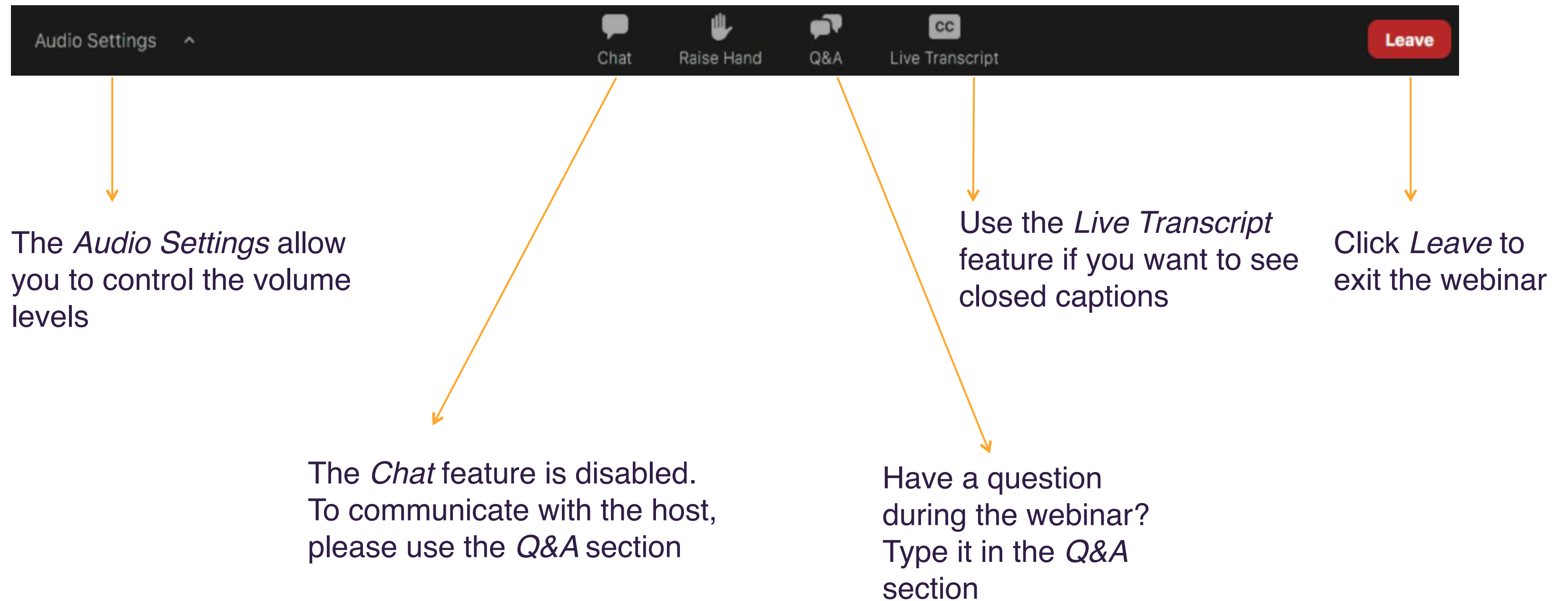


A Deep Dive into the CSS Profile

How to Participate



About MEFA

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



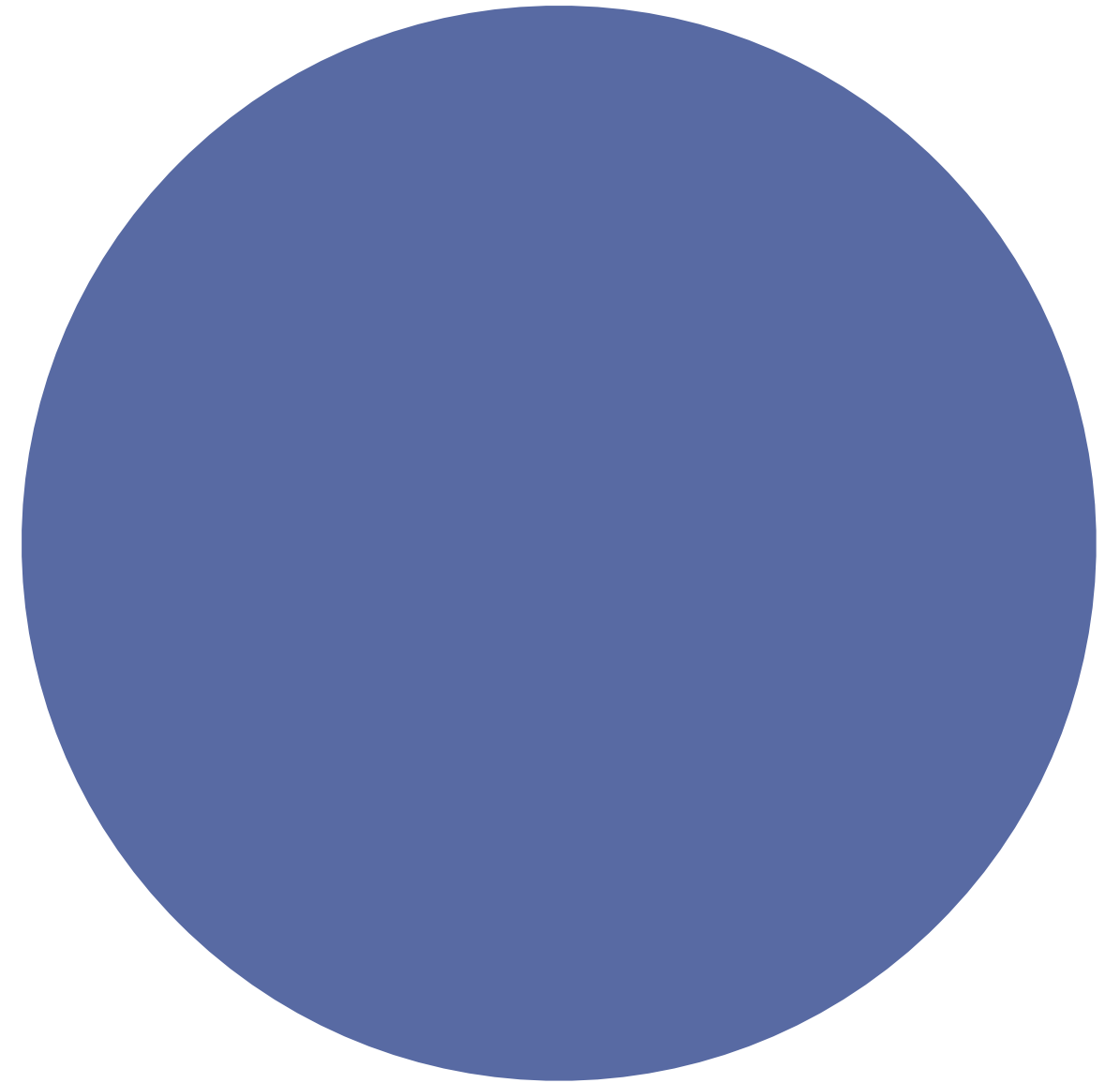
What is the CSS Profile®?

- College Board's online financial aid application
- Required by roughly 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



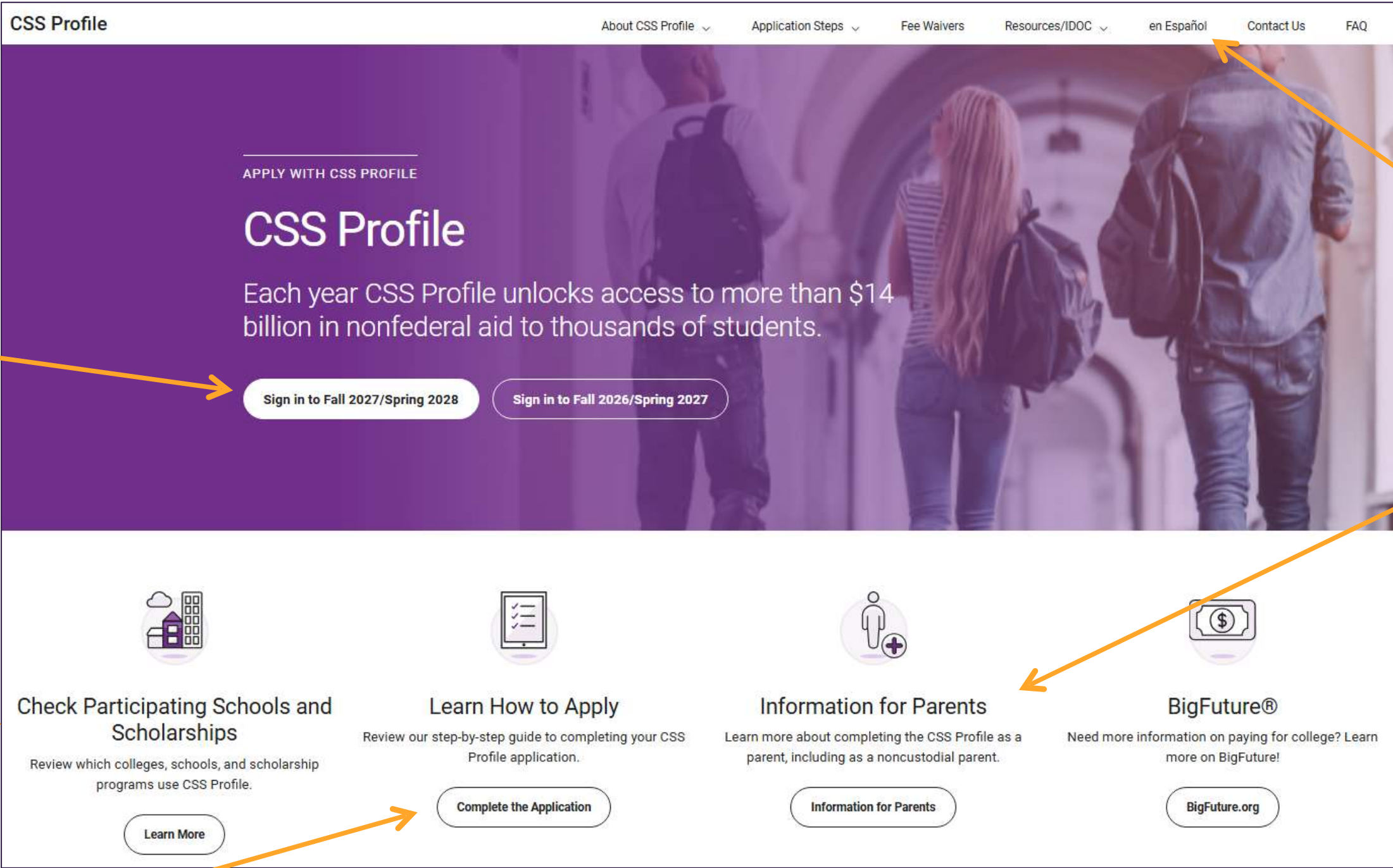
Start Here: cssprofile.org

Links to more info

High school seniors should apply for 2027-28

List of colleges that require the Profile

Profile tips



Spanish

Info for noncustodial parents

Participating Institutions and Programs

CollegeBoard

CSS Profile™

September 20, 2026

2027-28 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
5007	American University	DC	Yes	No	Yes	No
0262	American University of Rome		Yes	Yes	Yes	No
3003	Amherst College	MA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4007	Arizona State University	AZ	Yes	No	Yes	No
0193	Armenian Student Assoc of Amer	MA	Yes	Yes	No	No
0613	Attleboro Scholarship Found	MA	Yes	No	No	No
3075	Babson College	MA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2037	Bard College	NY	Yes	No	Yes	No
3795	Bard College at Simons Rock	NY	Yes	No	Yes	No
2038	Barnard College	NY	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Additional Resources on Homepage

Resources

DOWNLOAD

CSS Profile Waiver Request for the Noncustodial Parent

PDF | 334.92 KB



DOWNLOAD

CSS Profile Fee Waivers

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

PDF | 135.9 KB



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](#)

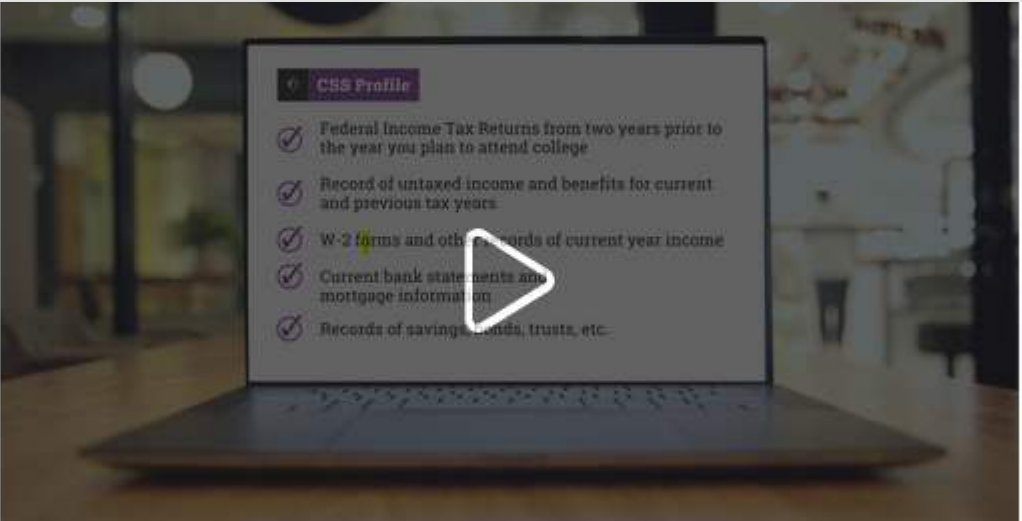
en Español

Estamos listos para ayudarle.

[Aprender Más](#)

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

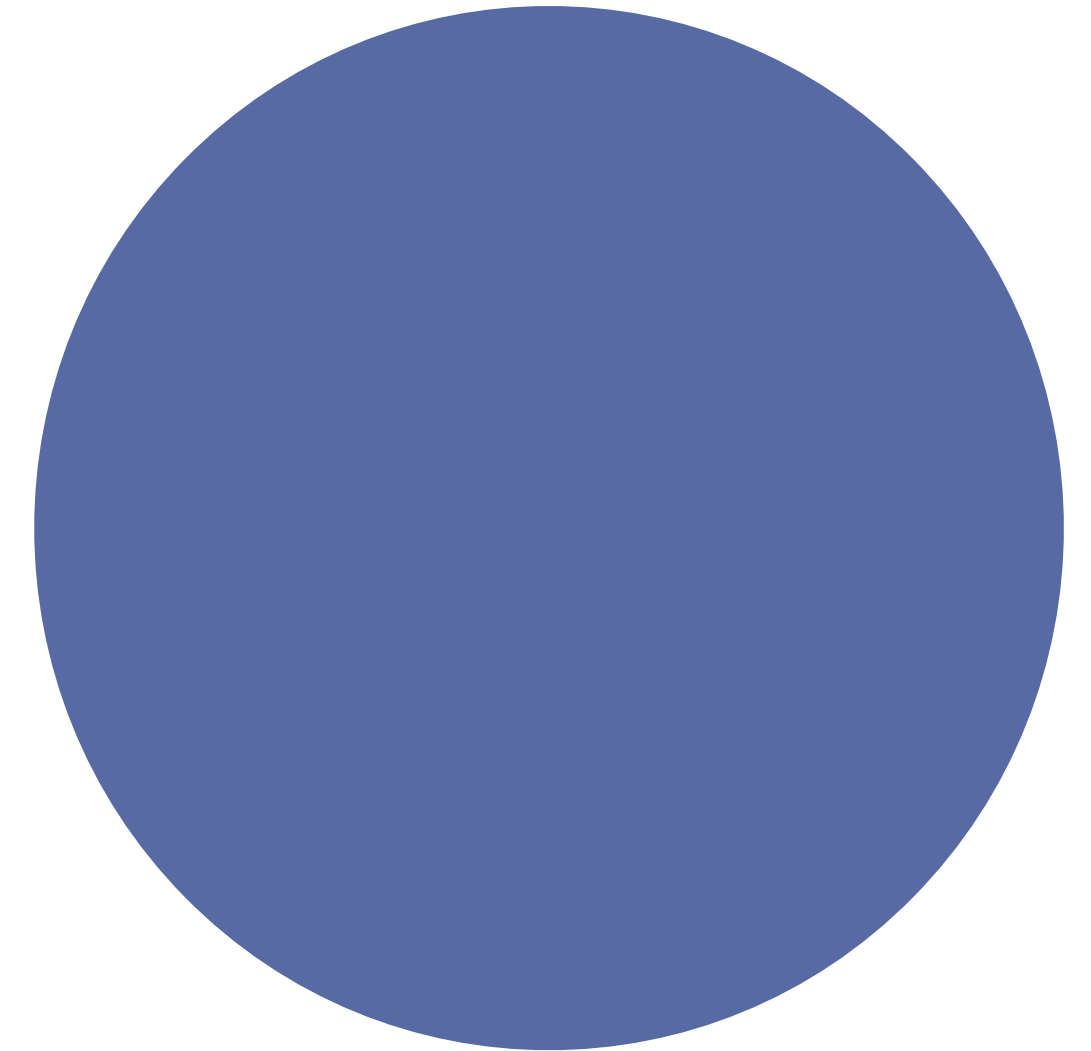
- Use **student's** College Board account from SATs/AP tests
- OR create a new student account using **parent's** information
- A separate College Board account is needed for each student

Customized application

- Based on each student and colleges where student is applying
- Sections are added when they become required
- Bookmark sections to return to (find all bookmarks in the side panel)

Modern features

- Complete sections in any order
- Can complete in multiple sittings
- Mobile-friendly



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
- Should answer all questions that family has the answers to, like 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)
- Must report date of birth and email address for parent(s)
- Legal guardians should be reported as parents (different from the FAFSA)
- Custodial parent, current spouse, and student provide financial/household 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

Application Determination

Which parents' information will be provided on this application?

Select all that apply.

Note: If your selected parent is married or living with a partner, select their spouse/partner as well.

☐ Stella Acorn

☐ Stuart Acorn

☐ Stephanie Acorn

What is their marital status? (required)

☐ Married or in domestic partnership

☐ Divorced or no longer in a domestic partnership

☐ Never married

☐ Separated

☐ Widowed

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
 - Check each college's financial aid page for waiver request form and/or instructions

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
 - Must create own College Board **student** account with **parent** information
 - Will use student's CBFinAid ID (included in email)
 - 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 2025 income
- Parent & student projected 2026 income
- Parent and student current assets including businesses
- Household member information
- Number of children in college

Have on Hand

- 2025 federal tax return (will refer to line items)
- 2025 W-2s
- Records of 2025 untaxed income
- Records of all current assets

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
- Value and debt of all businesses and farms
- 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

Parent Housing Details

Tell us about Stella and Stuart's home.

Home purchase year (required)

❗ What if I didn't purchase my home? ▼

Home purchase price (required)

Current market value (required)

❗ What is market value? ▼

Total amount owed on home (required)

❗ What should I enter here? ▼

More Questions = Better Estimate of Ability to Pay

Family data

- Other dependents: name, date of birth, relationship to student, year in school, school expenses

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
- Notate 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

[←Sections](#) / Special Circumstances

Special Circumstances

Select all circumstances that have ongoing financial impact for your family. (required)

Note: Check all that apply. You will have an opportunity to explain your selection(s) on the next page. If you do not have any circumstances to report, select None.

☐ Change in employment

☐ Exceptional medical or dental expenses

What is eldercare or financial support? ▼

☐ Eldercare or financial support of other family members

☐ Non-recurring income or expenses

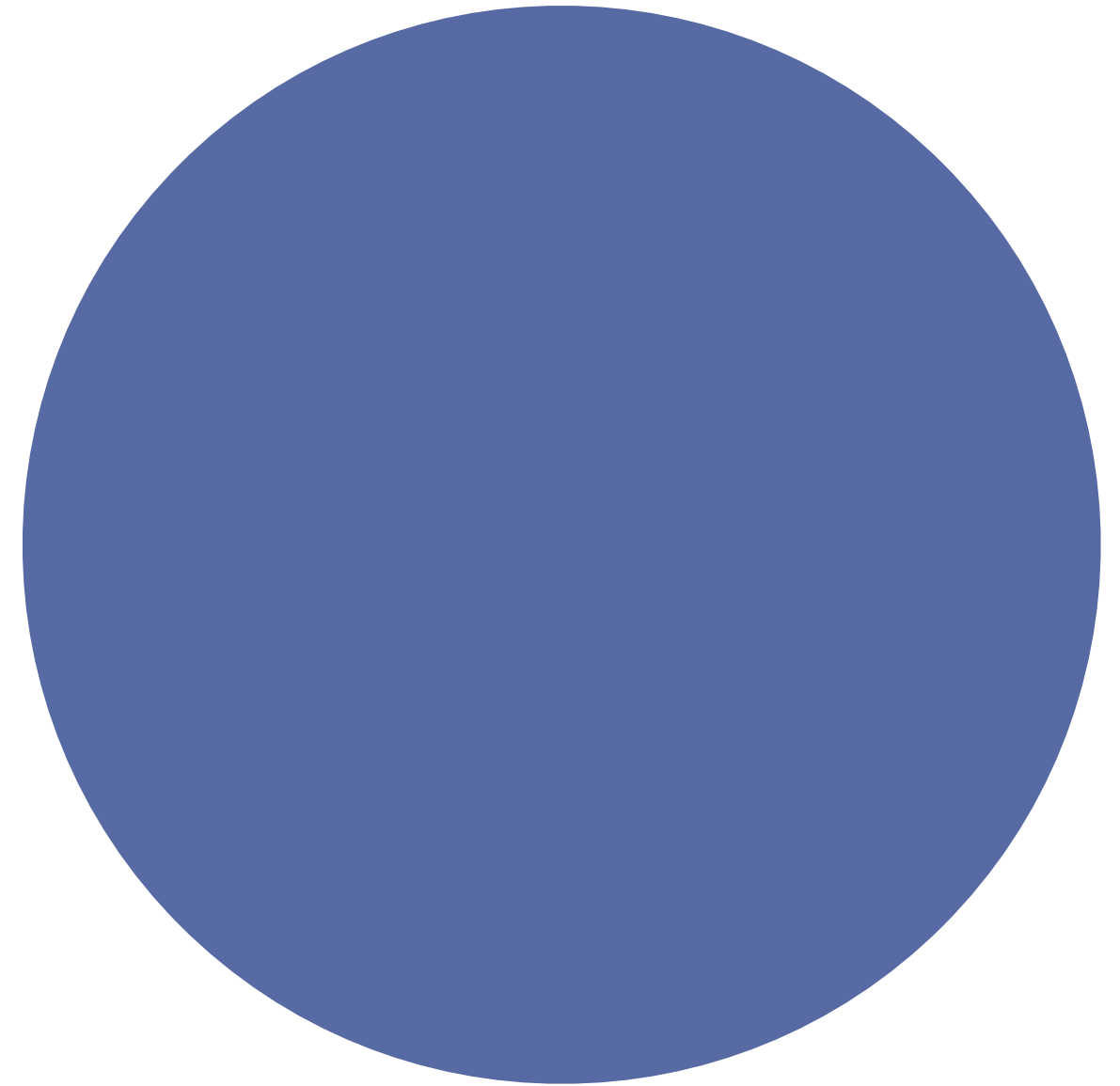
☐ Other

☐ None

Save and Continue

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

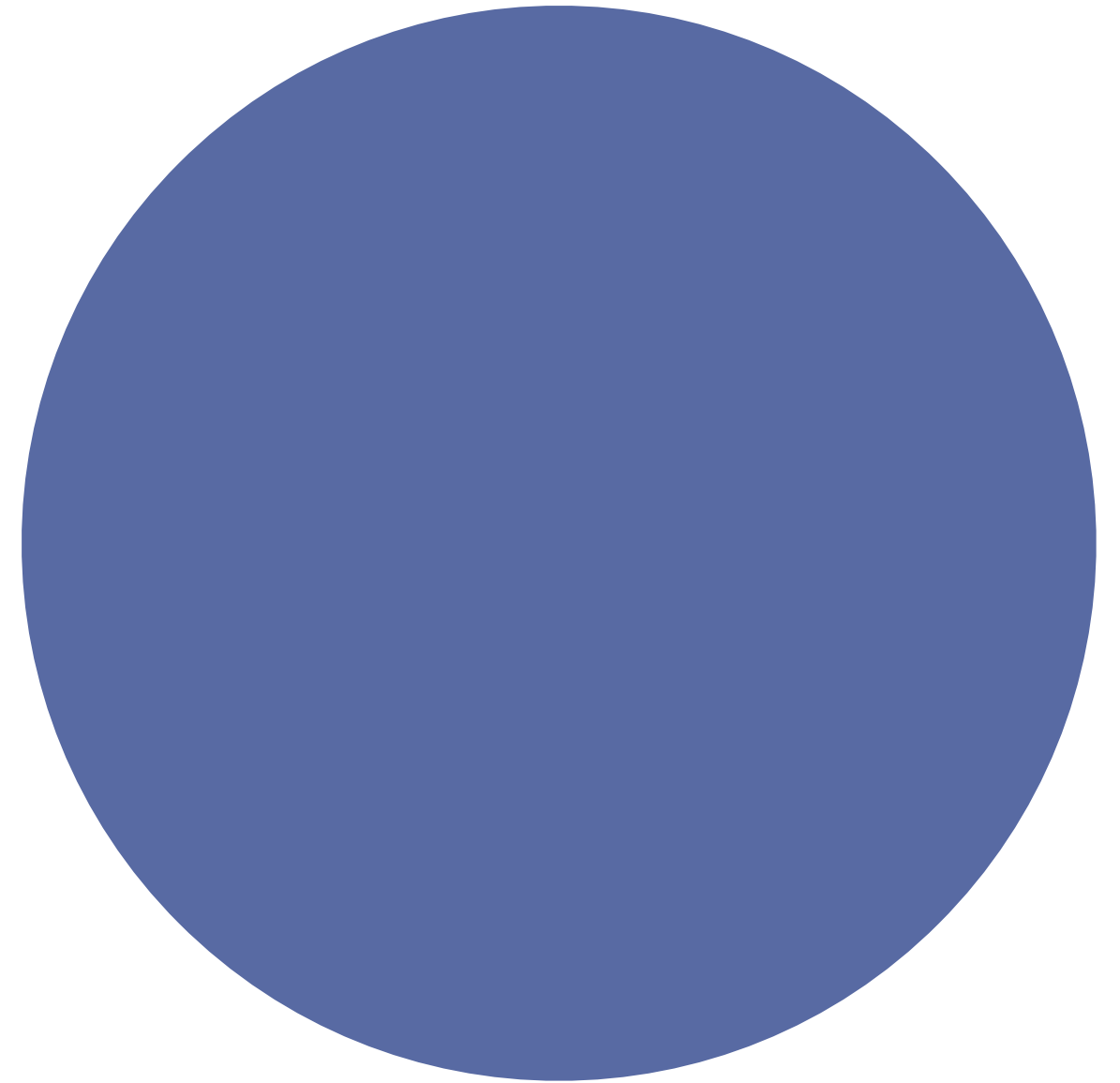


Fee Waivers

- 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

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 are shown here

[-Sections](#) / Final Charge Summary

Final Charge Summary

Application Fee	9.00
College(s) Programs(s) selected	
5024	College of Sample(as is) 16.00
Total Charge	25.00

Based on the information you provided on your CSS Profile application, you qualify for a fee waiver. The fee waiver covers all of your CSS Profile fees.

Please note that your receipt of a fee waiver will be reported with your application data to your schools and programs.

Please be sure your application is complete, accurate, and ready to be submitted and then click "Submit" below to submit your application.

Fee Waiver Credit	25.00
Amount Due	0

[-Go Back](#)

[Submit](#)

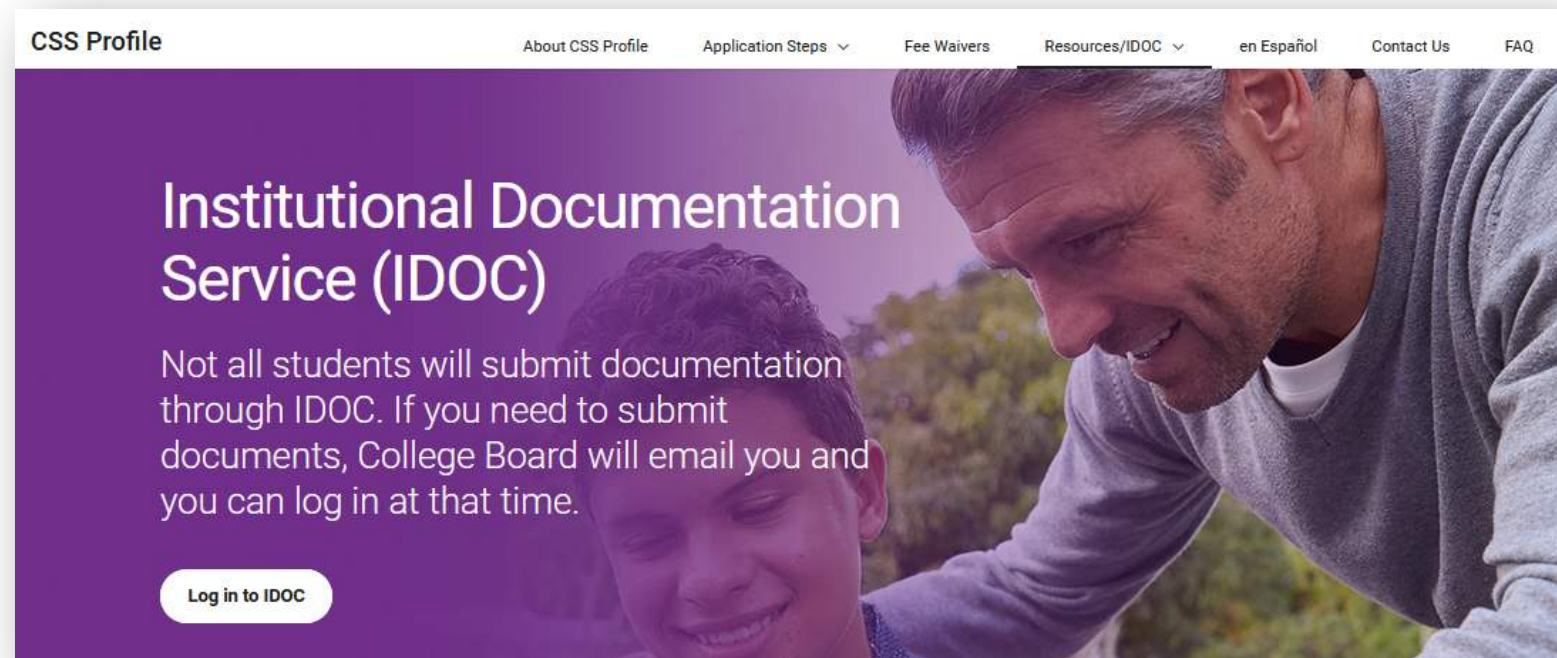
Dashboard

- 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

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

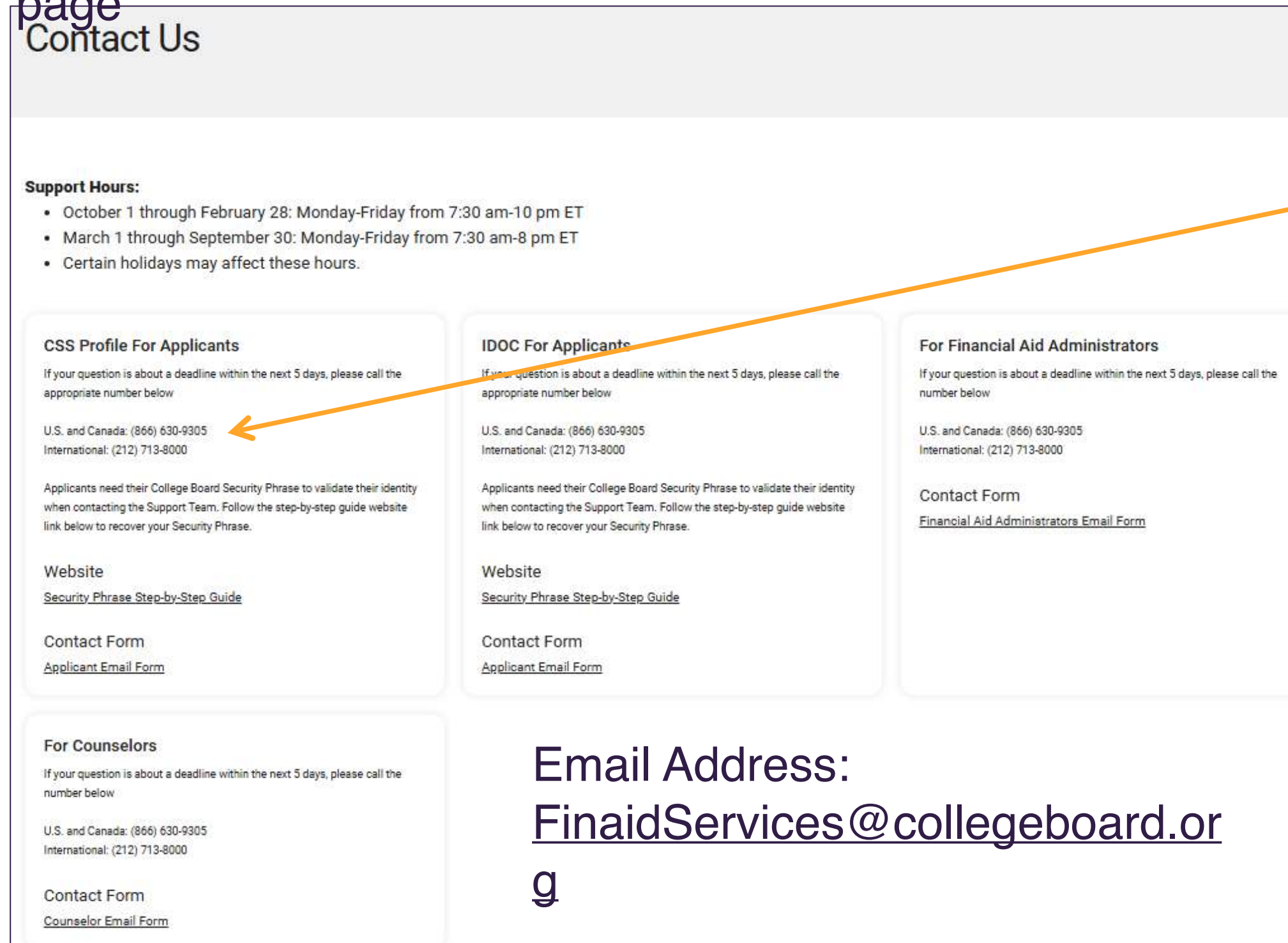
What is IDOC?



- 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
- cssprofile.collegeboard.org/idoc

Profile Customer Support Center

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



Phone Number

Email Address:
FinaidServices@collegeboard.org

Connect with MEFA: Social Media



facebook.com/mefaMA



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



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



linkedin.com/company/mefa



youtube.com/MEFAcounselor



mefa.org/mefa-podcast

Thank You!

Questions?



(800) 449-MEFA (6332)



collegeplanning@mefa.org

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