

The 2024-25 FAFSA Roadmap

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The 2024–25 *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) integrates major changes in the way students will apply for Federal student aid. According to the U.S. Education Department (ED), these changes will help students by enabling a better and simpler FAFSA experience. The new FAFSA also modifies the methods to be used by the ED to determine eligibility for aid.

Among the improvements are a real-time data interchange with the IRS for income tax data, a new “Who’s My Parent” exercise, and a single portal for all FAFSA help resources. The 2024-25 FAFSA represents the final implementation of the rules stipulated in the *FAFSA Simplification Act of 2020*, some of which have already been released in the 2122-23 and 2023-24 FAFSA’s.

The 2024-25 FAFSA form will not be launched until December 2023, two months later than the traditional date. This fact, which is expected to cause difficulties throughout the financial aid and college admissions process, is glossed over by the positive spin that the ED has adopted for the *Better FAFSA Better Future Roadmap* (Roadmap) that is the primary instrument for the rollout.

There will be complications as a consequence of the delay in the FAFSA that will be borne by the stakeholders who are indispensable to the successful functioning of the process. Stakeholders include colleges, first-time applicants, students who re-apply annually, parents, state financial aid offices, advocates for minority and disadvantaged applicants, college admissions consultants, college financial aid consultants, software and services providers, and high school guidance counselors. Please refer to our last post, “*FAFSA Delay Will Cause Problems*”, for information concerning the potential impact of the delay on stakeholders.

To assist in helping users of the 2024–25 FAFSA be prepared, the ED has recently published the Roadmap in the Knowledge Center of the ED’s Federal Student Aid website.

The Tables below describe the elements of the Roadmap for stakeholder groups and lists the delivery dates of each element.

Table A:
Colleges and State Agencies

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Date</u>
New Need Analysis Formula Tools	
These tools will help financial aid administrators understand the difference between the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and the new Student Aid Index (SAI), including a crosswalk, comparison case studies, and revised Federal Pell Grant look-up tables.	Spring 2023

Provisional Final FAFSA Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) Layout

This near-final ISIR record layout will allow software developers to support institutions and states in determining eligibility for student aid.

April 2023

Policy Guidance

Official guidance documents will help ensure institutions are legally compliant in their implementation of the *FAFSA Simplification Act* and the *FUTURE Act*. The guidance will cover topics including Federal Pell Grants for incarcerated students, use of Federal tax information, homeless youth determinations, verification, and FAFSA reporting requirements.

**Spring thru Fall
2023**

FAFSA Specifications Guide

This multi-volume technical reference provides financial aid administrators and software vendors critical technical details for upcoming changes and software systems updates. The release schedule for each volume aligns with software development cycle needs with record layouts and edits in March/April, followed by processing details and testing requirements in the following months.

**Start March
2023**

- Volumes 1–2 cover the summary of changes and implementation schedule of the FAFSA processing system.
- Volumes 3–7 cover technical changes to the ISIR layouts including reject, comment, and processing codes.
- Volumes 8–9 cover technical changes to agency matches, testing data, and the web demo system.

Financial Aid Administrator Training

These webinars will provide detailed training about the changes to application, eligibility, and data use so aid administrators can counsel families and update compliance procedures. The training will include topics such as consent and Federal tax information, old and new ISIR layouts, verification and professional judgment, a Student Aid Index deep dive, and the Federal Pell Grant formula.

Summer 2023

Sample ISIR Datasets for Testing

Sample student records will be available for software developers to test their eligibility calculations.

July 2023

Final ISIR Layout

A final student record layout will be available for colleges and software providers to finalize their financial aid management systems.

October 2023

FAFSA Demonstration Site

The FAFSA testing and demonstration website will be available for counselors and financial aid administrators to show staff, students, and families how to access and navigate the 2024–25 FAFSA form.

December 2023

Table B:
Consultants, Counselors, and Advocates

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Date</u>
Financial Aid Estimator and Preview Tools	
Online tools for students and families will provide an early estimate of their Student Aid Index and potential eligibility, as well as visual previews of the 2024–25 FAFSA form.	Summer 2023
Consultant and Counselor Training	
Webinars and train-the-trainer sessions, offered in collaboration with college access organizations and professional associations, will provide detailed training about the key changes in the application process and eligibility determination. This training will help participants better support students and families.	Spring thru Fall 2023
Fact Sheets	
One-page resources for counselors about priority topics identified by college access professionals will include understanding the Student Aid Index, creating an FSA ID, assisting students with unusual circumstances, and use of Federal tax information.	Spring thru Fall 2023

Table C:
Students and Families

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Date</u>
Preparing for 2024–25 FAFSA Outreach Campaign	
A communications campaign, including videos, directed to students and families will highlight what they should be done to prepare for the new FAFSA form. The campaign also will provide key facts about what to expect from the new FAFSA process, including how to create an FSA ID, features of the 2024–25 FAFSA form, and Federal Pell Grant eligibility.	Summer 2023
Financial Aid Estimator and Preview Tools	
Online tools for students and families will provide an early estimate of their Student Aid Index and potential eligibility, as well as visual previews of the new FAFSA form.	Summer thru Fall 2023
FAFSA Information Updates on <i>StudentAid.gov</i>	
Ongoing updates to FAFSA information and help resources will be posted to <i>StudentAid.gov</i> .	Summer thru Fall 2023