

# A Deep Dive into the CSS Profile

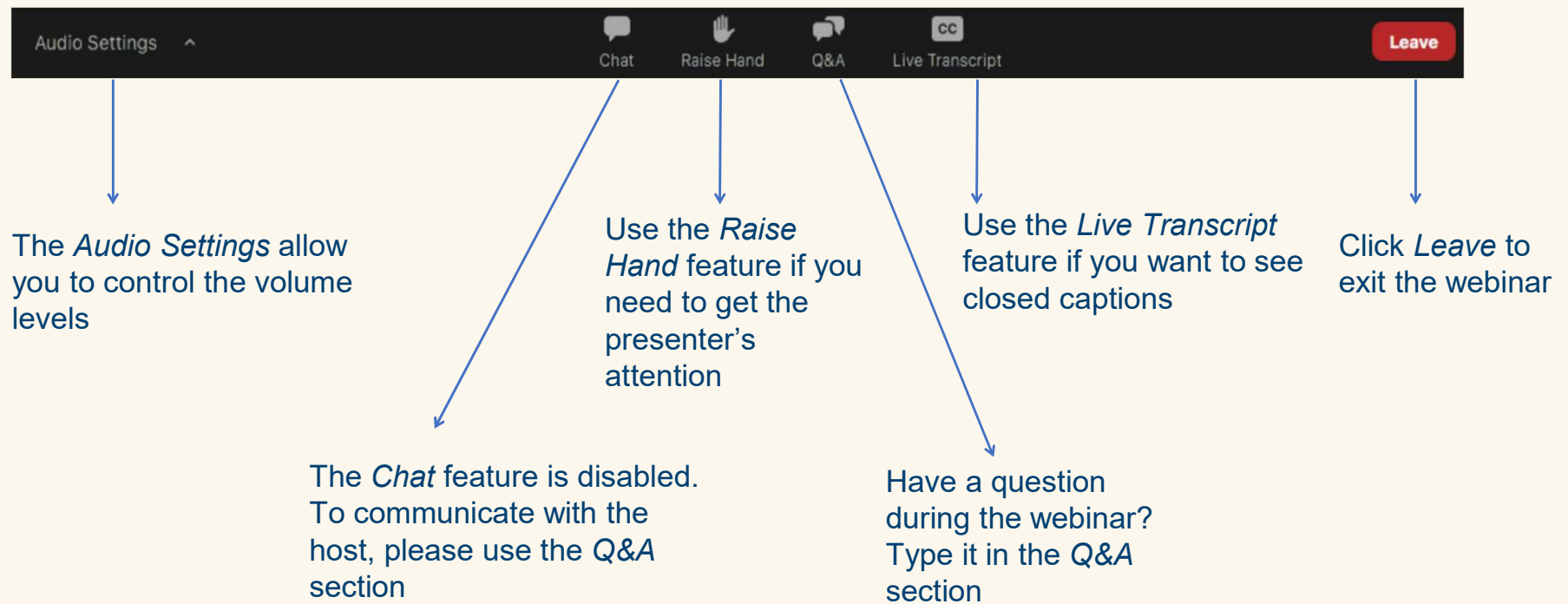
A MEFA Institute Webinar

*mefa*<sup>®</sup>

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## How to Participate





## About MEFA

State authority created by the Commonwealth of MA in 1982, helping families plan, save, and pay for college

## What is the CSS Profile™?

- The College Board's online financial aid application
- Required by almost 200 colleges/universities & (a few) scholarship programs
  - Check each college/university's financial aid website
- All colleges also require the FAFSA®
- Used to award non-federal financial aid funds
- Opens October 1st each year
- Available for both domestic and international students



## Why Do Institutions Use the Profile?

- Collects more detailed information than the FAFSA
- Allows schools to ask customized questions
- Permits families to provide special circumstances

Start Here: [cssprofile.org](https://cssprofile.org)

Links to more info

High school seniors should apply for 2024-25

List of colleges that require the Profile

The screenshot shows the CSS Profile website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'About CSS Profile', 'Application Steps', 'Fee Waivers', 'Resources/IDOC', 'en Español', 'Contact Us', and 'FAQ'. The main content area features a purple header with the text 'APPLY WITH CSS PROFILE' and 'CSS Profile'. Below this, it states 'Each year CSS Profile unlocks access to more than \$10 billion in nonfederal aid to thousands of students.' There are two buttons: 'Sign in to Fall 2024/Spring 2025' and 'Sign in to Fall 2023/Spring 2024'. The bottom section has three columns: 'Check Participating Schools and Scholarships' with a 'Learn More' button; 'Learn How to Apply' with a 'Complete the Application' button; and 'Completing the CSS Profile for the Noncustodial Parent' with an 'Information for Parents' button. The background image shows students walking in a hallway.

Spanish

Info for noncustodial parents

Profile tips

## Participating Institutions and Programs

### 2024-25 Participating Institutions and Programs

The following colleges, universities, and scholarship programs use [CSS Profile](#) and/or [IDOC](#) as part of their financial aid process for some or all of their financial aid applicants in the populations listed below. Please check schools' websites or contact the institution for more information.

CSS Code	Institution Name	Institution State	CSS Profile – Domestic Students	CSS Profile – International Students	CSS Profile – Noncustodial Parents	IDOC
Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾	Show All ▾
1001	Adrian College, MI	MI	No	Yes	No	No
1003	Alabama A&M University	AL	No	No	No	Yes
5007	American University	DC	Yes	No	Yes	No
3003	Amherst College	MA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4007	Arizona State University	AZ	Yes	No	No	No
0193	Armenian Student Assoc of Amer	RI	Yes	Yes	No	No
3075	Babson College	MA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Additional Resources on Homepage

### Getting Started

Here's a list of our most helpful resources to make it easier for you to apply.

[Get Started](#)

### Fee Waivers

CSS Profile is free for families who make up to \$100,000 a year.

[See If You Qualify](#)

### Divorced or Separated Families

Some colleges may require the CSS Profile from both the custodial and noncustodial parent.

[Learn More](#)

### International Students

Many colleges provide scholarship aid to international students.

[Know What to Expect](#)

### en Español

Estamos listos para ayudarle.

[Aprender Más](#)

## Resources

DOWNLOAD

### CSS Profile for Students

PDF | 4.01 MB

[Download](#)

DOWNLOAD

### CSS Profile Waiver Request for the Noncustodial Parent

PDF | 334.92 KB

[Download](#)

DOWNLOAD

### CSS Profile Fee Waivers

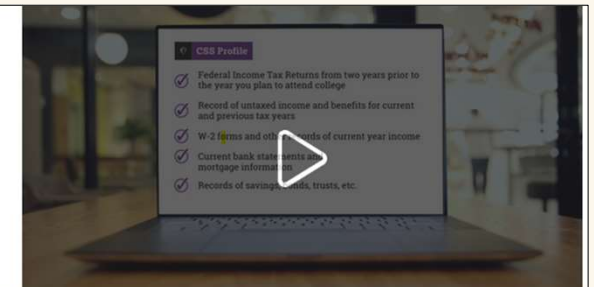
Read our FAQ for more details on submitting CSS Profile for free.

PDF | 135.9 KB

[Download](#)

## Complete the CSS Profile

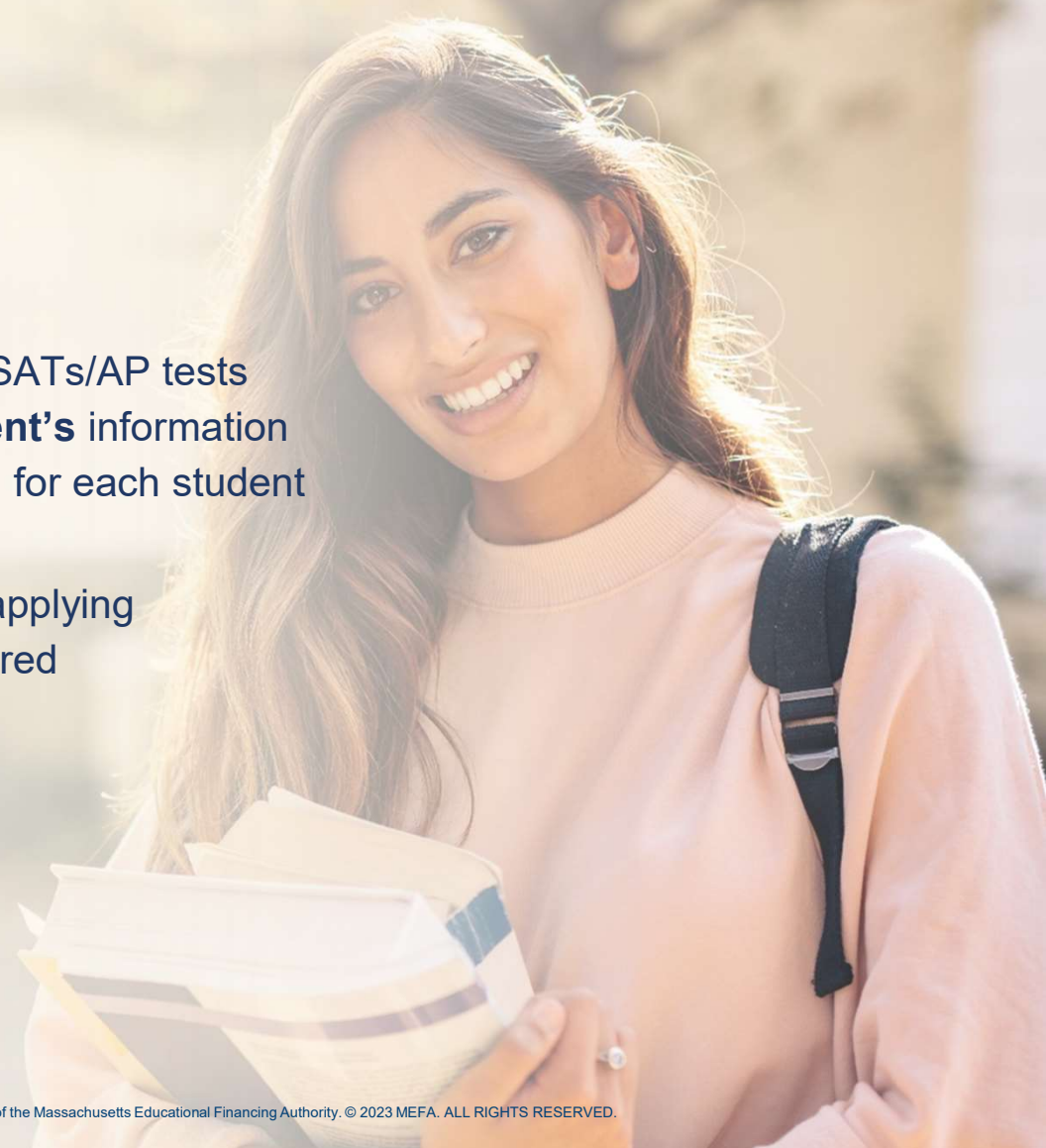
Need help completing your CSS Profile? Watch our quick overview to navigate the process and check out our other resources, like the Frequently Asked Questions, to find more information.





## Application Process

- Sign in
  - Use **student's** College Board account from SATs/AP tests
  - OR create a new student account using **parent's** information
  - A separate College Board account is needed for each student
- Customized application
  - Based on each student and colleges where applying
  - Sections are added when they become required
- Modern features
  - Complete sections in any order
  - Can complete in multiple sittings
  - Mobile-friendly



A young man with glasses is sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop. He has a thoughtful expression, with his hand near his chin. The desk is cluttered with books and papers. The background is a bright, slightly blurred office or study area.

## Application General Tips

- Click *Save and Continue* to move to the next section
- To exit, click *Save and Continue* and then close the browser
- Use buttons in application, not web browser, to navigate
- Use hints and notes for question guidance
- Some questions will offer expandable hints you can click to read
- Families should answer all questions to which they have answers, such as the SSN
- Can leave an answer blank if it does not apply and is not required

## Parent Information

- Report all parents and step-parents (up to 4) (include deceased)
- Legal guardians should be reported as parents (different from the FAFSA)
- Custodial parent, current spouse, and student provide info & list of colleges
  - Custodial parent = same as FAFSA = whoever provided more financial support in the previous 12 months
- Some schools require noncustodial parent to submit a Profile (check school's website)
- Student supplies email address of noncustodial parent
  - Either after school selection or in dashboard after submission
  - It is student responsibility to follow up with noncustodial parent

**Divorced or Separated Families**  
Some colleges may require the CSS Profile from both the custodial and noncustodial parent.

[Learn More](#)

Link on homepage to helpful tips



## If Noncustodial Parent Info Not Available

- If no noncustodial parent is listed, student will receive follow-up questions
  - Is noncustodial parent:
    - Deceased
    - Unknown
    - Incarcerated
    - Involved with legal order or documented abuse
  - Is student:
    - A child of a single adoptive parent
    - A child conceived by single parent at time of conception
    - Not in contact with noncustodial parent
- Based on the answers provided, noncustodial parent questions may be removed
- If noncustodial parent info required but not available, send waiver request to colleges
  - Found on CSS Profile parent page: [cssprofile.collegeboard.org/profile-for-parents](https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/profile-for-parents)



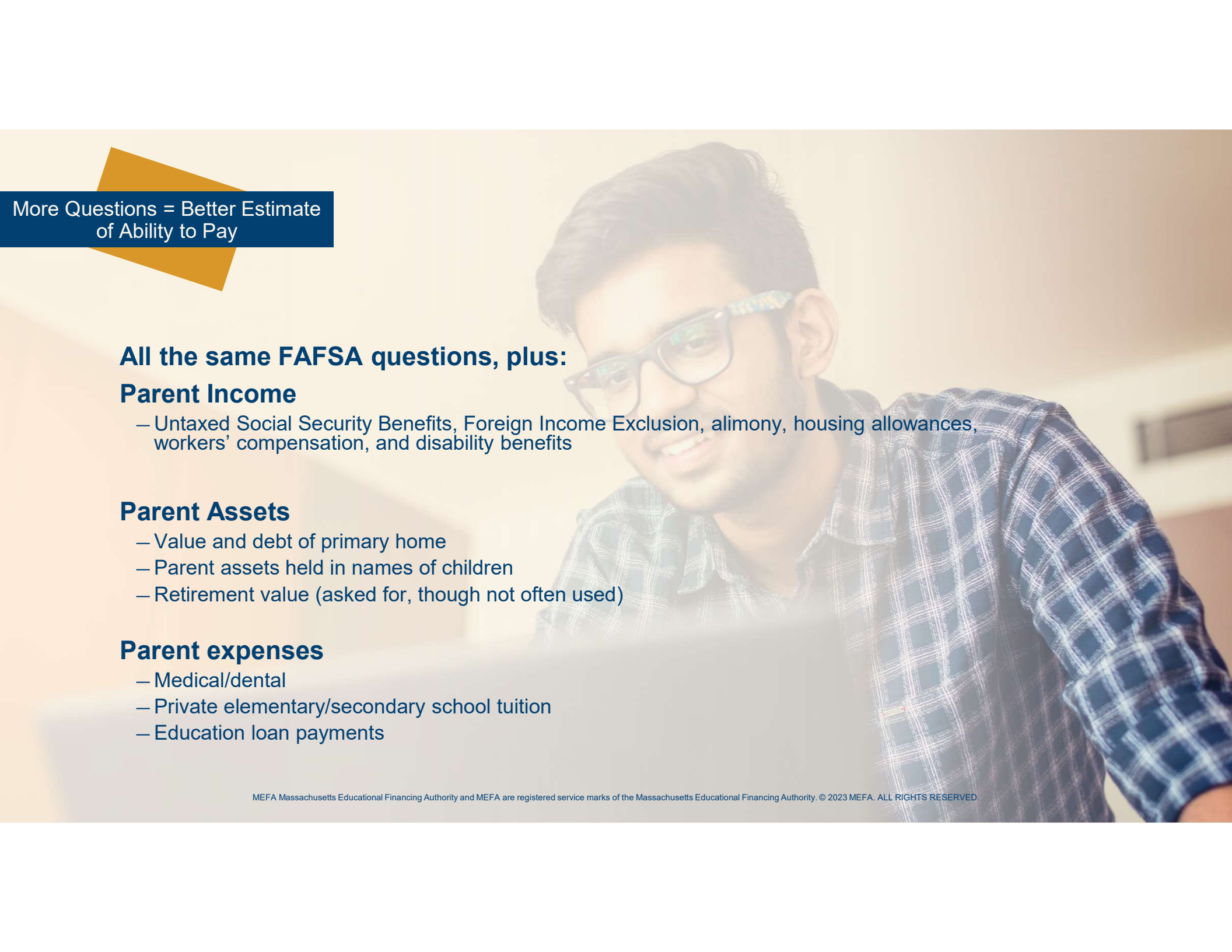
## Noncustodial Parent Instructions

- Noncustodial parent will receive an email request to submit the Profile
- Noncustodial parent completes a separate and secure Profile
  - Use same website: [cssprofile.org](https://cssprofile.org)
  - Must create own College Board account
  - Will use student's CBFInAid ID (included in email)
  - Will create a **student** account with **parent** information
  - No student financial info provided, just student demographic info
  - Does not select colleges but sees them listed
  - Cannot submit application until at least one college is listed
  - Can use a fee payment code
  - If completing two CSS Profiles, will need to use two accounts under two different email addresses
- Custodial and noncustodial parents cannot see one another's application



## General Information Requested on Profile

- Colleges where student is applying
- Parent & student 2022 income
  - Will refer to tax return lines
- Parent & student projected 2023 income
- Parent and student assets (current)
- Household member information
- Number of children in college



More Questions = Better Estimate  
of Ability to Pay

## All the same FAFSA questions, plus:

### Parent Income


- Untaxed Social Security Benefits, Foreign Income Exclusion, alimony, housing allowances, workers' compensation, and disability benefits

### Parent Assets

- Value and debt of primary home
- Parent assets held in names of children
- Retirement value (asked for, though not often used)

### Parent expenses

- Medical/dental
- Private elementary/secondary school tuition
- Education loan payments



More Questions = Better Estimate of  
Ability to Pay Continued

### **Family data**

- Ages of children in family
- Colleges that children attend

### **Student data**

- Private scholarships
- Employee tuition benefits

### **Explanation of special circumstances**

- After certain questions and at the end of the application
- Can check a certain category but must provide details
- Note change in income, exceptional expenses, etc.
- Send details to college if happens after completing the Profile

### **Supplemental Questions**

- Added by each college/university (requesting school will be noted)
- Sometimes not required but strongly recommended to answer





## Fees

- \$25 for the application and initial school report
- \$16 for each additional school report
- Payment options: Credit card or debit card
- Noncustodial parent's Profile: \$25 one-time
- Expanded fee waiver policy

Approximately 40% of all applicants and over 80% of first-generation applicants complete the CSS Profile for free



## Fee Waivers

- **Automatically granted if family meets one of the following:**
  - Household income (AGI) is \$100,000 or less
  - Student is an orphan or ward of the court and under 24
  - Student received an SAT fee waiver (must use student's College Board account)
- **Available to freshman/transfer/returning/independent undergraduate students**
- **Available to students whose parents live in U.S.**
- **Not available for international students**
- **Use for unlimited # of schools**
- **Noncustodial parents: fee waiver if meet same income guidelines above**

A young man with brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt with red sleeves and a backpack, is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is standing on a college campus with other students and buildings in the background. The image is slightly blurred to focus on the text.

## Fee Payment Codes

- Purchased by colleges/universities/organizations for use by students
- Each code pays for one college submission
- No limit on use of fee payment codes



## Submitting the Profile

- Will be given a chance to review the application
  - Prompts given to review inconsistencies or possible errors
  - Able to print answers if desired
- Will need to check box to certify that application is accurate
- Will be asked to pay – fee waivers show here

A young man and woman are looking at a tablet together in a bright, modern setting. The man is wearing a plaid shirt and the woman is wearing a brown top. They are both smiling and looking at the tablet. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office or classroom environment.

## Dashboard

- Can access anytime
- Tab on top right of application
- Includes:
  - Application status
  - Each college's submission date, deadline, and additional documents required
  - Next steps required by each school
  - Payment receipt
  - Option to save or print application
  - Opportunity to add a college or program
  - Link to IDOC
  - Space to add noncustodial parent's email address (can be sent multiple times)
  - The student's CBFinAid ID

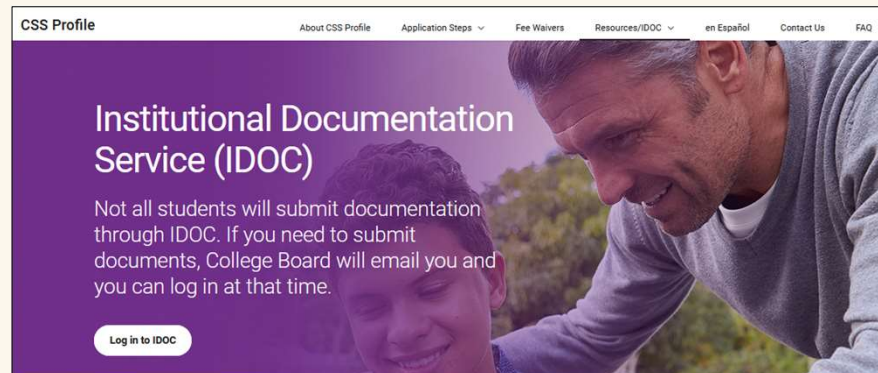
A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a blue button-down shirt with white polka dots. He is looking down at a white smartphone in his hands. The background is a bright, slightly blurred indoor setting with light-colored curtains.

## Corrections

- Students can submit corrections one time per application for certain situations:
  - Student completed the application as an independent but is actually a dependent
  - Student did not include business or farm information
  - Catch-all drop-down box
    - Options include “made a mistake” and “change in employment”
    - Student can provide a written explanation of the change
- Corrections are permitted only after original application has been delivered (~24 hours)
- Cannot complete a correction and *add college request* at the same time
- No charge to submit corrections

## What is IDOC?

- College Board's Institutional Documentation Service
- Collects family documents (such as tax returns) on institution's behalf
- Not all CSS Profile schools use IDOC; check with each college
- IDOC student dashboard tells student of required documents
- Institution-specific forms are under the *Get Forms* link on the IDOC dashboard
- Documents must be in JPEG, TIFF, or PDF format
- Send ALL tax return pages and schedules to prevent delay
- Sign any documents on signature lines
- IDOC Customer Service: (866) 897-9881
- [idoc.collegeboard.com](https://idoc.collegeboard.com)



# IDOC Overview

## Institutional Documentation Service (IDOC) Overview

0% Done

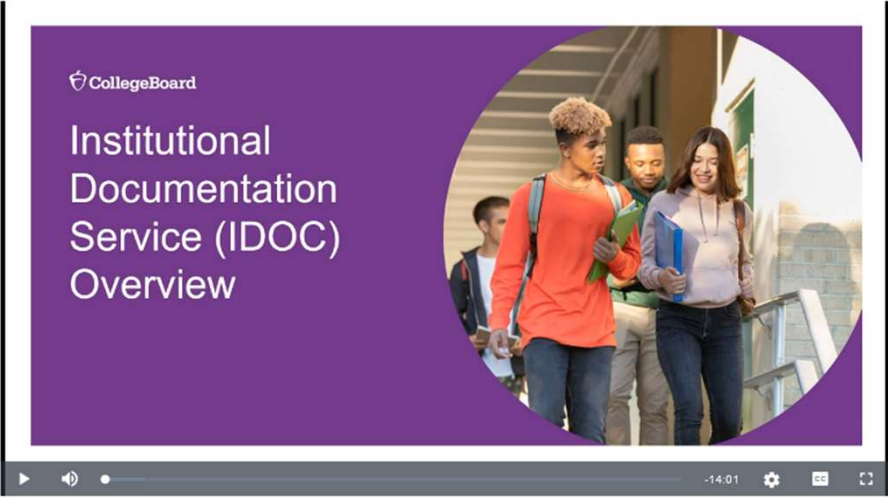
### 1. IDOC Introduction

- About IDOC
- Log in to IDOC
- Determining What Documents Are Required
- Uploading Documents
- Checking the Status of Documents
- How to Complete Institutional Forms
- Tips for a Successful IDOC Submission
- Helpful Resources
- Survey

## IDOC Introduction

IDOC is a service that collects family financial documents and distributes them to institutions on behalf of the student.

In this overview, we are going to discuss what IDOC is and guide you through its use. To begin, use the navigation on the left to select the topic you wish to learn more about or view the video in its entirety by clicking play below.



The video player displays a title slide with the CollegeBoard logo in the top left corner. The main text on the slide reads 'Institutional Documentation Service (IDOC) Overview'. To the right of the text is a circular image showing three diverse students walking on a college campus. The video player interface includes a play button, a progress bar, a volume icon, a settings gear, a chat icon, and a full-screen icon. The time '-14:01' is visible in the bottom right corner of the player.

[slides.collegeboard.org/idoc-student-dashboard](https://slides.collegeboard.org/idoc-student-dashboard)



## Profile Customer Support Center

Click on *Contact Us* on the top navigation bar to reach this page

### Contact Us

**Support Hours:**

- October 1 through February 28: Monday-Friday from 9am-10pm ET
- March 1 through September 30: Monday-Friday from 9am-6pm ET
- Certain holidays may affect these hours.

**Family customer support**

**CSS Profile For Students**  
U.S. and Canada: 844-202-0524  
Para español: 844-202-0524, marque 6  
International: 212-299-0096

**IDOC For Students**  
U.S. and Canada: 866-897-9881  
Para español: 866-897-9881, marque 7  
International: 212-299-0096

**For Financial Aid Administrators**  
Phone: 866-881-1167

**School counselor customer support**

**For Counselors**  
Phone: 800-626-9795

**Email Address: [FinaidServices@collegeboard.org](mailto:FinaidServices@collegeboard.org)**

**Live Chat**

← Chat




## Things To Do

- Register for upcoming MEFA Institute webinars and complete lessons to earn PDPs: [mefa.org/mefa-institute](https://mefa.org/mefa-institute)
- Share MEFA resources with families
- Visit [mefa.org/counselors](https://mefa.org/counselors)
- Encourage families to:
  - Register for MEFA webinars at [mefa.org/events](https://mefa.org/events)
  - Research financial aid deadlines and required applications
  - Complete the CSS Profile (now) and the FAFSA (in December)

Connect with MEFA on Social Media

 [facebook.com/mefaMA](https://facebook.com/mefaMA)

 [@mefa\\_ma](https://www.instagram.com/mefa_ma)

 [@MEFAtweets](https://twitter.com/MEFAtweets)

 [linkedin.com/company/mefa](https://linkedin.com/company/mefa)

 [youtube.com/MEFAcounselor](https://youtube.com/MEFAcounselor)

 [mefa.org/mefa-podcast](https://mefa.org/mefa-podcast)



Thank You

**QUESTIONS?**

Call (800)-449-MEFA (6332)  
or email [collegeplanning@mefa.org](mailto:collegeplanning@mefa.org)

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