

Frequently Asked Questions for New Jersey Dreamers

What is the difference between the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application?

While the applications require similar information, the FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for both federal and state aid while the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application is used solely to determine eligibility for New Jersey state aid. A student should only complete one application and choose that application based on the following:

a. You should complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov if you are a:

-Person who has a Social Security number who is either:

-A U.S. Citizen **or**

-An eligible non-citizen, per the FAFSA definition (<https://fafsa.ed.gov/help/fotw15a.htm>)

b. You should complete the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application if you:

Do not meet the FAFSA definitions above **or** do not have a Social Security Number, **and** if you have undocumented immigration status, you meet all the qualifications listed below:

-Attended a New Jersey high school for at least three (3) years

-Graduated from a New Jersey high school **or** received the equivalent of a high school diploma in New Jersey

-Registered with Selective Service (male students only) -- *See question 5 below*

-Are able to file an affidavit stating that you have filed an application to legalize your immigration status **or** will file an application as soon as you are eligible to do so

As an undocumented student, am I eligible to apply for state student aid?

Yes. New Jersey's state-funded financial aid for higher education is now available to all qualifying students, regardless of their immigration status. Under a new policy signed into law by Governor Phil Murphy on May 9, 2018, graduates of New Jersey high schools who do not have documented immigration status, but who meet other qualifying criteria, will be eligible to apply for state-funded financial aid for postsecondary education starting in the Fall semester of Academic Year 2018/2019.

As an undocumented student, am I eligible to apply for federal student aid?

No, undocumented students are not eligible for federal student aid. However, if you attend an eligible New Jersey institutions higher education, you will be considered for New Jersey state financial aid—such as the Tuition Aid Grant Program (TAG), Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Grant, New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJSTARS) Programs, and Governor's Urban Scholarship (GUS) – if you complete the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application.

How do I apply for State Financial Aid as an undocumented student?

The New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application is used by undocumented students who meet all the eligibility requirements. The New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) processes the application, and any aid received can only be used at eligible New Jersey institutions. U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens such as permanent residents should complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov. They may be eligible for federal student aid as well as New Jersey state aid. The application deadline is September 15, 2018 for enrollment in fall semester of Academic Year 2018/2019 for both the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application and the FAFSA.

Am I required to be registered for the Selective Service?

If you are a male between the ages of 18 and 25, you are required to register with the Selective Service System (SSS) and show proof of registration to your institution before receiving state financial aid. The SSS does not share your immigration status. You can register by mail even if you do not have a Social Security number. Do not register online if you do not have a Social Security number. **It can take one to two months to receive proof of registration after the form is submitted. For more information, visit the Selective Service website: www.sss.gov.**

Where can I get help with completing the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application?

You can visit the financial aid office at the school you plan on attending, or you can contact HESAA Customer Care at 609-584-4480.

Do I have to wait until my parents or I file my tax returns to complete my New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application?

No, the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application uses prior-prior tax year information. For example, for the 2018-2019 school year application, you will use 2016 income information.

What if I or my parents do not file a tax return?

In order for students to qualify for New Jersey State aid, upon request, applicants must provide proof of verifiable income, such as U.S. Tax return transcripts, IRS wage statements, or proof of income through a federal or state agency, i.e. TANF, SSI, WIC, etc.

When is the deadline to submit?

The deadline to submit the alternative application is September 15 to be eligible for the fall 2018 semester. The deadline for the spring 2019 semester is February 15. For other important deadline dates, please visit: <http://www.hesaa.org/Pages/StateApplicationDeadlines.aspx>.

Do I apply each year?

Yes, you must apply each year. For instance, if you will be continuing education in Academic Year 2019/2020, the renewal deadline for fall semester 2019 will be April 15, 2019.

How will I know the amount of aid I am receiving?

HESAA will notify you of your results, via email, after you submit your application. You may also be selected for a process called verification, which requires you and/or your parents to submit income verification to HESAA to determine eligibility. Please allow for processing time to receive a response.

What is the process to receive financial assistance through the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application?

Follow these steps:

- 1) Complete and submit the alternative application at <http://www.hesaa.org/njalternativeapplication.aspx>
- 2) Once HESAA receives your completed application, you will receive information and next steps through the email address you supplied on the application.
- 3) HESAA will determine your eligibility for NJ State grants or request additional documentation.
- 4) All the colleges or universities you listed on your application will have access to view your award eligibility.

I was notified that I am receiving a Tuition Aid Grant. How do I receive the money?

All the colleges or universities you listed on your application will have access to view your award eligibility. HESAA does not send awards directly to the applicant. The award is paid through the college or university. Your college or university is in charge of certifying that you are eligible for the award and disbursing the awards to your student account. For more information, you should contact the financial aid office or the bursars' office at the institution you are attending.