

Financial Aid: Frequently Asked Questions
Indian Hills Community College

Q. How do I apply for Aid?

A. There are several ways to fill out and submit the FAFSA form:

1. Online at fafsa.gov is faster and easier than using paper.
2. If you need a printed FAFSA form, you can [download a FAFSA PDF](#) or
3. [order a print-out of the FAFSA PDF](#) or
4. The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) can assist you in completing your FAFSA located in the Ottumwa Arts & Science Building, Room 113. Contact them by calling (641) 683-5315 or email eoc@indianhills.edu

Q. How do I sign my FAFSA?

A. If you have an FSA ID, then you should use your FSA ID to sign your application electronically. When you sign your application electronically using your FSA ID, your application is processed within 3-5 days.

To sign your application electronically, click the Login button on the FAFSA on the Web home page to log in, and then click the Provide Signatures button.

If you do not already have an FSA ID, you can [create an FSA ID](#).

Alternatively, you can choose one of the following options:

- Print a signature page, sign it, and mail it to the address on the page. Your application will be processed once your signature is received.
- Submit your FAFSA without signatures. Your application will be partially processed without signatures, and you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) within 3-5 days. In order for your FAFSA to fully process, you'll need to return later to sign electronically.

Q. Will I need to fill out the FAFSA each year?

A. Yes. Because eligibility for federal student aid does not carry over from one award year to the next, you need to fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) for each award year in which you are or plan to be a student. Your eligibility for financial aid can differ from year to year for various reasons, including your family's financial situation and the number of your family members enrolled in college.

Q. What is the FAFSA® form?

A. The FREE application used to apply for federal student aid, such as federal grants, loans, and work-study. You must complete the FAFSA form to apply for this aid. By submitting your FAFSA to the processing center you will be considered for federal and state financial aid. The types of federal student aid include: Grants - financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund); Work Study - provides part-time employment while you are enrolled in school; and Loans - borrowed money for college or career school; you must repay your loans, with *interest*. These low interest loans begin repayment after leaving college or dropping below half-time. Some scholarships are also based on the FAFSA results but usually require their own application and process (for example, State of Iowa grants and scholarships). Please visit www.iowacollegeaid.gov for the electronic application. The application can be found on the right-hand side of the page.

Q. Do I need to apply for admission before I apply for financial aid?

A. No, but you will need to be admitted to an eligible program before we are able to finalize your award. We are required to match FAFSA results by SSN; therefore, we must have your SSN in our system (usually completed at Admissions) prior to IHCC being able to import your FAFSA.

Q. What if I don't live with my parents?

A. You still must answer the questions about your parents if you're considered a dependent student.

Q. I don't live with my parents or my parents don't claim me on their tax returns. Do I still need to use their information on the FAFSA?

A. Yes. It does not matter if you live with them or not. If you do not meet the Federal definition of an Independent Student, you are required to supply parental information on the FAFSA. Read the FAFSA

instructions about dependency and who is considered a parent carefully. See “Step Three” on the FAFSA application to determine if you will be required to provide parent information on the application.

Q. Should I include my step-parent’s information on the FAFSA?

A. If the person who is considered the parent on the FAFSA is remarried at the time of the FAFSA filing, answer the FAFSA questions about this parent and the person whom your parent married (your step-parent).

Q. I am separated/divorced from my spouse now. How do I file for financial aid?

A. You do not include your spouse’s income or other information on the FAFSA. If you and your spouse filed a joint Federal tax return and you need help in completing your FAFSA, you can make an appointment with the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) by calling (800) 726-2585, ext. 5315 or (641) 683-5315. The EOC is located in the Arts & Science Building, Room 113 on the Ottumwa Campus. Please be sure to take with you your Federal tax return, State return, and all W-2s (i.e. any and all income information that you have).

Q. My ex-spouse has custody of our children, but I pay child support. Can I include my children on the application?

A. You may include the children as part of your household on the FAFSA only if you provide more than 50 percent of the child’s support. You may be required to provide documented proof of this. In most cases, if the children do not live with the student, they are not able to include the children on the FAFSA. You cannot claim the child as part of the household and claim the child support paid.

Q. My spouse/parent passed away during the tax year required on the FAFSA. Do I include their income on the application?

A. No. If the person has passed away, you do not provide that income information on the FAFSA.

Q. I am getting married in the near future. Can I say I’m married on the FAFSA?

A. You must file your FAFSA with your correct marital status at the time of submitting your application. If you (as a dependent student) get married, you may update your marital status on your FAFSA application IF you married prior to the first date of the term in which you will begin enrollment at IHCC for the current academic year.

- **Example #1:** Let’s say you initially filed your FAFSA as single on May 31, 2017, and you then married on July 6, 2017. If you are starting IHCC during the 17/WI term (November 15, 2017), then you are ABLE update your marital status to married on your FAFSA. You will also be required to submit your marriage certificate to the Financial Aid Office.
- **Example #2:** Let’s say you initially filed your FAFSA as single on May 31, 2017, and you then married on December 6, 2017. If you are starting IHCC during the 17/WI term (November 15, 2017), then you CANNOT update your marital status to married on your FAFSA. This is because you married AFTER the first date of the term that you began enrollment.

Q. What if my parents are unwilling to provide their information on my FAFSA® form? What should I do?

A. You can’t be considered independent of your parents just because they refuse to help you with this process. If you do not provide their information on the FAFSA form, the application will be considered “incomplete,” and you might not be able to receive any federal student aid. The most you would be able to get (depending on what the financial aid office at your college decides) would be a loan called an [unsubsidized loan](#).

You might want to inform them that these are Federal regulations and parent information is used only to determine your aid eligibility. They would not be responsible for any loans you incur as the loans would be in your name. Under the Federal law, a financial aid administrator may, but is not required to, offer a dependent student an unsubsidized Stafford loan but not other Title IV Federal student aid if the dependent student’s parent(s) have stopped providing financial support to the student, will not financially support the student in the future, and decline to complete a FAFSA. If you have no contact/relationship with your parents that can be supported by third-party documentation such as a counselor, teacher, or clergy, an exception to the Federal regulation may be made. If so, please contact us about a special circumstance/dependency override appeal.

Q. Which FAFSA form should I file?

A. If you plan to attend college before June 30, 2018, you should file a 2017-18 FAFSA form.

If you plan to attend college from July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019, you should file a 2018-19 FAFSA form. The 2018-19 FAFSA form will be available on October 1, 2017.

Q. What are the deadlines for filling out the FAFSA form?

A. To be considered for federal student aid for the 2018-2019 award year, you can complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) between October 1, 2017, and June 30, 2019, midnight Central Time. Any corrections or updates must be submitted by September 14, 2019, midnight Central Time. To be considered for federal student aid for the 2017-2018 award year, you can complete a FAFSA form by June 30, 2018, midnight Central Time. Any corrections or updates must be submitted by September 15, 2018, midnight Central Time. Many states and colleges have earlier deadlines for applying for state and institutional financial aid. It's also a good idea to check with your college about its deadlines. Because of the variation in state and college deadlines, it is highly recommended that you fill out the FAFSA as soon as you can after October 1 to ensure that you do not miss out on available aid.

Q. What do I do if I'm told I've been selected for verification?

A. Verification is the process your school uses to confirm that the data reported on your FAFSA form is accurate. If you're selected for verification, don't assume you're being accused of doing anything wrong. Some people are selected at random; and some schools verify all students' FAFSA forms. All you need to do is provide the documentation your school asks for—and be sure to do so by the school's deadline, or you won't be able to get financial aid. If you used the Internal Revenue Service Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) when filling out your FAFSA form, you may not have to verify that information. If you didn't use the IRS DRT, or if you filed an amended tax return and used the IRS DRT, your school may require you to submit a tax transcript as part of the verification process. You can find your tax transcript through the IRS's Get Transcript service at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript>

Q. What if I defaulted on my student loan but now I want to get more federal student aid?

A. If you are in default on a Federal student loan, you are not eligible for any Federal or state financial aid. You must make satisfactory payment arrangements with the Department of Education to regain eligibility for aid. You must present the Financial Aid office with official notification from the Department of Education that you are no longer in default in order to receive aid.

Q. How will I find out about what financial aid I qualify for?

A. After we receive your FAFSA results from the processing center, you will receive an Estimated Award Letter. After we collect all required documents and correct any discrepancies, we will send you a Revised Award Letter to your IHCC email account.

Q. How much financial aid am I eligible to receive?

A. The financial aid office will determine how much financial aid you are eligible to receive. Your eligibility for most federal student aid depends on a variety of factors, including your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), your year in college, your enrollment status, and the cost of attendance at the college you will be attending.

Q. What do I do with my Award Letter and Direct Loan Disclosure Statement or Promissory Note?

A. Be sure to read the entire letter and all enclosed inserts carefully and follow the instructions.

Q. What is Entrance Loan Counseling?

A. A mandatory information session that takes place before you receive your first federal student loan that explains your responsibilities and rights as a student borrower. You must complete entrance counseling before we can make the first *disbursement* of your loan. Complete Entrance Counseling at <https://studentloans.gov> Entrance Loan Counseling is a Federal requirement to assure that students understand the basics of borrowing a Student Loan. If you are borrowing a Student Loan for the first time, you must complete this exercise before we can disburse your loan. Go to www.studentloans.gov and click on the Loan Entrance Counseling link.

Q. Can I charge books from the bookstore to my tuition and fees student account?

A. You must have your financial aid complete or have accepted payment plan in place in order for you to charge your books. You can accept a payment plan under your WebAdvisor through your student account suite.

Q. What do I do about my financial aid and my tuition and fees account?

A. Please understand that you are responsible for paying your account by the due date listed on the statement, regardless if you eligible for financial assistance or not. In other words, all students must pay their outstanding balance by their due date. Failure to do so will result in a late fee being added to your balance and restrictions on your student account, including future registration.

Q. How does my financial aid get credited to my tuition and fees account?

A. Funds are divided by three or four terms for the academic year, depending on your enrolled program, and disbursed to students' accounts 30 days into each term. After your account is paid in full, any excess funds each term will be refunded to you.

Q. Do I have to attend class to get my financial aid disbursements?

A. Yes! Faculty submit attendance information to us before we disburse the aid. If you are not attending, we may need to reduce your aid amount or hold it until you are in good status in the class.

Q. What's the difference between Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans?

A. In short, Direct Subsidized Loans have slightly better terms to help out students with *financial need*. Subsidized loans are based on financial need and are available only to undergraduate students. The federal government pays interest on subsidized loans while you are in school at least half-time and during grace and deferment periods. Unsubsidized loans are based on the student's education costs and other aid received. Interest starts accruing (accumulating) from the time the funds are disbursed to you. You can choose to either pay it while you are in school or let it accrue. To receive either type of loan, you must be enrolled at least half-time.

Q. How much Direct Loan money may I borrow?

A. If eligible, a dependent student in the first year of their study may borrow \$5,500, and then \$6,500 when you become a sophomore. Since different majors have different lengths of study, the grade levels may also differ. Independent students may also borrow up to an additional \$4,000 in unsubsidized loans. If your program is less than three terms in length, the loan(s) will be prorated. You must attend at least half-time each term to borrow.

Q. Do I have to reapply for financial aid if I transfer to another school during the award year?

A. You do not have to re-apply, but dollar amounts do not transfer from school to school. Check with the school you are transferring to about their process. If you are transferring to Indian Hills Community College, add our school code to your FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov and re-submit it. Our school code is 008298. To add colleges after you have already submitted your FAFSA, click the Login button on the home page and log into *FAFSA on the Web*. Click Make FAFSA Corrections, and then navigate to the "School Selection" page.

Q. I lost my job, I am cutting my hours at work so I can attend school, or I am working a different job and making less money. How does this affect my aid?

A. The Financial Aid Office has a Special Circumstances Form for students to fill out when there is a dramatic change in income. It can have a significant affect in the amount of aid a student receives. Please contact our office for more information.