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Frequently Asked Questions



Q What is Prior, Prior Year (PPY)

A Beginning with the 2017-18 academic year, FAFSA applicants are required to report information from their 2015 tax returns – which translates into “prior to the prior year.” FAFSA applicants will then be required to use 2016 tax information on the 2018-19 FAFSA application.

Q What are the advantages to using Prior, Prior Year?

A Students can submit the FAFSA earlier by not waiting to complete their current year tax returns. The numbers will be actual figures which eliminates guessing or estimating. Students and families will now have more time to explore and understand their financial aid options.

Q What is the IRS DRT?

A The IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) allows students and parents to automate the data from the IRS tax return and auto fill the necessary data directly into their FAFSA.

TIP: Create a FSA ID for the student and one parent in the household before the FAFSA process. The FSA ID is used for identification purposes to sign and make corrections to the FAFSA, to use the IRS DRT, and to access federal student loan information.

Q Can I choose to report 2016 income if my family’s financial situation has changed since our 2015 taxes were filed?

A No, you must report the information for the required year. If your family’s income has changed substantially since the 2015 tax year, visit your campus financial aid administrator about your family’s situation.

Q What if I did not use the IRS DRT on my 2016-17 FAFSA and the income reported on my 2017-18 FAFSA is different?

A When the data does not match, a “pop up” warning will appear in the FAFSA application. If you choose to ignore it, this may cause delays in processing and you might be contacted by your financial aid administrator to resolve issues related to the differences.

Q Where can I get more information or help with the FAFSA?

A As you fill out the FAFSA at fafsa.gov, you can access the hints text box for every question and the Federal Government’s FAFSA help line is 1-800-433-3243.