



# Navigating FAFSA and RDS to Prepare for College

Both FAFSA and RDS are required and need similar information for completion. Below is a breakdown of what these two items are and the information needed to complete them.

**FAFSA** - Complete the **FAFSA** (*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*) to determine your eligibility for federal and state financial aid.

**RDS** - Use **RDS** (*Residency Determination Service*) to receive an **RCN** (*Residency Certification Number*) to determine your eligibility for in-state tuition and state grant awards.

		
<b>What?</b>	Possible eligibility for federal and state financial aid for college	Possible eligibility for in-state tuition and state grants
<b>Where?</b>	<b>fafsa.gov</b>	<b>ncresidency.org</b>
<b>First Step?</b>	Get FSA ID ( <i>Federal Student Aid Identification</i> ) – student and parent/legal guardian	Complete RDS online
<b>When?</b>	FSA ID before Oct. 1; FAFSA as soon as possible after Oct. 1	Ideally before student applies to NC colleges and universities
	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED</b>	<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED</b>
<b>Student's Personal Identifying Information (SSN, ARN, USCIS or TIN)*</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Parent/s Personal Identifying Information (SSN, ARN, USCIS or TIN)*</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Student-filed Federal Taxes</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Parent/Legal Guardian-filed Federal Taxes</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Student-filed State Taxes</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Parent/Legal Guardian-filed State Taxes</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Address of Permanent Residence</b>	<b>YES</b> , for state grant eligibility	<b>YES</b> , for in-state tuition and state grant eligibility
<b>Driver's License or Vehicle Information (if available)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Military Information (if applicable)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Documentation (if applicable)</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>What to Save After Completing Form?</b>	<b>FSA ID</b> - Keep it safe.	<b>RCN - (Residency Certification Number)</b> Keep it safe.
<b>Apply Again?</b>	<b>YES</b> . Use FSA ID to complete the FAFSA each year in college.	<b>NO</b> . RCN never changes, but you may need to reapply if you transfer to a different institution.

\*SSN = Social Security Number; ARN = Alien Registration Number; USCIS=US Citizenship and Immigration Services; ITIN = Individual Taxpayer Identification Number