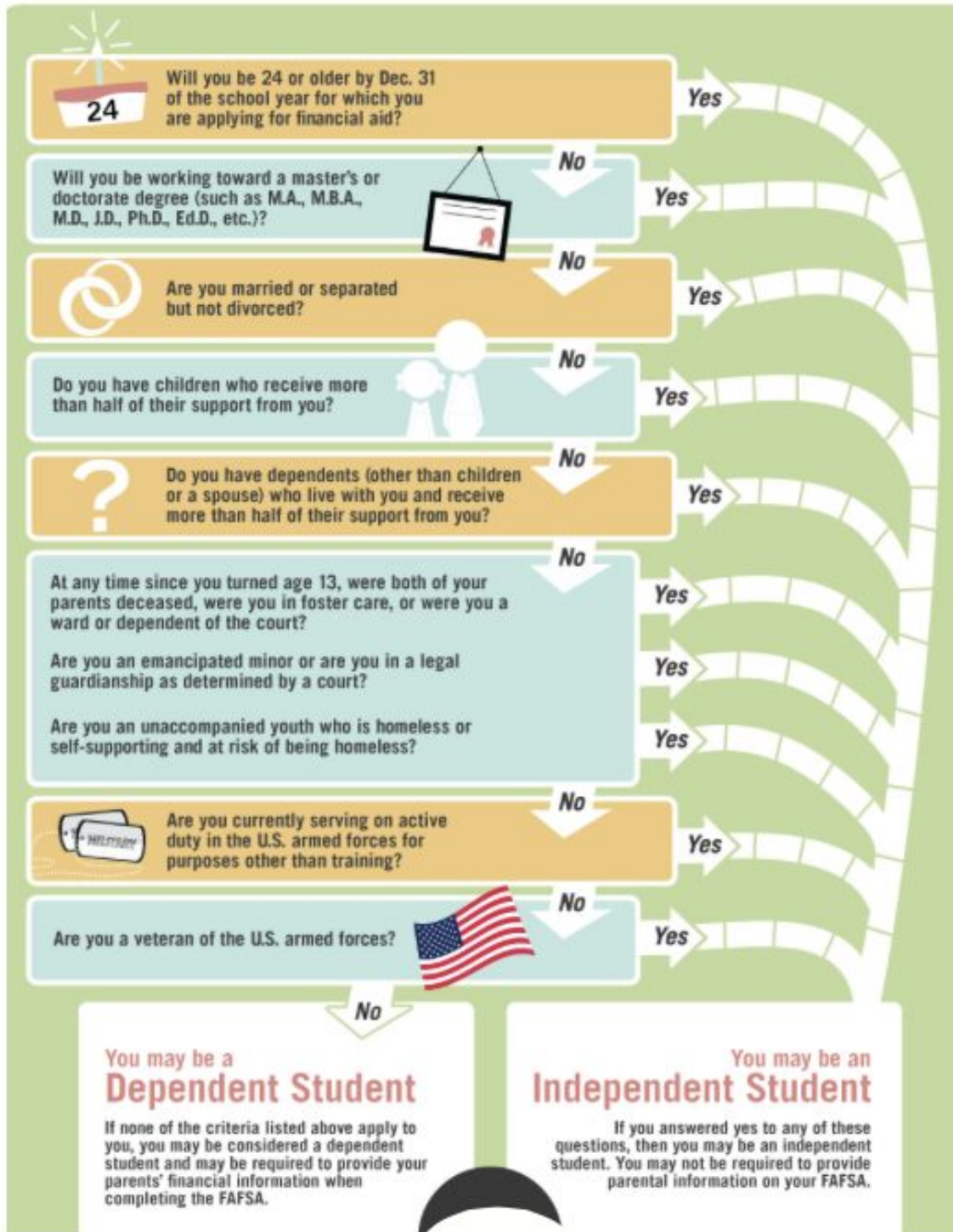
Confirm Password

[CONTINUE](#)

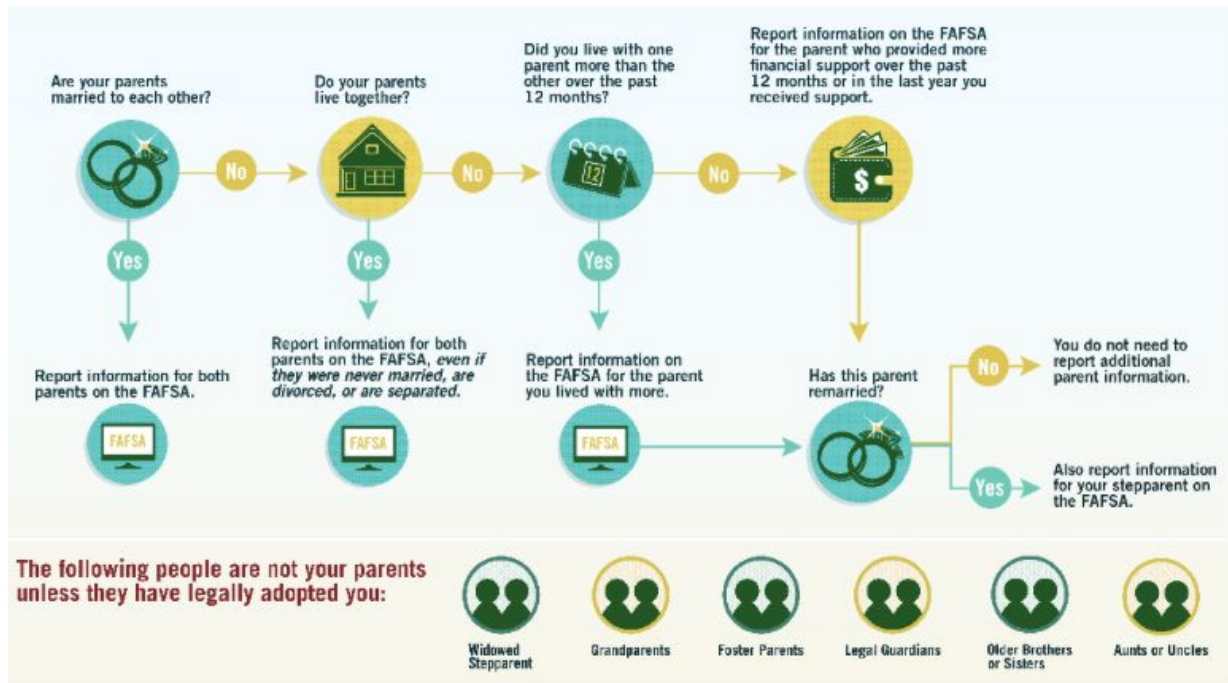
You will need to gather your financial and legal documents.

- The FSA ID for both the student and the parent
- Social Security numbers
- Driver's licenses (if any)
- Permanent Resident Card, Resident Alien Card, or Alien Registration Receipt Card (if applicable)
- W-2 forms and other 2018 records of money earned
- 2018 income tax return, if completed
- Current bank statements
- Records of child support paid, if applicable
- Records of taxable earnings from Federal Work-Study or other need-based work programs, if applicable
- Records of student grant, scholarship and fellowship aid, including AmeriCorps awards, that was included in your (or your parents') adjusted gross income (AGI)
- Current stock, bond, and other investment records
- Current business and farm records, if applicable

Do I Have To Provide My Parents' Info On The FAFSA?



Who Is My Parent When I Fill Out My FAFSA?



Complete all the required information questions. Make sure to list all of your school codes (found on college websites) for the colleges you are applying to on the application. Once you submit the FAFSA, you will receive a confirmation number and a data release number (DRN). After your application is fully processed, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) with your office expected family contribution (EFC).

Submitting the FAFSA

How do I know the student has submitted the FAFSA?

When a student has completed all of the necessary fields of the FAFSA, it will come time for student (and parent, if the student is a dependent) to sign the FAFSA using their FSA ID. After the FSA IDs are used successfully, the following screen will appear:

Congratulations, Janel
Your FAFSA was successfully submitted to Federal Student Aid.

Confirmation Number: F 11104356507 07/31/2015 14:27:34

Data Release Number (DRN): 9999

What Happens Next

- You will receive an e-mail version of this page.
- In 3-5 business days, you will receive an e-mail notifying you that your FAFSA was processed.
- Your FAFSA information will be made available to your school(s), and they will use it to determine the aid you may be eligible to receive.
- Your school(s) will contact you if they need more information or when they are ready to discuss your financial aid award.
- If you have questions about your financial aid package, contact your school(s).

An abbreviated version of your confirmation page has been sent to you at the e-mail address:
student@gmail.com

PRINT THIS PAGE

Estimated All

> Estimated Expected Family Contribution (EFC) = 999999

> IRS Information

This page provides students a confirmation number and a data release number (DRN) at the top. The DRN can be provided to a customer service representative to make certain changes to your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) information. These changes include: permanent mailing address, e-mail address, phone number, school code, and housing plan.

You should not give your DRN to anyone unless that person is a financial aid administrator or customer service representative and you are either adding colleges or changing data on your FAFSA.

At the bottom of the screen, students can view their estimated expected family contribution or EFC. After your application is fully processed, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) with your official EFC. The SAR will be sent to a student's email within 3-5 days if the FAFSA is electronically signed with a student's FSA ID and if the student provided an email address. If a student mails in the signature page for the FAFSA rather than signing electronically with the FSA ID, it can take 2 weeks to receive the SAR.

Note: Neither your estimated EFC (on the Confirmation Page) nor your official EFC (on the SAR) is the amount of money your family will have to pay for college nor is it the amount of federal student aid you will receive. It is a number used by your college to calculate the amount of federal student aid you are eligible to receive.

Making FAFSA Corrections

The fastest way to correct the FAFSA is online at fafsa.gov.

1. Click on the "Login" button and enter the FSA ID.
2. On the "My FAFSA" page, click "Make FAFSA Corrections."
3. Create a save key.
4. Change or add the information that the student's SAR lists as missing or incorrect.
5. Submit the new information.

A student can also write in the corrections or updates on their paper SAR, sign it, and mail it to the address provided on the SAR. It is not recommended to mail in corrections, as this process will take significantly longer to process. If a student opts to mail in corrections, encourage the student to make a copy of the written corrections that they submit.

Helpful Links

- Get started completing your FAFSA [here](#). For help and frequently asked questions, click [here](#).
- Check out these [videos](#) for more information on how to complete the FAFSA.
- Check out these [10 tips](#) for filing the FAFSA.
- Here are some tips for handling [special circumstances](#) on the FAFSA.
- Book a free appointment with the [College Planning Center of Rhode Island](#) to receive help filling out the FAFSA.

Resources and Strategies for Schools

Outreach

This [website](#) provides resources for schools to conduct outreach to students and families about FAFSA completion, including how to get the word out, host events and utilize social media. Additionally, Federal Student Aid offers [information](#) about financial aid and [trainings](#) for school counselors and advisors.

Text Messages

Studies show that [text messaging nudges](#) from school counselors are a valuable way to increase FAFSA completion rates and college enrollment for high school seniors. These messages are most effective when students can respond to them and receive direct support.

Raffles

One way to motivate students to complete the FAFSA is to conduct a raffle for students who complete the FAFSA by a certain date. Prizes can include school apparel, tickets to prom or other school events, and gift cards.

Host a FAFSA night at your school

Bringing students, parents, counselors, and community members together to complete the FAFSA is a useful way for students to receive support. Consider inviting one of these [organizations](#) to your event. To host a FAFSA night, you must pick a date, prepare to track student progress, notify students and parents, advertise effectively on the school website and social media platforms, and follow-up with families after the event. Check out [these resources](#) for planning a FAFSA night.

Sample letter to send to parents/guardians

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are writing to remind you about the importance of having your high school senior complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The cost of college and career training can be a barrier for many students, so completing the FAFSA is essential for students to qualify for federal, state, and institutional funds; your student can receive up to \$6,195 for college next year in Federal Pell grants.

The FAFSA becomes available online on October 1st of the year before you plan to go to college. It's highly recommended that you complete the FAFSA as close to October 1st as possible in order to qualify for financial aid. The FAFSA is often used by colleges to help determine other grants, scholarships, loans, and work study programs, as well. Even if you don't think your child will attend college, completing the FAFSA gives them the opportunity to receive financial aid in case they change their mind.

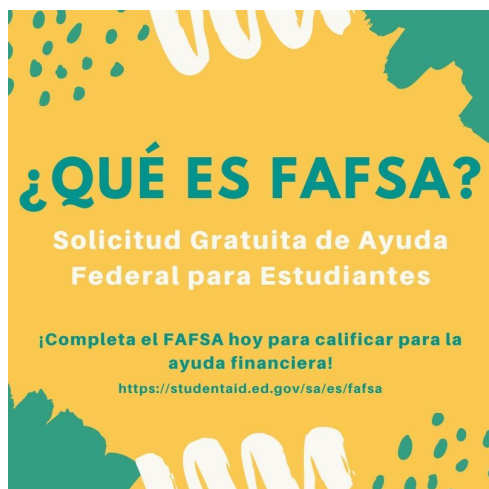
You can start completing the FAFSA at: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>. Additionally, the College Planning Center of Rhode Island offers **FREE** appointments to help students and families fill out the FAFSA. You can book a free appointment by visiting their website at: <https://bit.ly/2P6W2X6>. More information about FAFSA can be found in the Rhode Island Department of Education's toolkit at: <https://www.prepare-ri.org/fafsa>. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's school counselor if you have any questions about the college application or financial aid processes.

Sincerely,

Resources in Spanish

- Students and families can access the FAFSA in Spanish [here](#).
- Click [here](#) for a video in Spanish about how to fill out the FAFSA.

Here are some examples of social media graphics in Spanish.





Social Media Tools

Here are some examples of social media graphics to promote FAFSA completion.



COMPLETE YOUR FAFSA TODAY!

Book a free appointment with the College Planning Center of Rhode Island

<https://t.co/UUQeInfm19>

COMPLETE YOUR FAFSA TODAY!

The College Planning Center is here to help. Book a free appointment at <https://t.co/UUQeInfm19>

Getting money to pay for college, just by completing the FAFSA

© QuickMeme

Pay lots of money to attend college

Fill out my FAFSA and get financial aid

Waiting to fill out my FAFSA

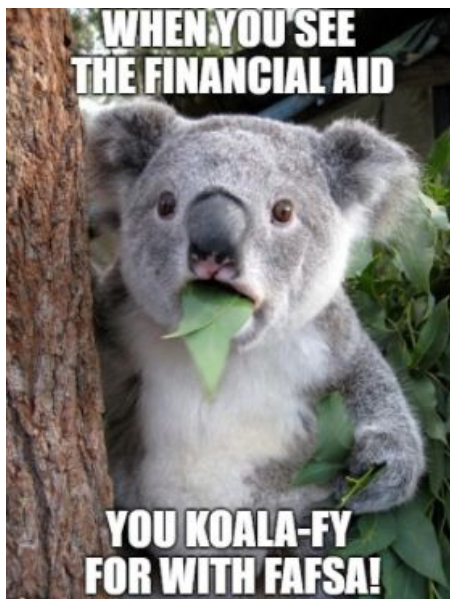
Completing my FAFSA now

Me

Trying to fill out the FAFSA by myself

Booking an appointment with the College Planning Center <https://t.co/UUQeInfm19>

Me



Sample Tweets

- Last year, 65% of all Rhode Island Seniors completed the @FAFSA, this year we are shooting for 85% statewide! #RhodeIsland
- Last year Rhode Islanders left \$6 MILLION of federal financial aid money on the table! Fill out your @FAFSA today!
- Let the College Planning Center help you fill out your FAFSA this year, it's FREE:
[/hubs.ly/H0fmP9J0](https://hubs.ly/H0fmP9J0)
- Getting free money for college can be done in EIGHT STEPS, fill out your FAFSA today:
bit.ly/2zxdiwt
- Rhode Island is currently at ____% FAFSA completion, which ranks us ____ in the country! Help us reach our state goal of 85%! <https://national.fafsatracker.com/currentRates>
- Check out <https://www.prepare-ri.org/fafsa> to learn more about how to complete the FAFSA!

- You could get \$6,195 per year in Federal Pell grants during the 2019/2020 FAFSA cycle!

Check out [this page](#) for more social media examples and tips for promoting FAFSA completion.

Notes

If you have concerns about your immigration status and completing your FAFSA, please reach out to the RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner at FAFSA@riopc.edu.

This Rhode Island FAFSA Toolkit has been modeled after the TN FAFSA Frenzy Toolkit, which can be found [here](#).

For more information about the Rhode Island FAFSA Toolkit, please reach out to Onna Holland (onna.holland@ride.ri.gov) or Elizabeth Teixeira (elizabeth.teixeira@ride.ri.gov) at RIDE.