



THE BETTER FAFSA

What Colleges and Universities Need to Know

Higher Education Opens Doors to Opportunity

The U.S. Department of Education is making transformational changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. The FAFSA form is an application that students and families need to complete to apply for federal student aid, such as federal grants, work-study funds, and loans. Completing and submitting the FAFSA form is free, and it gives students access to the largest source of financial aid to help pay for higher education.



Better FAFSA Timeline for the 2024-25 Award Year

NOW

- **Students and families should complete and submit the 2024-25 FAFSA form**

MARCH

- The Department begins transmitting FAFSA information to schools and state agencies for processing

STARTING IN APRIL

- Colleges review FAFSA information for students who applied for admission
- Colleges start sending aid packages to students

JULY 1

- FAFSA award year starts

Note: Students and families should check critical deadlines for their institutions and states regarding scholarships and enrollment commitments.

Checklist for College and University Officials

Every college and university should ensure it is ready to process student records when those records arrive in the first half of March.

- Ensure your financial aid office is adequately trained and has the most recent software.
- Utilize test versions of institutional student information records to ensure your systems are ready.
- Extend financial aid and admissions deadlines to give flexibility to students, as recommended by the American Council on Education.
- Keep new and current students updated on the process and timelines.

HOW THE DEPARTMENT IS HELPING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



The Department recently announced a [FAFSA College Support Strategy](#) to help colleges prepare aid packages for students as quickly and accurately as possible. We are:

- » **Connecting colleges to expertise and federal personnel** to ensure institutions have the tools and information needed to process financial aid packages, understand the steps they need to take to prepare, deliver direct on-campus support, and provide ongoing consultations and trainings as needed.
- » **Allocating \$50 million in federal funding** that will be used to recruit financial aid professionals who will provide additional technical assistance and support to under-resourced colleges—beyond the federal teams being deployed by the Department.
- » **Creating a new concierge service**, which will connect a broad set of colleges to financial aid experts. Colleges can contact the Department for assistance at CollegeSupportStrategy-FAFSA@ed.gov.
- » **Releasing data and tools to help colleges** prepare to quickly and accurately process student records and deliver financial aid packages. The Department is releasing test versions of institutional student information records, which will help colleges prepare their own systems and processes to efficiently assemble aid packages for students.
- » **Making it easier to process student aid records** by considerably reducing verification requirements, suspending routine school compliance reviews, and providing flexibility on renewing participation in the federal student aid programs.

More information and resources are available at ed.gov/BetterFAFSA

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Federal Student Aid
AN OFFICE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION