

Navigating FAFSA and NC RDS to Prepare for College



 Completing the FAFSA and NC RDS can unlock access to many types of financial aid for eligible students.	FAFSA	NC RDS
	 Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to determine eligibility for federal, state, and college-based financial aid.	 Use NC RDS (Residency Determination Service) to receive an RCN (Residency Certification Number) to determine eligibility for in-state tuition and/or state grant awards.
Where?	FAFSA.gov	ncresidency.org
First Step?	Set up a FAFSA account—required for students and parents of dependent students.	Log in to NC RDS using your CFNC.org username and password. If you don't have one, you'll be able to set one up from the login page.
When? (recommended)	Set up FAFSA account before Oct. 1; Submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after Oct. 1.	Ideally before student applies to NC colleges and universities.
INFORMATION REQUESTED		
Student's Personal Identifying Information*	SSN, ARN, or USCIS	SSN, ARN, USCIS, ITIN, I-94, or NC Student ID
Parent's Personal Identifying Information*	SSN**, ARN, USCIS, or ITIN	SSN**, ARN, USCIS, or ITIN
Student-Filed Federal Taxes	YES	YES
Parent-Filed Federal Taxes	YES	YES
Student-Filed State Taxes	NO	YES
Parent-Filed State Taxes	NO	YES
Address of Permanent Residence	YES, for state grant eligibility determination	YES, for in-state tuition and state grant eligibility determination
Driver's License or Vehicle Information (if available)	NO	YES
Military Information (if applicable)	YES	YES
What to Save After Completing Form?	FAFSA account username and password to review the FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS).	RCN to share with NC colleges/universities for in-state financial aid consideration.
Apply Again?	YES Use FAFSA account to complete the FAFSA each year in college.	NO RCN never changes, but you may need to reapply if you transfer to a different institution.

*SSN = Social Security Number; ARN = A-Number; USCIS = US Citizenship and Immigration Services; ITIN = Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

**Parents can use alternative information for verifying their identity