



U.S. Department of Education

Public Law 115-336, "21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act"
December 2021 Report to Congress on Modernizing Agency Websites
and Digital Services

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Prepared for Congress per the requirements of section 3(b)(2) of Public Law 115-336.

21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (IDEA) Report to Congress on Modernizing Agency Websites and Digital Services

As required by section 3(b)(2) of Public Law 115-336,¹ the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (21st Century IDEA), this report includes a list of key websites and digital services operated by the Department of Education (ED or the Department) that have been prioritized and targeted for modernization.

Background

As defined in Public Law 115-336, December 20, 2018, the 21st Century IDEA requires each federal executive branch agency to provide a prioritized list of the "most-viewed or ... otherwise important" public websites and digital services in compliance with section 3(a) of the law, and to provide an estimation of the cost and schedule to modernize those sites and services. In our December 2019 Report, ED identified four major websites and digital services deemed most viewed or utilized by the public and important for public engagement. Since then, we have developed and begun implementing a comprehensive plan to ensure compliance with the goals and objectives of the 21st Century IDEA.

IDEA Compliance Ongoing Initiatives

The Department's website and digital services modernization and IDEA compliance efforts are centered around upgrading and modernizing the websites and digital services listed below:

- ED.GOV
- FAFSA.GOV
- STUDENTLOANS.GOV
- STUDENTAID.GOV

After completing an in-depth review of the aforementioned sites and services, the Department initiated a multi-phased plan to meet the eight criteria established by the 21st Century IDEA. The plan includes:

- A comprehensive evaluation and needs assessment of the websites and digital services, to include associated sub domains
- The establishment of an Enterprise Web Governance forum
- A reprioritization of the legacy Website Modernization Plan
- A more definitive cost and schedule estimation for compliance

The Department is in the process of modernizing its main website ED.gov, in addition to an improved organizational structure, will result in the migration of a multitude of disparate non-compliant sites onto an enterprise platform that meets the goals and objectives of the 21st Century IDEA.

The FAFSA.gov and STUDENTLOANS.gov sites were both consolidated into the STUDENTAID.gov site as part of the NextGen/Digital Customer Care project, bringing them into compliance with the Law. The NextGen FSA/Digital Customer Care (DCC) consolidates multiple FSA websites into one single website housed at STUDENTAID.gov which will be fully compliant with the 21st Century IDEA Act; these modernization efforts will continue to be made through FY23.

21st Century IDEA Status

A comprehensive evaluation has been completed on all related websites, digital services, and non-

digital services deemed high-traffic and/or important for public engagement to understand the level of effort needed to bring the Department’s public sites into compliance. Based on that assessment and its findings the Department has made progress towards achieving compliance with the eight 21st century requirements to ensure their utilization and effectiveness in supporting the Department's mission. The chart below represents the Department’s 21st Century IDEA Act compliance status.

21st Century Requirements	FY21 Completion %
Section 508 Compliant?	86%
Consistent in appearance with the Department's main ED.GOV website?	32%
Authoritative instance?	77%
Contain a search function?	78%
Provided through a secure connection?	92%
Designed around user needs with data-driven analysis?	77%
Provides an option for a more customized digital experience?	47%
Mobile-friendly and fully functional/usable on mobile devices?	75%

Enterprise Web Governance

In support of its 21st Century IDEA compliance efforts the Department has taken steps to improve standardization and consistency across its various websites and digital services with the establishment of an Enterprise Web Governance forum that is codified in policy directive OCO-1-104 ED.gov Web Content Management. The Directive establishes a formal web governance body known as the Digital Council to ensure standardization and ensure commonality across web platforms and services across Federal agencies.

Cost and Schedule

The Department has submitted a Full Project Proposal (FPP) to the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) to fund the ED.gov modernization effort and bring the site into compliance with IDEA. The Department also plans to execute a Request For Information (RFI) to provide more definitive cost and schedule targets; the findings of this work is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2022.

Next Steps

The Department has sought the assistance of the Office of Management and Budget in hopes of expediting the completion of our 21st Century IDEA initiatives. We have requested additional funding through the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) to complete some of the major activities required for the ED.gov modernization. Once a decision is rendered, the Department will execute a RFI in preparation for soliciting

the requisite contract support and services to complete our work.

The Department will continue to implement the NextGen FSA/Digital Customer Care (DCC) project to bring sites into compliance. The Department plans to finalize the release of an RFI for additional remediation of non-compliant site.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this status report on the Department of Education's website modernization efforts. If you have any questions, please contact Steven Corey-Bey, Chief Enterprise Architect, at Steven.Corey-Bey@ed.gov.