

Federal Student Aid

An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

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SUBJECT: 2024–25 FAFSA Soft Launch Details and Timelines

This announcement seeks to expand upon previously shared information about the timeline of the 2024–25 FAFSA® form launch and share additional details for what applicants and families can expect through February 2024.

The new FAFSA form will significantly improve, streamline, and redesign how students and their families use the form. More students will be able to access federal aid, including helping 610,000 students receive Federal Pell Grants for the first time.

As previously announced in the [Nov. 15, 2023, Electronic Announcement](#), students and families will be able to complete and submit the 2024–25 FAFSA form online by Dec. 31. We will be treating the period leading up to and following Dec. 31 as a soft launch period, which will allow us to monitor and respond in real time to any potential issues impacting the applicant experience.

What to Expect During the Soft Launch of the 2024-25 FAFSA Form

During the soft launch period, the Department will be monitoring site performance, conducting planned pauses for maintenance, and making updates to improve the user experience for students and families.

Students and families will have ample time to complete the 2024-25 FAFSA, and **do not need to rush to fill out the form immediately when the soft launch period opens**, as FSA will not transmit results to schools until later in January. Here is what students, families, and schools can expect during the soft launch:

- Contributors (the student, parent, student’s spouse, or parent’s spouse), including those without a Social Security number (SSN), will be able to create a StudentAid.gov account to access and complete the online FAFSA form. Contributors who already have a verified account username and password will use their existing credentials to sign in and access the form.
- FSA will initiate planned pauses for site maintenance and to make updates as needed to create a better FAFSA experience for students and families. During these pauses, users who are already online will be able to complete their work, but other users may not be able to begin or resume work on the 2024-25 FAFSA form. Users who go on-line during a temporary pause should check back at a later time to complete the form.
- Applicants may experience a waiting room feature, which will help control website volumes to ensure optimal performance of the form.
- If a student completes their form during the soft launch period, their information will be stored for processing. They do NOT need to return to resubmit their application after the soft launch concludes.
- If a student completes their FAFSA form, but a contributor cannot access the site during a period when the site is unavailable, the contributor can return to complete their portion of the form as soon as the site becomes available again. Any data entered in the form is still in the system and is secure.
- If FSA initiates site maintenance while a student or contributor is completing an application, they will be able to continue until they have completed the form.
- After all sections of the online FAFSA form are completed and submitted, the student will receive a confirmation email noting their submission date, their estimated Student Aid Index (SAI), and estimated Federal Pell Grant eligibility. However, the student will not receive a FAFSA Submission Summary until FSA processes the FAFSA, beginning in late January.

What This Means for Students and Families

Because full processing of FAFSA forms will not start until late January, students and families will have ample time to complete

the 2024-25 FAFSA and do not need to rush to fill out the form immediately when the soft launch period opens.

FSA is updating its messaging to students and their families on StudentAid.gov and in other external communications to explain:

- The schools they selected will receive their FAFSA eligibility information starting in late January. Students will receive an email informing them when that information has been sent to the schools.
- Students will receive an email when their FAFSA Submission Summary is available to review on StudentAid.gov.
- Students should begin to receive aid information from schools they have been accepted to several weeks after the school received their FAFSA information.

We also encourage students to review all application deadlines and processes for their state as well as the colleges and career schools to which they applied, as these items may have changed for the 2024-25 application cycle.

Students who are legal residents of Iowa, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and who were previously eligible to transfer their FAFSA information directly into their state aid application, will be directed to a state-approved URL to complete their state applications separately. Students from Minnesota, who were previously eligible to transfer their FAFSA information directly into their state application, will not see any information nor links to transfer their FAFSA data.

What This Means for Institutions, State Aid Agencies, and College Access Partners


As you plan your FAFSA completion events, please consider and plan for the possible impact of the soft launch and delays it might create in accessing the form during December and January. If possible, we recommend you plan these events for later in January and in February to account for the soft launch period, in the event there is planned site maintenance that could impact your events.

Though FSA is updating the messaging to students and families about what they can anticipate during the soft launch period, institutions and state agencies may need to amplify key messages with students and families to clarify the FAFSA schedule and terms of the soft launch period.

We encourage you to direct students and families to StudentAid.gov to learn more, which will be updated to include basic information about the soft launch and what they can anticipate. Resources for completing the 2024-25 FAFSA form — including instructions for creating a StudentAid.gov account without a Social Security number, how to complete the new 2024-25 FAFSA form, and what to do before and after completing the FAFSA form — will also be made available on StudentAid.gov closer to the 2024-25 FAFSA form launch.

For state aid agencies and college access partners, as a result of the phased implementation of the 2024-25 FAFSA process, detailed school level data on FAFSA completions will not be available until April 2024.

Additional Help and Resources

Regular status updates and resources for our external partners will continue to be available in the [2024-25 FAFSA Updates](#) feature on the FAFSA Simplification Information Topics page on the Knowledge Center. Outreach resources, including messaging that may be used to develop your own communications, may be found on the [Financial Aid Toolkit](#) .

Questions about the information outlined in this announcement can be submitted to the Department using the [Contact Customer Support form](#) in FSA's Partner Connect Help Center. To submit a question, please enter your name, email address, topic, and question. When submitting a question related to this announcement, please select the topic "2024-25 FAFSA."