

Don't Push Pause on Your Education

As you may have heard, the 2024-25 FAFSA, also known as “Better FAFSA,” has been updated to simplify its completion process and also to adjust data used in the Student Aid Index calculation, to account for inflation. These improvements have caused some delays. As a result, the Federal Student Aid office has released a new timeline that will impact when students receive college financial aid award packages. Filling out a FAFSA is key to understanding your eligibility for financial aid, which includes grants, scholarships, and student loans that can open many doors to higher education and will help you meet your goals.

Hang in there! We understand these delays can be frustrating and confusing. College officials are gathering with K-12 educators, school counselors, and college access professionals from across the state to ensure we provide the best support for new and current students during this time of transition. We are here for you! The decision to pursue a postsecondary education is an important one, and we want to make sure you feel supported with all the tools and resources necessary to make the best decision.

The good news is that the FAFSA changes mean there will be more money to go around. The U.S. Department of Education is working diligently to correct calculation errors — this fix will lead to an additional \$1.8 billion in federal aid. More students should qualify for aid and many students will qualify for higher amounts of aid.

DOS AND DON'TS FOR STUDENTS

Do:

- File a [2024-25 FAFSA](#) as soon as possible. The sooner you file, the sooner you will receive a financial aid offer.
- Schedule college visits and explore campuses to make sure you have all the information necessary to make your final decisions, and current students should enroll in classes for next semester as soon as registration opens.
- Confirm your interest in enrollment if you know where you are attending. [Check](#) if your college has required an enrollment deposit, housing deposit, and/or orientation.
- Sign up for orientation. Check to see how your desired college offers an orientation (virtual, in-person, etc.).
- Use the [SAI Estimator](#) to understand how much aid you should expect to receive for the 2024-25 academic year.
- Use [net price calculators](#) to gain a general understanding of college costs.
- Research and apply for scholarships: use [this list](#) to find scholarships that you may qualify for. They have varying requirements so you may qualify!
- Use school counselors, admissions counselors, financial aid counselors, academic advisers, college success coaches, and faculty as resources if you have questions about your educational future.

Don't:

- Be afraid to ask for help. No matter what stage you are in, there are resources available!
- Assume you know whether you will or will not qualify for financial aid based on past results.
- Wait to apply to college or schedule classes until your financial award is available.

REMEMBER THAT YOU HAVE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

While official financial aid offers won't be available until later in the spring, you have access to resources and tools, as well as individuals who can help inform your postsecondary decision-making. The Better FAFSA will provide a simplified application process that unlocks more money overall. Financial aid awards might take longer to arrive this year due to nationwide delays from the FAFSA simplification process, but they will not impact your eligibility to receive financial aid. You can trust that college admissions and financial aid offices are doing everything they can to send the most accurate information to students, as soon as possible, so they can make the most informed college decisions. Check out these additional tips:

- Use the [live chat](#) and/or email (customerservice@studentaid.gov) for assistance with completing the FAFSA. If you receive an error message, it's helpful to provide screen captures of the error messages.
- Pay attention to and attend webinars or updates your college may be providing.

The FAFSA delays should not be a reason to push pause on your next steps, whether that be continued enrollment, new student orientation, or new registrations. Don't let the Better FAFSA delays slow down your future!

