

FAFSA | Contributors and Consent

There are a number of significant updates that are part of the major redesign of the 2024–25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Two of those changes are adding a new term, “contributor,” and a new requirement to consent to direct data exchange with the IRS.

Who is a “contributor”?

Anyone required to provide their signature on the FAFSA is considered a contributor. The FAFSA has always asked for parent/spouse information for dependent students and married independent students. The updated form refers to these roles as **contributors**.

How do I know if I am a contributor?

The student applying for aid is always a contributor. For dependent students, contributors include biological or adoptive parent(s), and if applicable, the spouse of the remarried parent listed on the FAFSA. The spouse of a married independent student may also be a contributor. The form has a “parent wizard” to identify a student’s contributors.

What does it mean to give “consent”?

Starting with the 2024–25 FAFSA, all contributors, including the student, will need to provide their **consent** to share Federal Tax Information (FTI). Even if a contributor was not required to file tax returns, consent is necessary to be eligible for federal aid.

A new Direct Data Exchange system allows the FAFSA to pull information directly from income tax returns. This process allows FTI to be transferred directly from the IRS.

The Department of Education will use the data received from the IRS to calculate an applicant’s Student Aid Index (SAI) and Pell Grant award. Consent is necessary for this process to take place.

What do these changes mean for students completing the FAFSA?

When a student begins their 2024–25 FAFSA, they will be asked to identify any contributors and invite them to complete specific sections of the form. After a student submits the following information about their contributor(s), the system will automatically email invitations.

- Legal First and Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number (SSN) or physical address if the contributor does not have an SSN
- Email address

The contributor will receive an email inviting them to complete their section of the FAFSA and will be provided a direct link to the student’s FAFSA form. Contributors will have 45 days to log in with their FSA ID and password to complete their section or the student will need to restart their application and the contributor invitation process. Contributors will need their personal FSA ID and password to log in. After completing

their section, the contributor will be able to review their information and then electronically sign the FAFSA. If there is a change in the contributor, the student can log back in and update the email address.



All contributors will be able to provide their consent as part of completing the FAFSA.

If a contributor declines and then changes their mind, they can log in to their FSA Dashboard to provide their consent. **If a contributor declines to provide consent, the student applicant will not be considered for federal student aid.** Since the FAFSA is also used to determine State and Institutional eligibility, declining to provide consent could impact receiving other financial aid. If the student is completing a paper FAFSA, there will be a section where the contributors can sign to provide the consent.