FAFSA Verification: Don't Panic and Don't Wait

If you see a note on your Student Aid Report or your college tells you that you've been selected for FAFSA verification, don't worry: nearly one in three FAFSAs are! Verification is a way to make sure everything on your FAFSA is correct.

If you're chosen, each college's financial aid office will request information from you. This request will usually come via email, so pay close attention to the inbox of the email address you used on your college application. Some colleges will request it right away and others will take longer.

Don't wait to respond to a verification request – your financial aid won't be released until you do. Take these three easy but important steps right away:

1. Fill out verification worksheets.

Your college will send you verification worksheets to go along with any materials they ask for. In many cases, filling out a worksheet will be all you need to do! Be sure you accurately answer every question, and if something doesn't apply to you, simply put "N/A" or "0" as the answer.

2. Gather the information requested.

Your college will tell you exactly what documents they need. Typical areas you might be asked to verify include tax information, high school completion status and number of people in your household. Most colleges only ask for information about one of these areas!

3. Return the verification worksheets and requested information ASAP.

If you miss the deadline to submit your information, it will delay the disbursement of your financial aid. In some cases, you might even lose your aid. Respond as quickly as you can! Make sure you submit the documents in the way the college asks for them (such as by mail, a secure portal or even email). Some colleges will have a website where you can check if they have received your documents. Monitor that website and reach out to the college if you don't see the documents checked in.

If you have any questions about the information you're being asked to provide or how to fill out the forms, contact your college's financial aid office – they're there to help!

Your financial aid package might change if any of the information on your FAFSA was incorrect. If that happens, your college will let you know, so keep an eye on your email.

If you receive an email saying your FAFSA has been corrected, it could be because you updated your information, including adding or deleting a school. It could also be because your college adjusted some part of your form to help your FAFSA accurately reflect your financial picture. You'll be able to see what changed by accessing your FAFSA online.