FAFSA Completion Tips for Students with Parents without a Social Security Number

Students need to have an **FSA ID** (Federal Student Aid Identification) before starting the **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Go to **studentaid.gov/fsa-id** to get started. If one of the parents has a social security number, then this parent should also get an FSA ID. Be sure to have paper and pencil to write down the user name and password for each FSA ID and keep them in a safe, secure place. The FSA ID you set up will be required each year you complete a FAFSA.

If neither parent has a social security number, he/she will not be able to get an FSA ID. However, do not worry about that, there is a solution. See bullets below:

- Visit **FAFSA.gov** and click on Start My FAFSA and begin to answer the questions. If you want to complete the application in Spanish, select Español on the top right-hand corner. Make sure to enter student information into the student part of the FAFSA and parent information into the parent part. This is a common error.
- If neither parent has a social security number, they will need to enter 000-00-0000 in the SSN box on the FAFSA.
- You will get an error message; however, this is the correct way to proceed. Do not give up – you will need to click the box that says, "check for errors" or "continue". You may have to do this twice if you entered zeros for both parents, but this will allow you to continue to the next section.
- Parents sometimes try to use their ITIN numbers instead of 000-00-0000. **Do not use the ITIN number.** The ITIN always begins with a 9 and will appear to be a valid social security number, but it is **not**. **ITIN numbers will not work on the FAFSA; use 000-00-0000 instead.**

If parents do not have social security numbers, they will not be able to use the DRT (Data Retrieval Tool) shown on the FAFSA. (The DRT is a feature that directly reaches into a person's income tax data at the IRS and transfers the information directly to the FAFSA. Since this is a direct data transfer, there are fewer human errors.)

Parents who use 000-00-0000 must manually enter the data directly from the paper copy of the income tax return they filed the prior prior year. Students and parents sometimes have questions with this section. If you are at a FAFSA event, ask questions or call CFNC toll-free at 866.866.CFNC (2362) and choose the Pay for College option OR call the FAFSA help line.

When you reach the signature part of the FAFSA, students and parents, who have the FSA ID, will use it to sign the FAFSA. This is very simple.

Parents who use 000-00-0000 have the option to mail an ink-on-paper signature. Here is what they need to do:

- To find the parent signature sections, parents should scroll down below where the student has just signed the FAFSA with his/her own FSA ID. In this section, the parent should click the box that says, "I agree" and then click "Print This Page". **Make sure you do not have a pop-up blocker on. This is important.**

- After the page is printed, the parent should sign the page, write in the date and immediately send **this page** to Federal Student Aid Programs. The address can be found on the signature page.
- After printing your signature page, the student should click on "**submit my FAFSA**". Once the FAFSA is submitted, the student will receive a confirmation that their FAFSA has been submitted.
- It is not necessary to send the entire FAFSA in paper form, *only the signature page*. Send the signature as soon as possible because it takes about 3 weeks to process it. Your FAFSA will be sitting there, idle, until the signature page is matched to your application. You will notice the bar code on the signature page, which will be scanned when it arrives to the department of education.

For individual assistance:
- Students should contact their school counselors or academic advisors at their schools.
- Contact the financial aid office at a college or university near you.
- Call the Department of Education FAFSA help line **1-800-433-3243.**
- **Contact** CFNC toll-free at **866.866.CFNC (2362)** Monday – Thursday, 8 am – 6pm and Friday, 8 am – 5 pm or via email at **espanol@cfncresources.org.**