

Paying for College: How to complete the FAFSA

Overview

This FAFSA completion lesson plan is designed to assist with the implementation of Nebraska's LB701/state [statute 79-729](#), which requires the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be completed as a high school graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2025. Often referred to as "universal FAFSA," this law requires graduating seniors to either complete the FAFSA or complete an opt-out form.

Standards and Indicators:

[Standards](#) met through this lesson:

- Personal Finance Standards
- ASCA Standards
- Nebraska Career Readiness Standards

Objective:

By the end of this lesson, students will understand the importance of filing the FAFSA, the necessary documents required, and the step-by-step process of completing the application. They will also understand the context for FAFSA completion as a high school graduation requirement in Nebraska.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the significance of filing the FAFSA.
- Learn what documents are needed to fill out the FAFSA.
 - The [FAFSA Checklist](#) provides a detailed list of all necessary information
- Understand the steps involved in completing the FAFSA.
- Know how to avoid common mistakes when filling out the FAFSA.

Target Audience: High school seniors

Lesson Duration:

The lesson plan can be deployed in several ways, depending on the class time available.

Options include:

- One 50-minute class
- Three 30-minute class segments
- One block class schedule

Lesson Outline:

Introduction

Explain what the FAFSA is and its role in accessing federal student aid, including grants, work-study, and loans. Explain its role in the college funding process.

- Explain the Nebraska law that requires the FAFSA as a high school graduation requirement.

Importance of Filing the FAFSA

Why File the FAFSA?

- Discuss the importance of the FAFSA in securing financial aid.
 1. Show the [FiveWaysEdPays](#) video by the College Board
 2. Show the Federal Student Aid video [What is the FAFSA? \(2 minutes\)](#)
 - Highlight the types of aid available through the FAFSA (grants, work-study, and loans).
 - Explain how the FAFSA can open up additional state and institutional aid opportunities.
- 2. Impact of Not Filing:**
- Discuss the potential consequences of not filing the FAFSA, such as missing out on financial aid and scholarships.

Presentation

- 1. What is the FAFSA?**
 - Show the [Applying for Financial Aid with the FAFSA Form](#) video from Federal Student Aid (FSA) or present a short PowerPoint explaining the FAFSA.
 - Discuss the types of aid available through the FAFSA, reference back to the FSA video, if desired
- 2. Documents Needed:**
 - Review a [checklist](#) of documents required to complete the FAFSA
- 3. FAFSA Deadlines:**
 - Highlight the importance of meeting federal, state, and college deadlines.

Demonstration

- 1. Creating an FSA ID:**
 - Guide students through the process of [creating an FSA ID](#), which is needed to log in and sign the FAFSA form.
- 2. Step-by-Step FAFSA Completion:**
 - Use the [FAFSA demo video](#) to walk through each section.
 - Emphasize key areas: personal information, dependency status, parent information, student information, and the confirmation page.

Hands-On Practice

- 1. Practice Completing the FAFSA:**
 - Allow students to practice filling out a sample FAFSA form.
 - Access the 2025–26 FAFSA® Prototype by following these steps.
 1. Visit: <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/fafsa-prototype/2526>
 2. Enter access code: prototype2526

OR

- Review the Prototype slides – found in the lesson plan slides.

Conclusion

1. Review Key Points:

- Summarize the main steps and important tips for completing the FAFSA.
- Reinforce the importance of submitting the FAFSA to access financial aid.

2. Next Steps:

- Advise students on what to do after submitting the FAFSA, such as checking the status of their application and understanding their FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS).

3. Additional Resources:

- EducationQuest.org
 - FAFSA Tools: <https://eqf.org/FAFSAtools>
 - YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/EducationQuest>
 - Social Press Kit: <https://eqf.org/SocialPressKit>
- School counselor(s)
- [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- Financial Aid Toolkit for Counselors: <https://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/learn/fafsa.jsp>
 - Filling out the FAFSA guidance: <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out>
- Nebraska Department of Education: [FAFSA page](#)
- National College Attainment Network (NCAN): [Universal FAFSA Resource](#)

Assessment:

- Evaluate students' understanding through their ability to complete the sample FAFSA.

Students who are undocumented are not eligible to complete and submit federal aid applications.