

DECEMBER 2003  
FAFSA ON-LINE — HINTS AND HOW-TOS

***Before beginning a FAFSA:***

- **If you do not already have a**

**PIN**, apply for one now (you don't have to wait till after January 2). Apply at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). You'll need a PIN to electronically sign your FAFSA. Your PIN will be e-mailed to you within 1-5 days. If you don't provide a valid e-mail address, the agency will mail you your PIN within 7-10 days.

- **Documents you will need to complete your FAFSA:**

—Social Security number

—Driver's license number if you have one

—W-2 Forms

—Federal income tax return (though this information may be estimated at early dates and confirmed later)

—Current bank statements, records of stocks, bonds, other investments

—Records of other untaxed income received, such as Social Security, etc.

—Business or farm records

—Alien registration number, if one is not a U.S. citizen.

—If the student is a dependent, he will need parent(s)' income and financial records (as listed above).

- **Apply as early in**

**January or February** as possible. You do not need to have made a final school choice to apply for financial aid. As with federal income tax, you may apply with estimated data. When you receive your SAR (Student Aid Report) for confirmation, you will need to cite actual income data. But your early application, even with estimated data, puts you in line with the college financial aid administrators.

- **Financial aid distribution**

of college aid is usually on a first-come, first-served basis—at least to some extent. The earlier your FAFSA is filed and college application is made the less likely the school will run thin on its award monies.

- **Keep all your records**

as you file. You will find them helpful next year. Yes, you have to do this each year for each student you have in college and for whom you want financial aid.