

WHAT IS VERIFICATION?

Verification uses documentation to confirm that the information provided on a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is correct. The federal government **requires** colleges and universities to verify, or confirm, the data reported by students and their parent(s) on the FAFSA. In this process, Montana Western will be comparing information from the FAFSA with unaltered IRS data via the IRS Data Retrieval tool (if applicable) and/or copies of the student (and parent's) Federal tax return transcripts, W-2 forms or other financial documents as well as educational records (if necessary). The law requires the college to verify this information before awarding Federal financial aid. The verification process ensures that eligible students receive all the federal financial aid to which they are entitled and prevents ineligible students from receiving financial aid for which they do not qualify.

Process

If your Student Aid Report (FAFSA results) indicates you were selected for verification and you have not yet submitted information to the Montana Western Financial Aid Office, you must:

- Complete the verification form that was mailed to you.
- Submit unaltered IRS Data directly from the IRS.

The IRS Data Retrieval process (available February 7, 2016), will enable Title IV student aid applicants and parents of dependent applicants to transfer certain tax return information from an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website directly into their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on the Web application. If IRS Data Retrieval was not utilized on the original FAFSA, make a correction at www.fafsa.gov or send a copy of the student and (parent's, if dependent) 2015 Federal income tax return transcript to the Montana Western Financial Aid Office.

Availability of 2015 Tax Data:

Whether the filer owed IRS or was due a refund determines when the IRS processes the return. **For those who owe taxes, the return is processed in May and June** - which can delay use of the IRS DRT or accessing the tax transcript.

Applicants cannot use Data Retrieval if:

- Parents are married filing separately
- Parents are married filing head of household
- If an amended return is filed
- If filing a Puerto Rican or foreign tax return

Applicants unable to use the IRS Data Retrieval process or those who have altered IRS data **MUST** request a tax return transcript from the IRS.

The Tax Return Transcript is a simplified version of the completed return and serves as a document to prove that a person has filed a particular tax return with the IRS.

A Tax Return Transcript shows most lines items from your federal tax return (Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ) as it was originally filed with the IRS, including any accompanying forms and schedules. It does not reflect any changes you, your representative or the IRS made after the return was filed. In many cases, a return transcript will meet the requirements of lending institutions such as those offering mortgages and for applying for student loans.

Federal tax return transcripts may be requested by utilizing one of the following options:

- Completing the IRS Form 4506TEZ Transcript Request Form (you may opt to have the transcript mailed directly to Montana Western by selecting this option on the form);
- Using the IRS2Go App from the Apple Online Store at:
(<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/irs2go/id414113282?mt=8>);
- Using Google Play at:(<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.irs>); OR
- Using the IRS website at: IRS.gov (click on the "Get Transcript by Mail" option).

There is no charge for transcript requests using any of the options listed above. Please allow five to ten business days for delivery of your order online or by phone.

If the student, parent and/or spouse did not file and are not required to file a federal tax return in 2015, copies of IRS Form W-2 (from all employers) must be submitted to show proof of earnings.