

Overview of the FAFSA Completion Project

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Policy Context and Motivation

- Increasing college enrollment and completion is a high priority
- The Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) is intended to simplify college access
 - Submission strongly associated with enrollment
 - Prerequisite for federal and most forms of aid
- Strong ED desire to improve access to aid

Project Background

- 2010: FSA began FAFSA Completion Pilot
 - Initially 20 sites to test feasibility
 - Received many requests from LEAs to expand pilot
- 2012: Decision to expand and evaluate whether to expand further.
- Considerations:
 - Administrative costs
 - Capacity
 - Impacts on student outcomes

The Initiative

- Provide participating districts with access to individual seniors' FAFSA completion status
 - Districts upload directory information for students to FSA's secure website
 - Districts download results next day
 - Results include FAFSA status, submitted and processed dates
- Encourage districts to implement **targeted** outreach and counseling for seniors with no FAFSA or an incomplete FAFSA
- No ED funds provided to participants

Expanding the Initiative

- Early 2012: Invited additional multi-high-school and single-high-school districts to participate
- Criteria
 - Meet technical requirements
 - Agree to comply with FERPA
 - Agree to participate in evaluation (multi-high-schools)
- Capacity to include 92 districts
 - Participants randomly selected
 - Representing 30 states

New Districts



Current Status

- Total of 77 new districts participating
- Completed the onboarding process of the treatment schools
- In the process of onboarding of the control schools
- Various support available:
 - FSA Resources
 - Programmatic Support
 - Technical Support

Operational Reporting Schedule

Milestone	Report Number of FAFSA Filers with a Flag "2"	Report Number of Seniors	Cut-off date for adjustment	Date to report numbers to FSA*
1	no	yes	As of January 1	January 18
2	yes	yes	As of March 31	April 12
3	yes	yes	As of May 31	June 14
4	yes	yes	As of September 1	September 16

* You should report your numerator, denominator and completion rate to ED at the specified timeframes. Please send this information to FAFSACompletion@ed.gov

Example: How to calculate your FAFSA completion rate.

$$\frac{\text{Number of FAFSA Filers with a Flag "2"}}{\text{Number of seniors as of the cut-off date}} = \text{FAFSA Completion Rate (___\%)}$$

How will the Evaluation Work?

- Delayed-start randomized control trial:
 - Early-start (Treatment) schools began downloads in January 2013
 - Late-start (Control) schools will begin in January 2014
- Institute for Education Sciences (IES) randomly assigned high schools within districts to treatment or control
- IES will extract student data from our records
- IES will statistically compare the data for students in the treatment school vs. students in the control schools => impacts

What Will the Evaluation Tell Us?

Question	Data Source
What is the impact of having student level FAFSA completion data on actual FAFSA completion?	FSA Admin Data—Completion Rate
What is the impact of having student level FAFSA completion data on offers of financial aid and receipt?	FSA Admin Data—Number and size of awards made
What is the impact of having student level FAFSA completion data on college enrollment?	NSC Data-Enrollment FSA Admin Data—Draw down of award

Evaluation Timeline

DATE	DISTRICT	EVALUATION TEAM
Nov 2012 – Jan 2013	Provide list of participating schools, directory info for seniors in those schools	Randomly assign schools within districts
Dec 2012	Train school staff (treatment schools only)	
Jan-May 2013	Download FAFSA data, conduct outreach (treatment schools only)	
Apr, Sept 2013		Extract data from FSA
Dec 2013		Produce impact estimates
Jan 2014	Train school staff (control schools only)	

Best Practices

from

Catherine Chiu, Boston Public Schools

Roxanne Rosales, San Antonio ISD

Next Steps

- Provide IES with additional data needed to complete the evaluation
- Review evaluation findings
- Future consideration of another process



Questions