

## Avoiding FAFSA Errors: 2012-2013

The following reminders can help you avoid FAFSA errors:

Check your name, date of birth and social security number!

- Remember, the Applicant is the Student.

Carefully follow instructions for dependency questions (45-57)!

- These questions determine whether parent data is necessary, and whether the student is considered "independent" for the purposes of financial aid. Answering these questions incorrectly may cause FAFSA on the web to skip questions about parent income and delay processing of your application by your financial aid professional.
- **Remember that your biological parents are not considered your legal guardians.**

Report the correct parent's information!

- Use information for the parent you live with, and step-parent, if that parent is remarried. Refer to the FAFSA instructions for more information.

Do not leave benefit questions (74-78) blank!

- If your family receives any of these benefits and reports them correctly on the FAFSA, the benefit(s) will be taken into account when determining family need.

Report your correct income tax PAID! (Question 36 (student) or Question 84 (parent))!

- From IRS Form:
  - ❖ 1040 - line 55
  - ❖ 1040A - line 35
  - ❖ 1040EZ - line 10

Don't forget untaxed income reported on both your tax return and your W-2 form! (Question 44 (student) or Question 92(parents))!

- Payments to tax deferred pensions are reported in Boxes 12a through 12d of your W-2 form, codes D, E, F, G, H and S. You do not report the total value--only the yearly contribution!

Remember to report any income exclusions! (Question 43 (student) or Question 91 (parents))!

- Report Federal Work-Study earnings from your 2010 W-2.
- Report combat pay as reported on the W2 in box 12, Code Q.

Respond correctly to the question: "If you have filed or will file a 1040, were you eligible to file a 1040A or 1040EZ?"! (Question 34 (student) and Question 81 (parents))!

- For more information on who can use form 1040A or 1040EZ and when you must use form 1040, please review Tax Topic 352 from the IRS web site:

Which Form—1040, 1040A, or 1040A/EZ?

Remember to update your FAFSA after you file if you did so using estimates!

- Update tax filing status AND income tax paid.