

# 2025–26 FAFSA® Press Kit

## ON BACKGROUND – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Building on the successful results of the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) beta testing since October, on Nov. 21, 2024, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) announced the official launch of the 2025–26 FAFSA form. All students and families can now access the form, which meets the Department’s goal of making the form broadly available by Dec. 1.

The Department followed industry best practices and used a new process to launch the 2025–26 FAFSA form. This process was informed by hundreds of conversations and significant feedback from students, institutions, financial aid partners, and other stakeholders.

Starting in October 2024, the Department conducted beta tests with limited groups of users to identify and resolve the kind of system errors that can derail students, contributors, and schools. The beta tests involved four phases, and over time, the FAFSA form was made available to more participants, increasing from hundreds to thousands to tens of thousands, in partnership with **community-based organizations, schools, institutions of higher education, and other organizations**.

The Department regularly reported on the progress of all beta testing periods through frequent press calls, **press releases**, and on [fafsa.gov/beta](https://fafsa.gov/beta). This communication included **data** about beta participation, user surveys, and FAFSA submission.

The Department was encouraged by the results of the four beta periods. Not only have more than 167,000 students successfully submitted the FAFSA form as of Nov. 21, but we also have found no new critical bugs with the 2025–26 form. Additionally, the Department is processing those FAFSA forms and sending Institutional Student Information Records (ISIRs) to colleges and state scholarship agencies.

The Department recognizes that the 2024–25 FAFSA rollout was challenging for students, families, postsecondary institutions, and other stakeholders. Our top priority continues to be ensuring that every student has the help they need to access the life-changing potential of higher education. We will keep improving as we hear more from students, families, schools, and our partners.

### 2025–26 FAFSA PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT TIMELINE

- Nov. 21, 2024: The Department **announced** the official launch of the 2025–26 FAFSA form.

- Nov. 14, 2024: The Department **announced** the final beta period (Beta 4) and that Expanded Beta 4 would be open to all interested students and families.
- Oct. 15, 2024: The Department **announced** successful Beta 1 results and the start of Beta 2.
- Sept. 30, 2024: The Department **announced** the launch of Beta 1, Beta 2-4 participants, and new FAFSA resources.
- Sept. 11, 2024: The Department **announced** details for 2025–26 beta testing.
- Aug. 27, 2024: The Department **announced** a framework for 2025–26 beta testing.
- Aug. 7, 2024: The Department **announced** the schedule and new process for 2025–26 launch.

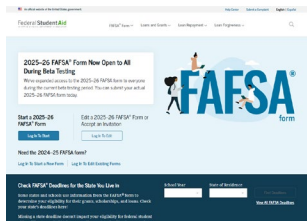
## DEPARTMENT ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THE 2025–26 FAFSA EXPERIENCE

- The Department **focused activities** around three key areas, that include:
  - modernizing Federal Student Aid (FSA);
  - ensuring the development of the 2025–26 FAFSA form remained on track with key timelines and progress communicated to our partners; and
  - providing more resources and improving the experience for students, families, school, states, and our partners.
- Key actions:
  - We modernized FSA by bringing on new leadership and experts in IT project development as well as strengthening our project and program management protocols to ensure contractor accountability for meeting key deadlines and achieving results.
  - We provided early and predictable timelines for FAFSA development, which included the launch of a new beta testing strategy on Oct. 1.
  - We ensured the FAFSA form functioned as intended by testing with real users before launch and implementing a **seven-layer testing strategy**.
  - We increased our transparency by hosting regular briefings and launching a new webpage with information about our progress, including about beta testing, at [fafsa.gov/beta](https://fafsa.gov/beta).
  - We released more resources for students and families including new videos and guidance that helps them navigate the FAFSA form.
  - We provided additional resources for counselors, institutions, states, and other critical partners including an expanded FAFSA prototype tool, trainings, videos, and early released test ISIRs to help get their systems ready.
  - We ensured the Federal Student Aid Information Center (contact center) has sufficient capacity and training to support students and families. We added more than 700 new contact center agents since January 2024, an 80% increase, and we are putting in place 225 more agents for surge staffing and expanded hours.
  - We improved the experience for students and families by, for example, revamping help text and adding pop-up messages to warn applicants about potential errors in their forms.

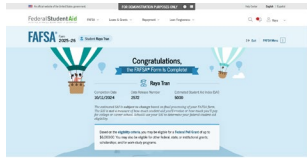
## REFERENCE IMAGES

Download high-resolution versions from the links below.

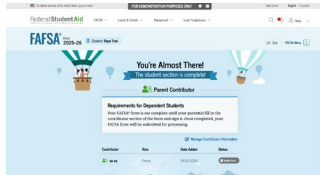
- [2025–26 FAFSA homepage during expanded Beta 4](#)



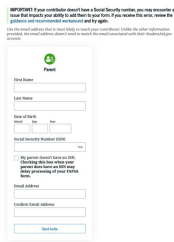
- **2025–26 Successful submission**



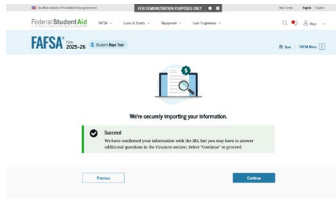
- **2025–26 Parent notification that student section is complete**



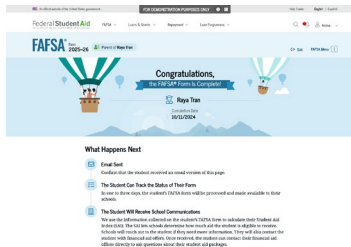
- **2025–26 notification for applicant's whose contributor does not have a Social Security number**



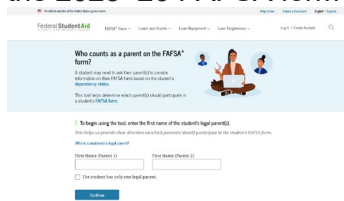
- **2025–26 Notification of secure import of federal tax information**



- **2025–26 FAFSA form: What happens next page**



- **“Who is 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.



## 2025–26 FAFSA RESOURCES:

### For students and families:

- **Federal Student Aid Estimator:** A revised tool which provides an estimate of the 2025–26 Student Aid Index and Federal 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 new 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 complete and submit the FAFSA form. This resource will also be linked from the StudentAid.gov Dashboard to promote easier access for students and their required contributor(s).
- **Federal Student Aid YouTube Channel:** Updated FAFSA 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.
  - **What Is FAFSA® [form]?**
  - **Why Do My Contributors and I Need Our Own StudentAid.gov Accounts for the FAFSA Form?**
  - **Who is a Contributor on the FAFSA form?**
  - **What Happens After Submitting Your FAFSA Form?**

### For financial aid professionals (e.g. counselors, mentors, college access organizations):

- **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.
- **FAFSA Issue Alerts page:** A webpage with a list of known issues with the form updated in real-time as bugs are fixed in beta testing.
- **2025–26 FAFSA prototype:** An updated tool which provides the financial aid community an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the FAFSA user experience.
- **2025–26 FAFSA Roadmap:** The resource 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:** The tool 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.

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

#### For Spanish-speaking students and families:

- Video: [What is FAFSA® \[form\]?](#)
  - [¿Qué es el formulario FAFSA®?](#) (elige subtítulos en español): Video FAFSA actualizado para ayudar a los estudiantes y las familias a comprender la importancia del formulario FAFSA.
- Video: [Applying for Financial Aid With the FAFSA® Form](#)
  - [Cómo solicitar ayuda económica con el formulario FAFSA®](#) (elige subtítulos en español): Video FAFSA actualizado para ayudar a los estudiantes y las familias a completar el formulario FAFSA.
- Web Page: [Pro Tips for the FAFSA® Form](#)
  - [Consejos profesionales para llenar el formulario FAFSA®](#) Consejos actualizados para prepararse para completar y enviar el formulario FAFSA. Este recurso también estará vinculado desde el Panel de StudentAid.gov para promover un acceso más fácil para los estudiantes y sus contribuyentes requeridos.
- Web Page: [Creating Your StudentAid.gov Account](#)
  - [Crear su cuenta StudentAid.gov](#): Un nuevo recurso que explica todo lo que las familias y los socios necesitan saber sobre cómo crear una cuenta en StudentAid.gov.
- Web Tool: [Who's My FAFSA Parent? wizard](#)
  - [Cómo completar el formulario FAFSA](#): Una nueva herramienta independiente para ayudar a los estudiantes y las familias a determinar quién deberá proporcionar información de contribuyente en el formulario FAFSA 2025–26 antes de comenzar la solicitud.

#### FAFSA TERMS

- **Award year**: School year for which financial aid is used to fund a student's education. Generally, this is a 12-month period that begins on July 1 of one year and ends on June 30 of the following year (e.g. July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025)
- **Contributor**: A contributor is anyone (student, spouse, biological or adoptive parent, or a parent's spouse) who is required to provide information on the FAFSA form, sign the FAFSA form, and provide consent and approval to have their federal tax information transferred directly from the IRS into the form.
- **FAFSA cycle**: Usually, the FAFSA form is available from Oct. 1 until June 30, two years later. For example, the 2022–23 FAFSA form launched on Oct. 1, 2021, and closed on June 30, 2023.
- **Federal Pell Grant program**: The Federal Pell Grant is the largest federal grant program offered to undergraduates. It is designed to assist students from low-income households. To qualify for a Federal Pell Grant, a student must demonstrate financial need by completing and submitting the FAFSA form.
- **FSA ID**: The Department is phasing out use of the term, FSA ID, to align with terminology—that is, “username” and “password”—that students, parents, and borrowers commonly encounter in other aspects of online account management.
- **StudentAid.gov account**: Consists of a username and password that gives students and families access to the Department's online systems. Students, parents, and borrowers need a StudentAid.gov account—among other things—to fill out, submit, and correct the FAFSA form online; complete other online forms (such as the *Master*

*Promissory Note*) required to receive aid; and review the federal student aid they've received.

Find more FAFSA-related [glossary terms](#).

## LEADERSHIP TITLES

- **U.S. Department of Education**
  - [U.S. Secretary of Education, Dr. Miguel Cardona](#)
  - [U.S. Under Secretary of Education, James Kvaal](#)
- **Federal Student Aid**
  - Acting Chief Operating Officer of Federal Student Aid, Denise Carter
  - FAFSA Executive Advisor, Jeremy Singer

## PRESS CONTACT

- [Press@ed.gov](mailto:Press@ed.gov)
- 202-401-1576
- Press webpage [Ed.gov/news](#)

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## ITEMS TO NOTE

- **On background:** Responses to press inquiries should always be considered on background and not attributable to staff members, unless otherwise stated.
- **Department Spokesperson:** The Department's press secretary and their designated staff members (e.g., deputy press secretary) are the only Department spokespersons.
- **Website:** Please use "StudentAid.gov" when writing our website and use uppercase "S" and A." Do not include "www."
- The U.S. Department of Education website is [Ed.gov](#)
- The Department on social media
  - [The Department](#) on Facebook
    - (español) [Departamento de Educacion](#) en Facebook
  - [@USEdGov](#) on X (formerly Twitter)
  - [@USEdGov](#) on YouTube
  - [@USEdGov](#) on Instagram
- Federal Student Aid's website is [StudentAid.gov](#)
- Federal Student Aid on social media
  - [Federal Student Aid](#) on Facebook
  - [@FAFSA](#) on X (formerly Twitter)
  - [@FederalStudentAid](#) on YouTube
  - [@FederalStudentAid](#) on Instagram