

## Avoiding FAFSA Errors: 2009-2010

The following reminders can help you avoid FAFSA errors:

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

- Be careful to write your Social Security Number (SSN) and date of birth accurately and clearly. Use your legal name as it appears on your Social Security card. Any errors in the SSN or date of birth or using a nickname or any other name will cause processing delays.

Report the correct parent's information!

- If your parents are divorced or separated, the parent with whom you lived the most during the past 12 months is the parent responsible for filling out the FAFSA. If you did not live with one parent more than the other, give answers about the parent who provided more financial support during the past 12 months or during the most recent year that you actually received support from a parent. This is not necessarily the same as the parent who has legal custody. If the parent who is responsible for completing the FAFSA has remarried, your step-parent must report his or her income and assets on the FAFSA, even if they weren't married during the previous year.

Report your correct income tax PAID! (Question 87)

- This amount is found on the following line items of each federal return: 2008 IRS form 1040 - line 56; 1040A - line 35; 1040EZ - line 11.

Don't forget untaxed income reported on both your tax return and your W-2 form! (Question 47 (student) or Question 95(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 46 (student) or Question 94 (parents))

- Report Federal Work-Study earnings from your 2008 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 35 (student) and Question 84 (parents))

- For more information on who can use form 1040A and when you must use form 1040, please review the following information taken from the IRS web site:

Am I eligible to File a 1040A/EZ?

Remember to update your income information after you file!

- If you estimate your 2008 income when you complete the FAFSA, please make sure to amend this information once you file your return if it has changed. It is also important to update the question about whether or not you have filed your return to indicate that you have now completed your return.