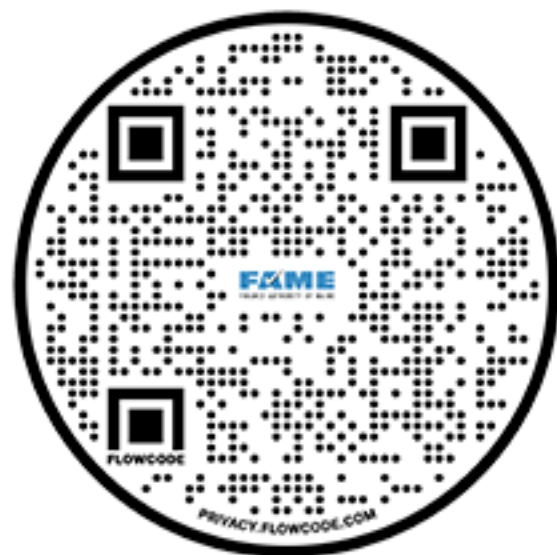


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The CSS Profile

October 31, 2025

PRESENTED BY

Mila Tappan, Education Affordability Content and Training Manager
Karin Parsons, Education Affordability and Financial Wellness Counselor



Getting Started

Documents to have on hand

- Two most recent years of federal tax returns
- Two most recent years of W-2 forms
- Records of untaxed income and benefits
- Bank statements
- Mortgage info
- Records of savings, stocks, bonds, trusts, and other investments
- List of household expenses (and dental/medical and student loans, if applicable)
- Social Security Numbers
- New for the 2026-27 CSS Profile – the citizenship status question has been removed!

Signing in

- If the student created a College Board account for the SAT, PSAT or AP, they use the same username and password to sign-in
- If not, create a new account
- Custodial parents will use the same account/application as their student
 - Only noncustodial parents will create a separate account
- Full legal name should be used when signing up for an account
- Use a personal email not a school or work email



Check to see which schools require the CSS Profile - it may not be needed at all!

- Not all colleges require the CSS Profile—only about 240 require the form
- A list of colleges and programs that use the CSS Profile can be found [on their website](#)

Review submission deadline for applicable schools

Required questions

- If required, labeled “required” in parenthesis
- Even questions such as parent socials are optional

Housekeeping

2026-27 Participating Institutions and Programs

The following colleges, universities, and scholarship programs use [CSS Profile](#) and/or [IDOC](#) as part of their financial aid process for some or all of their financial aid applicants in the populations listed below. Please check schools' websites or contact the institution for more information.

CSS Code	Institution Name	Institution State	CSS Profile – Domestic Students	CSS Profile – International Students	CSS Profile – Noncustodial Parents	IDOC
Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾
1001	Adrian College, MI	MI	No	Yes	No	No
5007	American University	DC	Yes	No	Yes	No
0262	American University of Rome		Yes	Yes	Yes	No
3003	Amherst College	MA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4007	Arizona State University	AZ	Yes	No	No	No
0193	Armenian Student Assoc of Amer	MA	Yes	Yes	No	No
0613	Attleboro Scholarship Found	MA	Yes	No	No	No
3075	Babson College	MA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2037	Bard College	NY	Yes	No	Yes	No
3795	Bard College at Simons Rock	NY	Yes	No	Yes	No
2038	Barnard College	NY	Yes	Yes	No	No
3076	Bates College	ME	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
6032	Baylor University	TX	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

List also indicates whether noncustodial parent info is required and if IDOC is used by the school – more to come!



Cost to Submit

Total cost is determined by the number of schools requiring the CSS Profile

- Initial fee is \$25, each additional school is \$16

Check student's College Board account to see if they qualify for a fee waiver

Fee Waiver Eligibility

Based on information you have provided, you are eligible for a CSS Profile fee waiver. You can submit this application for free.

[Continue](#)

- Log in and go to the [CSS Profile application page](#). If the student qualifies, it will be noted on that page

Student automatically qualifies for a fee waiver if (must be a domestic student):

- The student had an SAT or ACT waiver
- Family's adjusted gross income is \$100,000 or less
- Orphan or ward of the court under the age of 24

If they don't qualify automatically, ask the specific college if they can provide a fee waiver

Colleges can't reimburse for submissions already paid for

International students aren't eligible for automatic fee waivers

- Contact the school for further assistance



Questions vary based on student/parent circumstances!

Student Information

Provide basic info and status questions

Michelle was (until the age of 18) a ward of the court (required)

Tell me more

If a court of law assumed legal custody of you, the student, while you were under 18, you were considered a ward of the court.

If you had a legal guardian, you were not considered a ward of the court.

If you need to elaborate on your circumstances, you can include additional information at the end of the application in the Special Circumstances explanation.

Yes

No

Michelle was (until the age of 18) in foster care (required)

Tell me more

If you need to elaborate on your circumstances, you can include additional information at the end of the application in the Special Circumstances explanation.

Yes

No

Parental relationships

- Asks student to list all parents (including step-parents)
- Parent marital status
- If biological/ adoptive parents aren't married to each other or live in the same household, determine who provides the most financial support – that parent answers the parent questions

High School and College Information

- Provide current grade level and high school information
- List colleges and planned housing status
- When asked about college grade level, indicate “first-year undergrad” even for students who have participated in dual enrollment or have college credit from high school



Parent Information

Parent Details

- Demographic and contact information
- Parents' higher education experience

Parent Income Information (2024)

- Tax filing status and type of return
- Income overview
- **Fee waiver determination**
- **Detailed** tax questions – have tax return handy!
- Estimated 2025 income
- Any expected changes? If yes, will ask for 2026 anticipated income

Additional Parent Questions

- Parent benefits (SNAP, TANF, WIC, etc.)
- Parent employment and retirement accounts values
- Noncustodial parent info, applicable (more on next slide)
- Housing (own, rent, etc.)
- Additional dependent information
- Child support received or paid



Divorced or Separated Parents

Information about the noncustodial parent will be required, including email address.

If noncustodial parent information is *required (refer to list)*, an email with instructions will be sent.

The noncustodial parent will need to create their own account

In certain situations, this requirement can be waived, including

- * Documented abuse situations that involve the non-custodial parent
- * Legal orders that limit contact with the non-custodial parent
- * No contact or support from the non-custodial parent
- * However, parent refusal on its own does not qualify

2026-27 Participating Institutions and Programs

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Parent Expenses

- Out of pocket medical or dental expenses for 2024 and 2025
- Repayment of any college loan debt in 2024 (for student, parents, or sibling) and outstanding balances
- Household expenses (utilities, food, clothing, transportation, etc.)

Parent Assets

- Types of assets
- Cash, saving, and checking
- Investments (529 college savings – all children, college savings plans, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, money market funds, certificates of deposit, non-retirement annuities, trust funds, etc.)
- Real estate beyond the primary residence
- Business
- Farm

Parent Expenses

Did Mila have any medical or dental expenses not covered by insurance?

Hint: Select "yes" if the student's parents had uncovered/unreimbursed medical/dental expenses that were more than 3% of their total income for either 2024 or 2025.

Yes ✓

No ✗

Save and Continue



Student Income and Assets

Student Income (2024)

Student Income

- Tax filing status
- If tax return filed, detailed taxable income questions from the tax return.
- If taxes not filed, questions about earning, if any, from the W2.
- Additional questions about untaxed income.
- Expected taxed and untaxed income and benefits (for summer of 2026 and school year 2026-27)

Student Resources

- Estimate amounts to be received to help pay for school from parents, scholarships and grants, employers, and other relatives.

Assets (As of the day the form is completed)

Student Assets

- Types of assets
- Cash, savings, and checking
- Non-retirement investments like CDs, savings bonds, mutual funds, etc.
- Retirement accounts



Special Circumstances

**Change in
Employment**

**Exceptional
Medical or
Dental Expenses**

**Eldercare or
financial support
for other family
members**

**Non-recurring
income or
expenses**

Other

Special Circumstances/Additional Information

Please provide any additional information or context that will help us understand your situation. It's best to include details such as annual amounts paid and additional costs.

2000 character limit



Submitting & Beyond



Submitting the Form

Paying the Fee (if needed)

- At the end of the process, a dollar amount of the fee will be displayed.
- **Have a fee waiver code?** This is where it is added
- **Still need to request a waiver?** Hold off on submitting the form and contact the school
- **No fee waiver?** Use a credit or debit card and follow on-screen instructions to continue processing the application

Save a copy of submitted Profile: save it as a PDF or print a hard copy



Making Corrections

Some mistakes on the application can be corrected after submission

The CSS only allows one correction per academic year – for any additional revisions, the applicant must reach out to the school directly

Some items can be fixed online, such as dependency status and fields left blank

However, for changes to financial information (like adjusted gross income), they will need to talk to the school's financial aid office

Only certain corrections can be made “line by line” and all others must be reported in a standard text box

Corrections become available by late November each year



IDOC - Institutional Documentation Service

What is it?

- Online platform used to upload financial documents for college financial aid offices to review

What documents?

- Varies by school
- Tax returns, W-2 information, and/or business tax returns (if applicable)

What schools?

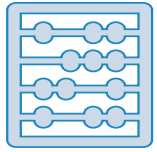
- To see which colleges require IDOC, check out the table of CSS Profile schools on the [College Board website](#)

When?

- If required, immediately following CSS Profile submission

Stay on top of your email for follow up

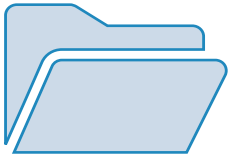
- An email is sent from IDOC with a link to submit documentation later if unable to submit immediately



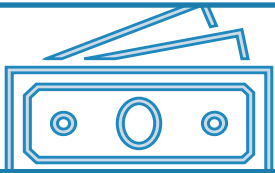
No fixed formula



“Institutional Methodology” to determine aid eligibility



These formulas are proprietary



The schools have more flexibility in terms of how they opt to award students



FAME Resources



FAMEmaine.com/Educators

CSS Profile Resources

[Comparing the FAFSA and the CSS Profile](#)

The CSS Profile, which is used by over 250 schools to determine eligibility for their institutional financial aid, is very different from the FAFSA.

[Here are 10 important differences](#)
[Download the PDF](#)

[CSS Profile Screenshots](#)

[This document](#) provides counselors, advisors, and financial aid professionals with screenshots of the 2025-26 CSS Profile.



Comparing the FAFSA and the CSS Profile - FAME Maine

Ten important differences for undergraduate students

The CSS Profile is used by approximately 250 schools to determine eligibility for their institutional financial aid. All schools must use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine eligibility for federal financial aid. The list of schools that require the CSS Profile can be found at [CSS Profile Participating Institutions and Programs](#).

There are numerous differences between the CSS Profile and the FAFSA which can result in questions from students and families. Here are 10 important differences:

	The FAFSA	The CSS Profile
Application Structure and Sign-in Requirements	The FAFSA consists of segmented student and parent sections. Each section can only be accessed by the owners' StudentAid.gov account.	The CSS Profile is one continuous form that includes student and parent information but is all accessed by the student's College Board ID (unless non-custodial parent information is needed).
Application Cost	As the name suggests, submitting the FAFSA is always free to all filers.	There is a \$25 application fee with an additional fee of \$16 for each school added to the form. Fee waivers are available if the: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● family's adjusted gross income less than \$100,000;● student qualifies for an SAT fee waiver or;● student is an orphan or ward of the court



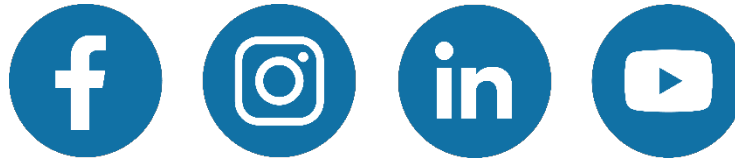
Questions?



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