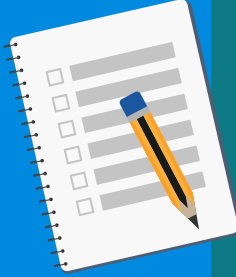# 9 KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT APPLYING FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

1. EVERYONE SHOULD FILL OUT THE FAFSA®

- There is no income cap.
- Most people qualify for some aid.
- Some scholarships and state aid require a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) too.

2. TIMING MATTERS

- The FAFSA comes out every year on October 1.
- Fill it out ASAP. Some schools award aid on a first-come, first-served basis.

3. BEWARE OF SCAMMERS

Only complete the FAFSA on **studentaid.gov** and never pay to fill it out.

4. PREP YOUR COLLEGE LIST BEFORE FILLING OUT THE FAFSA

- You can list up to ten schools where you'd like your FAFSA information sent.
- If your list is longer, you can send your information to more schools when you get your Student Aid Report (SAR).
- Sending FAFSA info to schools is not a commitment to attend.
- Schools can't see where else you send your information.

5. USE THE IRS DATA RETRIEVAL TOOL

It automatically prefills your form with your tax info, which saves you time and avoids mistakes.

6. YOUR FSA ID IS SUPER IMPORTANT

You need it every year you apply for aid. Keep it in a safe spot.

7. IT'S UP TO YOU TO REVIEW YOUR SAR

- It comes within 3 to 5 days of submitting your FAFSA online.
- Correct any errors in your online account.

8. COMPARE YOUR AWARD LETTERS

- You may start receiving award letters as early as February.
- They can be confusing, so use an award letter comparison tool like **collegecovered.com/award-letter-tool/** to see how much each school costs.

9. ASK IF YOU WANT (OR NEED) MORE AID

- There's no guarantee you'll be granted more aid, but there are two ways to request it:
  - **Appeal** if your financial situation has changed since you completed the FAFSA.
  - **Negotiate** if you need more aid and use other offers as leverage.
- Contact the school's financial aid office with any questions and to understand their process.