INSTRUCTIONS FOR:
2014–2015 Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)

Student’s Checklist

☐ 1. Apply for admissions: Complete your admissions application prior to completing the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA).

☐ 2. Confirm your eligibility for House Bill 1403/Senate Bill 1528: Contact the appropriate office, typically the registrar’s or admissions office of your college or university, in order to find out if you meet the requirements to be classified as a Texas resident under House Bill 1403/Senate Bill 1528.

☐ 3. File taxes: The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires you and/or your parents to file a tax return if either you or your parents meet the income thresholds established annually by the IRS. For more information regarding income thresholds, go to www.irs.gov.

Request an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN): Individuals who do not have a Social Security Number can apply for an ITIN using a W-7 Tax Form. For more information, go to www.irs.gov.

☐ 4. Register with the Selective Service (males only): If you are a male between the ages of 18 and 25, you must register with the Selective Service. You can obtain a registration form at your local post office.

☐ 5. Check Appendix A of TASFA: Appendix A contains the list of schools that currently accept the TASFA. If the college or university that you plan to attend is not on this list, check with the college’s financial aid office to determine which application the college prefers. You will most likely have to complete a paper copy of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

☐ 6. Complete the TASFA: Complete the TASFA. Print the completed form and mail it to the college or university you plan to attend. You are only required to submit the application piece (without the instructions) to your college or university. Do not leave any blanks. Enter “N/A” if a question does not apply to you.

a. Attach a copy of proof of registration with Selective Service: Attach a copy of the registration acknowledgement card to the TASFA. Your college will not be able to release state funds until you provide them with your acknowledgement card.

b. Attach a copy of 2013 income tax return(s) and tax transcript: If you are required to file taxes, the college will not process your TASFA until you provide a copy of your tax return(s).

c. Order a free copy of tax return transcript — To order a tax transcript, go to www.irs.gov or call 1-800-908-9946.

d. Include cash earnings: If you and/or your parents did not have to file a federal income tax return, but earned wages which were paid in cash, report those cash earnings on item 33 of the TASFA.

☐ 7. Follow up on your TASFA: To check the status of your application, contact your college’s or university’s financial aid office. Contact information can be obtained by visiting the college’s website. College/university websites are provided on Appendix A of the TASFA.

Help is available.
For assistance with the TASFA, call 1-888-311-8881
Section I: Student Information

1. **Were you born before January 1, 1991?**
   Note that if you were born on January 1, 1991, you should answer “No.”

2. **As of today, are you married?**
   Answer “Yes” if you are married as of the date that you complete the application. Answer “Yes” if you are separated but not divorced.

   In the state of Texas, common-law marriages are recognized. Therefore, if you meet the state’s requirements to be considered common-law married, answer “Yes” to this question. For more information on common law marriage in Texas, go to www.co.travis.tx.us/dro/common_law.asp.

3. **Are you in a graduate program of study?**
   You should answer “Yes” if you will be enrolled in a master’s or doctoral program in the initial term you attend in the 2014–2015 academic year. If you will be finishing your bachelor’s degree in the initial term of the academic year and then moving on to a master’s or doctoral degree you should first answer “No.” Once you have completed the bachelor’s degree, you must notify the financial aid office at the college or university that you will be attending.

4. **Do you have at least one child that you support?**
   Answer “Yes” if you have at least one child who receives at least 50% of his or her financial support from you. An applicant whose unborn child will be born before the end of the academic year (June 30, 2015) may answer “Yes.” Note that financial support is the issue here; it does not matter whether the child lives with you or not.

5. **Do you have dependents other than a child or spouse?**
   Answer “Yes” only if at least one dependent lives with you and receives more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2015.

6. **Are you an orphan or ward of the court?**
   Answer “Yes” if at any time since you turned age 13,
   - You had no living parent (biological or adoptive) even if you are now adopted;
   - You were in foster care even if you are no longer in foster care today or;
   - You were a dependent/ward of the court even if you are no longer a dependent/ward of the court today.

   The financial aid administrator at your school may require you to provide proof that you were in foster care or a dependent or ward of the court.

7 & 8. **As determined by a court in Texas, are you or were you an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship?**
   Answer “Yes” if you can provide a copy of the court’s decision that as of today you are an emancipated minor or are in legal guardianship.
   
   Also, answer “Yes” if you can provide a copy of a court’s decision that you were an emancipated minor or were in legal guardianship immediately before you reached the age of being an adult in Texas. The court must be located in your state of legal residence at the time the court’s decision was issued.

   Answer “No” if you are still a minor and the court decision is no longer in effect or the court decision was not in effect at the time you became an adult. The financial aid administrator at your school may require you to provide additional information such as a copy of the court’s decision. 9, 10, & 11. **Are you an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or at risk of being homeless?**
   Answer “Yes” if you received a determination at any time on or after July 1, 2013, that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or, for question 11, at risk of being homeless.

   - Homeless - means lacking fixed, regular, and adequate housing, which includes living in shelters, motels, or cars, or temporarily living with other people because you had nowhere else to go.
   - Unaccompanied - means you are not living in the physical custody of your parent or guardian
   - Youth - means you are 21 years of age or younger or you are still enrolled in high school as of the day you sign this application.

   Answer “No” if you are not homeless or at risk of being homeless, or if you do not have a determination. You should contact your financial aid office for assistance if you do not have a determination but believe you are an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or are an unaccompanied youth providing for your own living expenses who is at risk of being homeless.

   The financial aid administrator at your college may require you to provide a copy of the determination if you answered “Yes” to one of these questions.

Section II: Household Information

12. **If you are classified as a dependent student (according to Section I of this application), list the names and ages of ALL family members, including your parent(s), who will be supported by your parent(s) from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.**

   These should include:
   - yourself
   - your custodial parent (your mother or father)
   - your custodial parent’s spouse (e.g., your mother or stepmother, or father or stepfather)
   - any dependent child under the age of 18 who lives in your custodial parent’s household
   - any sibling who is a dependent student attending college
   - any other person receiving more than 50 percent of his or her financial support from your custodial parent

   If you are classified an independent student (according to Section I of this application), list the names and ages of ALL family members in your household whom you will support from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, including:
   - yourself
   - your spouse
   - any dependent child under the age of 18 who lives with you
   - any dependent child of your spouse
   - any other person receiving more than 50 percent of his or her financial support from you or your spouse

   For any dependent student who is attending college on at least a half-time basis, write the name of the college. Do not include your parent if he or she is going to college. Attach an additional sheet if necessary.
A foster parent, a legal guardian, or a grandparent or other relative is not considered a parent for purposes of filing this application unless that person has legally adopted the student. A person who has been granted power of attorney for a student is not a legal guardian.

Section III: Additional Information

13. As of today, are you or your spouse a dislocated worker? In general, a person is considered a dislocated worker if he or she meets one of the following conditions. The person:
   • Has lost his or her job.
   • Has been laid off or received a lay-off notice from his or her job.
   • Is receiving unemployment benefits due to being laid off or losing a job and is unlikely to return to a previous occupation.
   • Is self-employed but is unemployed due to economic conditions or natural disaster.
   • Is a displaced homemaker. A displaced homemaker is generally a person who previously provided unpaid services to the family (e.g., stay-at-home mom or dad), is no longer supported by the husband or wife, is unemployed or underemployed, and is having trouble finding or upgrading employment.

If a person quits work, generally he or she is not considered a dislocated worker.

Answer “Yes” to question 13 if you are, or your spouse is, a dislocated worker.

Answer “No” to question 13 if neither you nor your spouse is a dislocated worker.

Answer “Don’t know” to question 13 if you are not sure whether you or your spouse is a dislocated worker. You can contact your financial aid office for assistance in answering this question. The financial aid administrator may require you to provide proof if you answer Yes to question 13.

14. Did you work in 2013?

If you worked during the year (e.g. January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013), your college will need to know your earnings and whether you filed a tax return and/or received a W-2 form from the IRS. Be prepared to provide documentation of your earnings.

Did you file a U.S. federal or foreign income tax return for 2013?

Indicate whether you have already completed, are going to complete, or will not file a tax return for 2013. If “Yes,” you must attach a copy of your tax return and tax transcript to this application.

15. What is your marital status?

Report your marital status as of the date you sign your TASFA.

16. Have you been convicted of a felony or a crime involving a controlled substance?

This question asks whether you have been convicted of a felony or offense involving a controlled substance (e.g. drugs, alcohol). If you answer “Yes” to this question, you must complete Worksheet 1: Confirmation of Eligibility found at www.aie.org/State/TASFA/. Sign and return the completed form to the financial aid office.

17. Do you have authorization to work in the U.S.?

If you have been approved for Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA), you could be eligible for the Texas College Work-Study Program. Your college will require proof of your authorization to work in the U.S. (e.g. copy of your SSN card).

18. What are your housing plans for 2014–2015?

Indicate whether you will be living on campus, living off campus, or living at your parent’s or relative’s home.

19. At the start of the 2014–2015 academic year, indicate whether you will be enrolled:
   • Full time - 12 credit hours or more
   • 3/4 time - 9-11 credit hours
   • 1/2 time - 6-8 credit hours or
   • Less than 1/2 time - less than 6 credit hours

20. Have you received funds from the TEXAS Grant Program or Top 10% Scholarship Program while attending a prior institution?

In determining your awards package, schools will take into consideration your receipt of these funds at a prior institution. Depending on the availability of funds, you may qualify for additional funds at the current institution. Also, if you are a transfer student who graduated with an Associates degree prior to attending the current institution, you must enter the date that you received the Associates degree.

21. Did your parents work in 2013?

If at least one of your parents worked during the year (e.g. January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013), your college will need to know their earnings and whether they filed a tax return and/or received a W-2 form from the IRS. Be prepared to provide documentation of your parent’s earnings.

Did your parents file a U.S. federal or foreign income tax return for 2013?

Indicate whether your parent(s) have already completed, are going to complete, or will not file a tax return for 2013. If “Yes,” you must attach a copy of your parent’s tax return and tax transcript to this application.
22. **As of today, are either of your parents a dislocated worker?** In general, a person is considered a dislocated worker if he or she meets one of the following conditions. The person:

- Has lost his or her job.
- Has been laid off or received a lay-off notice from his or her job.
- Is receiving unemployment benefits due to being laid off or losing a job and is unlikely to return to a previous occupation.
- Is self employed but is unemployed due to economic conditions or natural disaster.
- Is a displaced homemaker. A displaced homemaker is generally a person who previously provided unpaid services to the family (e.g., stay-at-home mom or dad), is no longer supported by the husband or wife, is unemployed or underemployed, and is having trouble finding or upgrading employment.

If a person quits work, generally he or she is not considered a dislocated worker.

Answer “Yes” to question 22 if either of your parents is a dislocated worker.

Answer “No” to question 22 if neither of your parents is a dislocated worker.

Answer “Don’t know” to question 22 if you are not sure whether either of your parents is a dislocated worker.

You can contact your financial aid office for assistance in answering this question. The financial aid administrator may require you to provide proof if you answer Yes to question 22.

23. **What is your parent’s marital status?**

Indicate the marital status of your primary parent as “married,” “single,” “widowed,” or “divorced/separated.” If your parents are married, please include income information for both parents in sections IV and V. If your parents are divorced, but have remarried, please include income information for your custodial parent and his/her current spouse.

24–27. **Father’s/mother’s highest level of education completed and age**

These questions do not affect your eligibility for state aid. Some institutional programs use the information provided here to offer aid to first-generation college students.

**Section IV: Untaxed Income, Income Exclusions, and Assets**

**Part A: Annual Untaxed Income**

28. **Child support received**

Report child support that you and either your spouse or your parent(s), as applicable, received for all children during 2013. Do not include foster care or adoption payments.

29. **Tax exempt interest income**

If you filed a tax return, you can find it on IRS form 1040-line 8b or 1040A line 8b.

30. **Housing, food, and other living allowances**

Housing, food, and other living allowances provided to you or your parents must be reported when they are part of a compensation package received for a job. Include cash payments and cash value of benefits. If you received free room and board in 2013 for a job, you must report the value of the room and board as untaxed income. (For this category, “housing allowances” excludes rent subsidies for low-income housing.)

31. **Other untaxed income not reported, such as worker’s compensation, disability**

Don’t include student aid, earned income credit, child tax credit, untaxed Social Security benefits, Workforce Investment Act educational benefits, combat pay (if you are not a tax filer), benefits from flexible spending arrangements (e.g., cafeteria plans), foreign income exclusion, or credit for federal tax on special fuels.

32. **Money you received (or bills someone else paid for you) not reported elsewhere on this form**

Report any cash support that you (the student) receive from a friend or relative. Cash support includes payments made on your behalf. For instance, if your aunt pays your rent or utility bill that you would otherwise be obligated to pay yourself, you must report that financial support in this section.

33. **List any income that was paid in cash or other means for which a tax return was not filed or a W-2 form was not provided (i.e., wages not listed on taxes or W-2 forms).**

**Part B: Annual Income Exclusions**

34. **Child support paid**

Report any child support payments paid by you and either your spouse or your parent(s), as applicable, during 2013 as a result of divorce, separation, or some other legal requirement. Keep in mind that these payments are payments made to a child(ren) not living in your or your parent(s)’ household.

For purposes of this application, a child is a member of your household if you provide more than half of the child’s support, whether the child lives with you or not.

35. **Taxable earnings from State Work-Study or other needbased work programs**

These are earnings from need-based work programs and need-based employment portions of fellowships and assistantships.
36. **Taxable scholarships and grants reported on a 2013 tax return**

Report any student grant and scholarship aid that was reported to the IRS on your or your parent(s)’ 2013 federal income tax return. This includes benefits such as awards, living allowances, and interest accrual payments as well as grant and scholarship portions of fellowships and assistantships.

**Part C: Assets**

37. **As of today, balance of cash, savings, and checking accounts**

Do not include student financial aid in this amount.

38. **As of today, investment net worth (do not include the home you live in or the balance of retirement plans)**

Net worth means current value minus debt. If net worth is negative, enter 0.

**Investment value – investment debt = net worth of investments**

If you or your parent(s) own real estate or investments other than your principal residence, investment value equals the amount the investments are worth today. Investment debt equals how much you and either your spouse or your parent(s), as applicable, owe on real estate and investments other than your principal residence. Investment debt means only those debts that are related to the investments.

**Investments include** real estate (do not include the home you live in), trust funds, UGMA and UTMA accounts, money market funds, mutual funds, certificates of deposit, stocks, stock options, bonds, other securities, installment and land sale contracts (including mortgages held), commodities, etc.

**Investments also include** qualified educational benefits or education savings accounts (e.g., Coverdell savings accounts, 529 college savings plans and the refund value of 529 prepaid tuition plans). For an independent student, the accounts owned by the student and/or the student’s spouse are reported as investments here under the “Student/Spouse” column. For a dependent student, the accounts are reported as parental investments here under the “Parent(s)” column, including all accounts owned by the parents for any member of the household.

**Investments do not include** the home you live in, the value of life insurance, retirement plans (401(k) plans, pension funds, annuities, non-education IRAs, Keogh plans, etc.) or cash, savings, and checking accounts already reported in question 37.

**Investments also do not include** UGMA and UTMA accounts for which you are the custodian, but not the owner.

39. **As of today, net worth of current business(es) and/or investment farm(s)**

**Business and/or investment farm value includes** the market value of land, buildings, machinery, equipment, inventory, etc.

**Business and/or investment farm debt means only those debts for which the business or investment farm was used as collateral.**

**Business value does not include** the value of a small business if your family owns and controls more than 50 percent of the business and the business has 100 or fewer full-time or full-time equivalent employees. For small business value, your family includes (1) persons directly related to you, such as parent, sister or cousin, or (2) persons who are or were related to you by marriage, such as a spouse, stepparent, or sister-in-law.

**Investment farm value does not include** the value of a family farm that you (your spouse and/or your parents) live on and operate.

**Section V: Total Family Income**

40. **Was your total family income less than $6,900 in 2013?**

In order to accurately assess your financial situation, your college/university needs to account for all sources of income. In cases where your income falls below $6,900, an explanation is required, as this amount is considered to be significantly below the 2013 poverty guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

If a relative claims you on his or her taxes, some schools may require that you provide a copy of his or her IRS federal income Tax Form. Check with the college that you are planning on attending to find out if additional documentation is required.

**Include a breakdown of your living expenses**

If you answered “Yes”, make sure that you provide a letter that explains all your sources of income and how you were able to cover all your living expenses. You may want to provide an itemized budget.

**Section VI: Statement of Selective Service Registration Status**

41. **Selective Service Registration Status**

If you are male between the ages of 18 and 25, you must register with Selective Service in order to qualify for any type of state aid (regardless of residency status).

You may obtain a Selective Service registration form from any local post office. Complete this registration form and mail it to the Selective Service System office.
As soon as you receive your registration acknowledgement card, you should provide a copy of this acknowledgement card to the financial aid office of the institution you are attending or plan to attend. While you wait to receive your acknowledgement card, you can still complete the TASFA by checking the last box.

Certification of Registration Status
Under Texas Education Code, Section 51.9095, if you are currently of the age and gender requiring registration with Selective Service, but knowingly and willfully fail to do so, you are ineligible to receive funds from the State of Texas.

Exemptions
Almost all male U.S. citizens, and male noncitizens living in the U.S. who are 18 to 25 years of age, are required to register with Selective Service. Some noncitizens are required to register and others are not. Noncitizens not required to register include men who are in the U.S. on student or visitor visas, and men who are part of a diplomatic or trade mission and their families. Almost all other male noncitizens are required to register, including undocumented residents, legal permanent residents, and refugees.

NonRegistrants
If you are not registered as required, you are presently not eligible to receive state aid and should register promptly at a United States post office.

Privacy Act Statement
Because information on your registration status is essential for determining whether you are in compliance with the Selective Service law, failure to provide the information requested by this statement will prevent you from receiving state aid. This information is subject to verification with the Selective Service System.

False Statement Notification
A false statement may be grounds for your state aid to be suspended.

Review
Should any question arise regarding your registration or eligibility for an exemption, you may request an official “status information” letter from the Selective Service System by calling 1-888-655-1825. As an alternative, you may send a written request to the Selective Service System at P.O. Box 94638, Palatine, IL 60094-4638.

42. a. Student and Parent Signature Remember to sign your name on the application. Also, if you are classified as a dependent student, one of your parents must sign the application. The application will not be processed until all required signatures are included.

b. High School Counselor
This section applies only to those students who will be first-year college students (freshmen) in the 2014–2015 academic year. If extenuating circumstances exist that preclude your parent from signing this form, your high school counselor can sign this form in lieu of your parents.

When a high school counselor signs this form on behalf of the student’s parent, the high school counselor is attesting to the accuracy of the information provided on the application based on his or her knowledge of the student’s situation. Also, by signing the form, the counselor agrees to cooperate with the college or university’s financial aid administrator in providing documentation that verifies the student’s family circumstances and economic situation.

The option of allowing the high school counselor to sign this form is simply for the purpose of establishing a connection between the high school counselor and the college’s financial aid administrator to help clarify and document the student’s circumstances.

Some college and university financial aid administrators may want to contact the high school counselor for additional information and documentation. Therefore, the high school counselor must provide the following contact information: name, title, telephone number, e-mail address, and mailing address. Also, privacy laws may limit the information that your financial aid administrator may discuss with your high school counselor. Therefore, you may need to provide an official authorization that permits your financial aid administrator to discuss your situation with your high school counselor.

* If you will not be a first-year college student in academic year 2014–2015, but have extenuating circumstances that preclude your parents from signing this form, contact the college’s financial aid office.