



A Great Place To **Start**™

A Member of the Alabama Community College System

Office of Financial Aid The FAFSA What You Need to Know

#1 - FAFSA awards Pell Grants and Student Loans.

FALSE. FAFSA is simply an application. Once FAFSA is processed, the financial aid office at the schools you listed on the FAFSA will determine your eligibility for federal aid (Pell Grants, SEOG, Student Loans, and Work Study) and institutional grants and scholarships (money from the college or university).

#2 - Pell Grants cover the cost of college for low income students.

NOT USUALLY. A Pell Grant may cover tuition at a 2-year school, but does not cover the cost of tuition at a 4 year university. The maximum Pell Grant for 2019-2020 is \$6095, regardless of where the student chooses to go to school or the tuition costs.

#3 - You can't complete a FAFSA if you don't file federal taxes.

FALSE. Many Alabama residents are not required to file federal tax returns, and they are eligible to file the FAFSA. If selected for verification, these families might be required to provide a NON-TAX FILER letter which can be obtained from the IRS.

#4 - Student lives with grandmother who is not the legal guardian, whose information do you use on the student's FAFSA?

You NEVER use anyone's information on the FAFSA other than parent or student. EVER! The student would have to use parent(s) information. If the student is in a legal guardianship, he is an independent student and must only provide his income information.

#5 - If a student is 20 years old, doesn't live with parents and claims himself on taxes, he doesn't need parent's information to complete the FAFSA?

FALSE. Unless a student can answer "yes" to any one of the 13 dependency questions on the FAFSA, the student must provide parents' information. A student must be 24 to be independent. It never matters who claims a student on their tax return for determining whose information to use.

#6 - Parent is NEVER anyone but parent.

TRUE. A student can NEVER use aunt, grandmother, or any person that claims the student if they are not the biological or adoptive parent.....EVER!

#7 - Students are either dependent or independent on the FAFSA.

TRUE. If a student is dependent they use parental information AND student information. If they are considered independent, ONLY the student's information will be used.

#8 - Tax returns never matter for determining whose information you use.

TRUE. As of TODAY, if parents are married, you must use parents or parent and step-parent's information regardless of how they file, and tax returns never matter for determining whose information you use on the FAFSA.