

# We are EdTrust



## **FIERCE ADVOCATES**

for education equity and justice for students of color and students from low-income families

Equity-Driven • Data-Centered • Student-Focused



The Education Trust

# Training: Helping Students from Mixed-Status Families Complete the FAFSA

Friday, April 26, 2024

# The 2024-25 “Better FAFSA”

- 7.1 million students expected to be eligible for Pell Grants
- 665,000 more students will receive Federal Pell Grants
- More than 1.7 million more students will receive the maximum Pell Grant
- Fewer questions and a streamlined process, *for most*
- Submission and completion rates much lower than last year
  - As of 4/12, 25% fewer FAFSA submissions than last year

# Experience for Mixed-Status Families

- Errors preventing submissions
- Manual identity verification
- Manual entry of financial information
- Long wait times when calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC)
- Important message to students and families: this is NOT your fault

# Federal Privacy Protections

- By federal law, data collected through the FAFSA can not be used for anything other than calculating federal and state financial aid
- Personal information will not be shared with any other government agencies except to confirm identity
- Agencies with access to FAFSA data are required to protect it against security threats and unauthorized uses
- Protected by law, and is not the specific policy of any one particular presidential administration



# EdTrust Response

- Working with immigration and education partners to raise awareness of issues to the Department of Education and push for solutions
- Tools:
  - EdTrust's Navigating the Better FAFSA Hub
  - SurveyMonkey Tool for Mixed-Status Families
  - FAQs for Advocates and Tools to Support Students
- [edtrust.org/FAFSA](https://edtrust.org/FAFSA)

## Navigating the Better FAFSA

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Mar 21, 2024 by Ed Trust

In December 2020, Congress passed the bipartisan FAFSA Simplification Act that mandated a **new, simpler Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**, which overhauled the federal financial aid formula. These FAFSA updates are expected to help an additional **610,000 students qualify for a federal Pell Grant**, and another 1.5 million students qualify for the maximum Pell award. The opportunity for more students and families of color or from low-income backgrounds to have access to a simpler, improved FAFSA broadens the hopes of realizing the American dream. Yet, for tens of thousands of students, attending college is deterred by the cost and financial strains. Tuition could be offset with the help of federal financial aid — but there are major problems with what the Department of Education is calling the Better FAFSA.

As widely reported, there have been several **delays and setbacks** in the implementation of the Better FAFSA: the application process that traditionally opens October 1 didn't and the launch was an online disaster. This has a domino effect. These delays significantly reducing the time that students have to consider financial aid where to enroll for college, causing much distress among our nation's families and colleges who worry about the cost of tuition. Traditionally, students receive their financial aid offers as soon as students receive their admission decision early as December. But this year, offers may not arrive until late March.

Because students will be receiving financial aid offers from colleges that are later than usual, many students will be forced to make a decision within a much shorter time where they will enroll for college by May 1st, what's known as Decision Day. This may have to make that decision without knowing what their financial aid offers are. For continuing college students, while they won't miss out on deadlines for financial aid or scholarship aid, FAFSA delays leave these students in the dark about what their offers will be for the upcoming school year.



Resource

Wondering how to complete the FAFSA if

### Better FAFSA Resources

#### Better FAFSA Resources for Students with Parents without a Social Security Number (SSN)

- EdTrust Tool: [How to Complete the FAFSA if Your Contributor Does Not Have an SSN](#)
- Use this tool to walk through the steps you need to take to successfully complete your FAFSA if your contributor does not have a Social Security Number (SSN)
- Have a FAFSA issue? Submit your problems and questions [here](#). Our partners at the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration will do their best to elevate your concerns to the Department of Education and provide updates as they come in.
- U.S. Department of Education Resource: [How To Submit the 2024–25 FAFSA® Form if Your Contributor Doesn't Have an SSN](#) [English Webpage]
- Presidents' Alliance Webpage: [FAFSA Resources for Mixed-Status Families](#)

#### Federal Student Aid (FSA) Better FAFSA Resources

- [Federal Student Aid Better FAFSA Resources Page](#)
- [2024–25 FAFSA Issue Alerts](#)

#### Resources to Check Enrollment and Financial Aid Deadlines for Colleges

- [National Association for College Admission Counseling \(NACAC\) 2024 Enrollment Deadlines Directory](#)

#### National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Resources

- [Better FAFSA Landing Page](#)
- [Better FAFSA Awareness Toolkit](#)
- [Better FAFSA Training Opportunities](#)
- [NCAN's FAFSA Tracker](#)
- [Why Invest in Increasing FAFSA Completion?](#)
- [FAFSA Completion Approaches from the Field](#)

# Next Steps

- Share our [resources](#)!
- Let us know what other errors/difficulties your students are experiencing via the [Google Form](#) on the website
- Share [these FAFSA fliers](#) in Spanish & English with your community
- **Note for those working with California students** – visit the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) [website](#) for information on completing the California Dream Act Application (CADAA)

# Questions?

- Let us know what other errors/difficulties your students are experiencing via the Google Form on the website
- Contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center for direct assistance
  - Phone: 1-800-433-3243 (1-800-4 FED AID)
  - Website: [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov)
  - Student Aid on the Web, Website: [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- If you are a P-12 administrator or a higher-ed administrator, you can contact the Department of Ed using the following emails
  - P-12 administrators: [fafsa2004@ed.gov](mailto:fafsa2004@ed.gov)
  - Higher-Ed administrators: [collegesupportstrategy-fafsa@ed.gov](mailto:collegesupportstrategy-fafsa@ed.gov)