Transcript: How to Fill Out the FAFSA

The free application for federal student aid or FAFSA is the application for grants, loans and work study funds provided by the Federal Government. It is also used by many states and schools for their financial aid programs. For the fastest and easiest way to apply, visit our official website www.fafsa.gov. The FAFSA is available in English and Spanish. As you fill it out online, you will be able to automatically skip questions that don't pertain to you, check out your status immediately and get online help. It takes most people less than 30 minutes to complete the application. You will need a few things when you fill it out so get ready by gathering your social security number, permanent resident card if you have one, any W2s forms or records of money earned in the previous year and your tax records. Now if you haven't already filed your taxes, you can fill out the FAFSA with estimated tax information, but you'll have to update your information later: And if have filed your taxes, you maybe able to import your information automatically from the IRS. If you have any questions about what information to gather, there is a complete list of documents that you will need at www.FAFSA.gov. Before you being the process of filling out the FAFSA, you should create a Personal Identification Number called the Federal Student Aid PIN that will act as your electronic signature. You will only need to create a PIN once and you can use it to renew your FAFSA each year that you apply. Your parents will need a PIN too if they have to provide any information. So now you're ready to begin filling out the FAFSA to apply for financial aid. There are three groups of questions that include personal information such as your name, address and marital status. Financial information such as your income and any parent information that is required. If you get hung-up or confused about a question, the help and hints box on the right hand side on the application can help with each question as you move along. Also, look for the online chat feature under help if you would like assistance from a knowledgeable agent. Because colleges and career schools use the FAFSA to provide financial aid, you can list up to ten schools you are interested in attending. You should list all the schools you are considering even if you haven't been accepted or applied yet. If you have more than ten schools in mind, you can submit your FAFSA with ten schools and then add more later. When you finish filling out the FAFSA, use your PIN to sign the form. If you are required to submit parental information on your FAFSA, a parent would need to sign the application with his or her own PIN as well. If you have questions and need more information, please visit www.studentaid.gov.