Your Go-To Guide for the
CSS Profile

The CSS Profile is a financial aid application used by nearly 200 colleges, universities, and scholarship programs to award institutional (non-federal) aid. It is managed by the College Board and goes beyond the FAFSA by collecting more detailed financial information. The CSS Profile is just one piece of the puzzle, so encourage your students to explore all funding options—including local scholarships and federal aid.

How to Complete the CSS Profile

1 Create or log into a College Board account at **cssprofile.collegeboard.org**.

2 Select the academic year.

3 Choose institutions to receive your report; each may have its own deadline.

4 Complete each section carefully—save your progress along the way.

5 Submit and pay. The cost is $25 for the first school and $16 for each additional one. Fee waivers are available.

6 Depending on the institutions selected, students whose parents are separated, divorced or never married will be instructed on how each parent can complete their own CSS Profile.

PRO-TIP

The CSS Profile opens every year on October 1. Submitting the application early can increase access to institutional funds, which may be limited.

What You'll Need

1 Federal tax returns from two years prior (e.g. 2023 for the 2025–2026 academic year)

Note: *The CSS Profile will also ask for estimates for the year before and the year after.*

2 W-2s and other records of income

3 Records of untaxed income

4 Current bank statements

5 Mortgage info or rent details

6 Business/farm records (if applicable)

Who Should Complete the CSS Profile?

Students applying to CSS Profile-participating colleges (mostly private institutions).

Students seeking institutional grants or scholarships.

Undocumented and international students may also be eligible and are encouraged to apply.

PRO-TIP

Check each institution's financial aid page as deadlines vary by school.

FAQs

Q How is the CSS Profile different from the FAFSA?

A The FAFSA is for federal aid; the CSS Profile helps colleges award their own institutional aid and requires more detailed financial info.

Q How long does the CSS Profile take to complete?

A It varies based on your situation, but most families can complete the application in less than two hours.

Q Can undocumented and international students use the CSS Profile?

A Yes. Many institutions use the CSS Profile to assess aid eligibility for noncitizens and undocumented students.

Q Do all colleges require the CSS Profile?

A No—only about 200 schools do. Check with each college's financial aid office or on the CSS Profile website.

Q What if parents are divorced, separated, or were never married?

A Many schools require both the custodial and the non-custodial parent to complete their own CSS Profile. The student will be guided through the process of inviting each parent to complete the form, and the information on each of their forms is never shared with the other parent. Students should contact colleges if this presents a hardship.

appily

Visit our **FAFSA Resource Hub** for a wealth of tools designed to help you and your students navigate the financial aid process with confidence!
appily.com/fafsa