

## Simplifying the FAFSA® Form

For more than 30 years, the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form has been critical to ensuring all students have access to higher education. One of the Biden-Harris Administration's top priorities has been to make higher education more accessible and affordable for more students, and that started with improving the FAFSA system and form.

As the Biden-Harris Administration comes to a close, it leaves behind an overhauled FAFSA system and a form that is easier and faster to complete than ever before. Despite initial challenges in the 2024–25 cycle, more people are now receiving federal aid during the current award year compared to last, and the 2025–26 form is working smoothly. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) is on track to launch the 2026–27 FAFSA form by Oct. 1, 2025.

### **The Department officially released the 2025–26 FAFSA form ahead of its stated goal.**

- Over 4.6 million individuals have submitted a 2025–26 FAFSA form to date.
- 89% of those who complete a FAFSA form report that it takes a reasonable amount of time to complete.
- 94% of users say they are satisfied with their experience submitting the form.
- 17 million student records have been successfully processed and delivered to institutions of higher education and states.
- The Department officially released the 2025–26 FAFSA form 10 days before its Dec. 1 goal.
- The Department also created new, permanent FAFSA leadership positions to oversee the technology and process going forward.

### **The 2025–26 FAFSA form launched after weeks of improved testing.**

The Department conducted a series of beta tests, consistent with software industry best practices, before launching the 2025–26 FAFSA form.

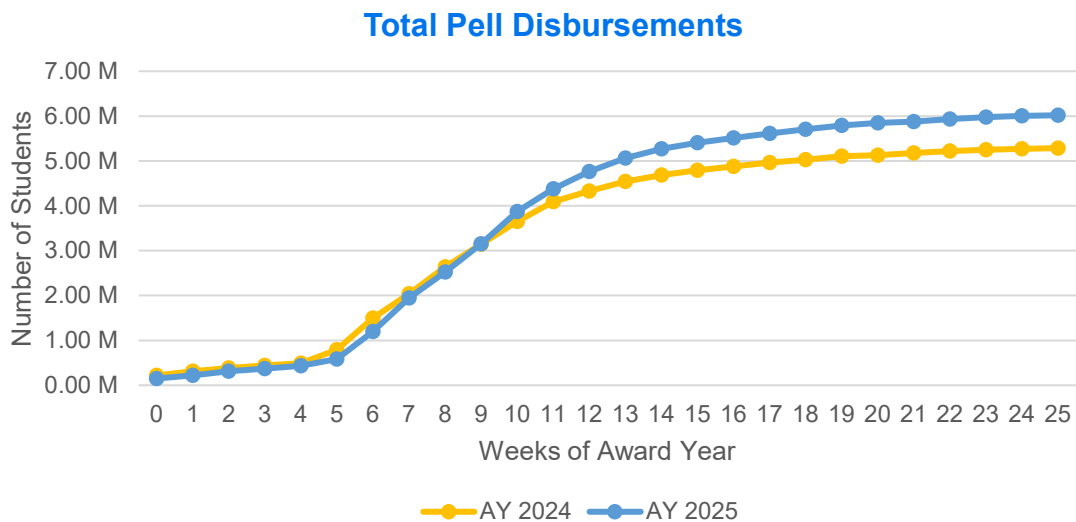
- More than 160,000 students and families participated in testing. Throughout this beta period, students submitted real FAFSA forms, and the Department processing and sent real FAFSA records to schools.
- The Department worked with over 52 partners, including community-based organizations, colleges, and universities to facilitate testing.
- During beta testing, the contact center received more than 1,000 calls with an average response time consistently under 30 seconds.
- The Department is on track to deliver batch corrections in the first quarter of 2025 after a short beta testing period set to run through February 2025.

## Since launching the simplified FAFSA form, access to federal financial aid has expanded in the 2024–25 award year.

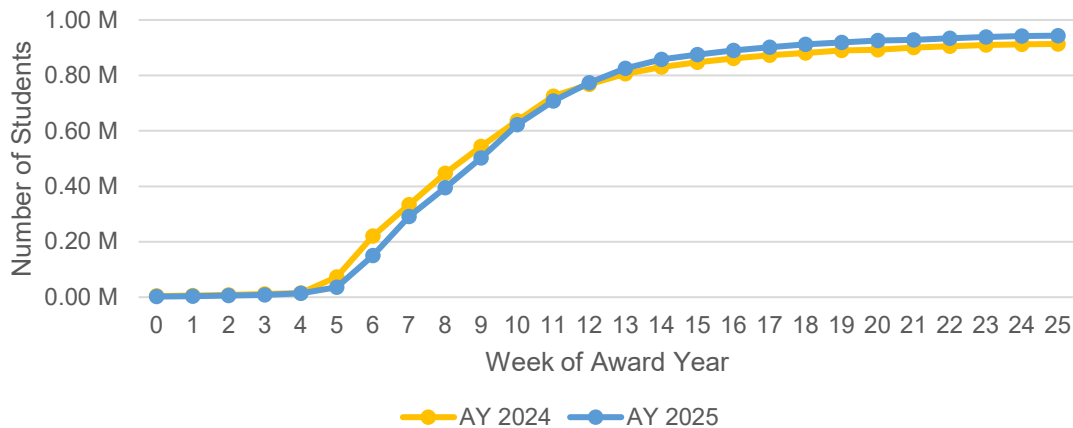
As of Dec. 31, 2024:

- Over 9.3 million 2024–25 FAFSA applicants were eligible for a Federal Pell Grant. Approximately 7.5 million 2024–25 FAFSA applicants were eligible for a maximum Pell Grant.
- The number of postsecondary students receiving federal aid is up 5.5% relative to the same time last year, and almost 14% more students are receiving Pell Grants.
- These increases represent over 460,000 more students receiving financial aid, and 730,000 more receiving Pell Grants, while enrolled in postsecondary education across the country compared to 2023–24.
- Among recent high school graduates attending college for the first time, the number of Pell recipients is up 3.3% relative to this time last year, an increase of approximately 30,000 students.
- The majority of all institutions, and 80% of public institutions, have as many as or more students receiving federal student aid than last year.

Data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center indicate that, as of late September, undergraduate [enrollment](#) for fall 2024 has increased compared to fall 2023. Freshman [enrollment](#) has also increased.



## Pell Disbursements of First-Time Recent High School Graduates



### The Department has ensured students, families, and our partners can access the support they need to submit and process the form.

The Department ensured its contact center had increased capacity for the 2025–26 FAFSA form launch, and wait times continue to be less than one minute on average – a number we expect will remain low. As of January 2025:

- The Department increased capacity by nearly 80%, adding 700 agents since early 2024, implemented additional training, and increased availability through expanded hours.
- The rate of call abandonment is now less than 2%.
- The contact center has handled 260,000 calls and 52,000 chats about the FAFSA form since the form was made generally available in November.

The Department is also proactively communicating with students and the public so that families and stakeholders have the timely information they need to complete the FAFSA form.

- For the 2024–25 FAFSA cycle, the Department sent over 183 million emails across over 170 FAFSA email campaigns directly to students and contributors who needed to take action to complete their form as of fall 2024.
- The Department has also communicated directly to students about means-tested benefits for which they may qualify based on income, including sending an email about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to over 8 million students.
- In 2026–27, the Department—with explicit consent from the applicant—will be able to share FAFSA data with means-tested benefits agencies to help applicants access other benefits.

In advance of the launch, the Department provided several resources to support students, families, and partners in preparing for and navigating the 2025–26 FAFSA cycle including:

- [Federal Student Aid Estimator](#)—Provides an estimate of the 2025–26 Student Aid Index and Pell Grant eligibility calculation.
- [“Who’s the Parent on the FAFSA Form?” Wizard](#)—A new, stand-alone tool to help students and families determine who will need to provide contributor information on the 2025–26 FAFSA form prior to starting the application.

- [“Creating Your StudentAid.gov Account” Page](#)—A resource that explains everything families and partners need to know about creating a StudentAid.gov account.
- [Pro Tips for Completing the FAFSA Form](#)—Updated tips for preparing to fill out and submit the FAFSA form.
- [Federal Student Aid YouTube Channel: FAFSA Videos](#)—Videos to help students and families understand the importance of the FAFSA form, who is a FAFSA contributor, and what happens after submitting the form.
- [2025–26 FAFSA Roadmap](#)—Highlights key dates for the FAFSA form launch, as well as timelines for the release of resources to assist our partners.
- [2025–26 FAFSA Preview Presentation](#)—Provides financial aid administrators, advisors, and counselors with reference tools for staff trainings and financial aid nights. The presentation deck contains screenshots which highlight changes to the online 2025–26 FAFSA form.
- [2025–26 FAFSA Prototype](#)—Provided the financial aid community an advance opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the FAFSA user experience ahead of its broad release.
- [2025–26 Counselor Resource for Completing the FAFSA Form](#)—Provides counselors and advisors with information and resources to help guide students and their families through the FAFSA form.

Updated information and outreach tools for counselors, college access professionals, and other advisors can be found on the [Financial Aid Toolkit](#).

**The Department is providing support to our K-12, community, institutional, and state partners to adapt to recent changes and ensure that students fully benefit from the opportunity provided by the simplified FAFSA system and form.**

The Department authorized the use of additional resources so that colleges could administer aid and partner organizations could help students and families fill out the 2024–25 FAFSA form.

The 2024–25 FAFSA College Support Strategy (February–October 2024):

- Provided additional personnel and technical assistance resources to help hundreds of schools process FAFSA data, package students’ financial aid quickly and accurately, and manage corrections. Participating institutions reported a 93% satisfaction rate with the support they received.

The [2024–25 FAFSA Student Support Strategy](#) (May–September 2024):

- Provided resources to more than 300 organizations from 48 states and six U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States.

Organizations participating in the Student Support Strategy implemented social media marketing campaigns, outreach initiatives, completion events, and one-on-one counseling that helped fuel the FAFSA completion summer surge. Based on self-reported data submitted in awardees’ reports, the student support strategy culminated in:

- More than 10,000 new advisors/staff trained and deployed to help students with FAFSA completion;

- More than 15,000 FAFSA completion workshops, events, trainings, webinars, clinics, office hours held; and
- More than 1.5 million individuals connected to the new FAFSA form through direct assistance and marketing or social media outreach.

The Department launched an additional [phase](#) of FAFSA Support Strategies on Dec. 12, 2024, to ensure the 2025–26 FAFSA form enables even more [students](#) to access federal financial aid and engage in higher education and enables [institutions](#) to successfully administer federal student aid programs.

The Department is entering 2025 with an overhauled system that is working for students and a team in place equipped to improve the experience into the future.