

Tips for filing your FAFSA.

Below are some tips to keep in mind when completing your Free Application for Federal Student Aid, otherwise known as your FAFSA, the first step to securing most types of financial aid including the Federal Stafford loan.

- 1. Online = Faster Filing.** Filing electronically at www.fafsa.ed.gov is much quicker. Paper copies take 4-6 weeks to get processed while the electronic version only takes 7-10 days. The electronic form also helps ensure that the information is filled out correctly, because it will not allow you to advance to the next page if anything is missing.
- 2. Start at the Beginning.** Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1st if you plan to enter school in the Fall of that year. Make sure you read the directions carefully and fill in all the required information. Don't leave anything blank that applies to you! Instead, you should fill out the word "none" or N/A. Only complete the sections that apply to you (if you are an independent student for example, don't complete the parent section).
- 3. Deadlines, Deadlines and more Deadlines!** Freshmen often have earlier deadlines than returning students. Also, keep in mind most deadlines are the date the FAFSA should be received. Make sure to allow enough travel time for the form to reach its destination before the actual due date. Make sure to also check School AND State specific deadlines. They are usually earlier than deadlines for Federal Aid. And don't wait until your taxes are filed to complete your FAFSA! You can fill in your estimated income and then simply complete your taxes as soon as possible thereafter.



- 4. More Forms??** Some schools require additional forms to be filled out along with the FAFSA. Check with the school you are planning on attending to be sure that you complete all of the necessary forms the school requires! Make sure to respond promptly to any verification requests. Delays could jeopardize your financial aid award.
- 5. Be a Copycat.** It is extremely important to make or print copies of EVERYTHING before you send it in! Keep a folder of all your financial aid information including forms, tax returns, W-2's, etc. Having a folder will also make the verification process more efficient since all the necessary information is in one place!
- 6. Help!** For questions about your FAFSA or Financial Aid in general talk to your school's financial aid office or contact us to speak with an Education Finance Specialist.

For more information call us at **1-800-721-3969**
or visit www.charterone.com/edu

