



FAFSA Simplification

What's Up On Your Campus?

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World's Toughest!

WORLDS TOUGHEST MUDDER



WORLDS TOUGHEST FAFSA YEAR!



Feel Stuck In Place!



Shed the “Mess” and Get Moving!



Walking a Tightrope?



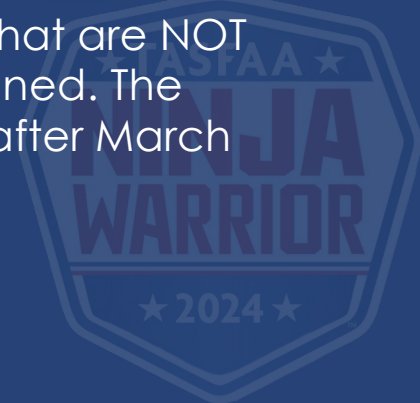
The Tightrope

- We want to get started processing, but how soon is too soon
- We have a class to enroll
- We want our returning students to be able to return
- People are counting on financial aid (university and families)
- How much to say, what to say, when to say it
- Keep the staff motivated despite the frequent missteps we keep seeing
- Reassure the university community we will get through this
- Reassure students and families we will get through this
- Header school!



GENERAL-24-24: Update on 2024-25 FAFSA Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) Delivery (Posted March 22, 2024)

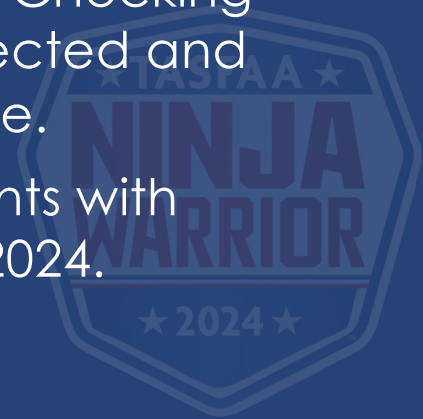
- To date, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) has processed more than 1.5 million FAFSA applications and delivered ISIRs to the majority of schools, states, and designated scholarship organizations.
- **At this time, schools and states can and should begin processing ISIRs and preparing aid packages for students**
- As we started to deliver ISIRs at scale, we identified an issue that we want to bring to schools' attention. This issue should not prevent schools from processing ISIRs and preparing aid packages, and only affects ISIRs delivered prior to March 21, 2024. To date, we have delivered over 1.3 million ISIRs to schools that are NOT affected by this issue, and schools can process those records as planned. The Department has also resolved the issue for all ISIRs delivered on and after March 21, 2024.



GENERAL-24-24

The Problem

- The FAFSA Processing System (FPS) was not including all data fields needed to correctly calculate the Student Aid Index (SAI) for dependent students who reported assets.
- The FPS used the student's Adjusted Net Worth of Businesses and Investment Farms to calculate the Student Contribution from Assets (ISIR field 328) and should have also included the student's Current Net Worth of Investments and Total of Cash, Savings, and Checking Accounts. This resulted in an SAI that was **lower** than expected and an inaccurate total Student Contribution from Assets value.
- This issue resulted in inaccurate ISIRs for dependent students with assets delivered to FTI-SAIG mailboxes prior to March 21, 2024.



GENERAL-24-24

Processing the Problem

If you received ISIRs for Dependent Students prior to March 21, 2024:

- For a dependent student **without** assets, continue processing as planned.
- For a dependent student **with** assets, the ISIRs delivered prior to March 21, 2024, will be reprocessed by the Department. **As an interim fix, schools and states can recalculate the SAI to develop a tentative aid package for an affected student without waiting to receive a reprocessed ISIR.**



Tired of Hanging Around and Waiting



(GENERAL-24-27) Update on 2024-25 FAFSA Processing (Posted 3/25/24)

- To date, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) has processed more than 4.3 million FAFSA forms and delivered ISIRs to the majority of schools, states, and designated scholarship organizations.
- The Department is on track to complete processing roughly 6 million FAFSA forms and transmitting the resulting ISIRs to schools, states, and scholarship agencies by the end of March.
- We have also published a new [FAFSA Status tracker](#) on the Knowledge Center to provide updates on FAFSA submission and processing. We will refresh the tracker twice a week providing numbers of FAFSA forms submitted to the Department and FAFSA forms processed by the Department.



FAFSA Status Tracker at the 2024–25 FAFSA Updates Website

FAFSA Status - 3/25/24

- ★ Processed To Date: 4.4M
- ★ Processed Since Last Report: 4.4M

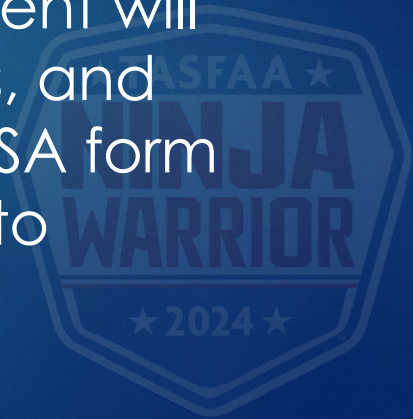
- ★ Submitted To Date: 6.3M
- ★ Submitted Since Last Report: 6.3M



GENERAL-24-27

Corrections

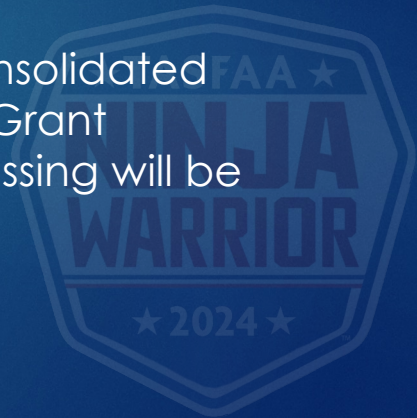
- The ability for students to make update and corrections to their FAFSA forms will be available in the first half of April.
 - ▶ *Brad Note: Impact on rejected prospective student FAFSAs and Admissions?*
- In advance of that implementation, the Department will provide detailed information to partners, students, and families on how to correct the most common FAFSA form errors including no signatures and selecting 'yes' to applying for unsubsidized loans only (Question 8).



GENERAL-24-27

Reprocessing

- The Department will start reprocessing applications impacted by a previously identified issue shortly after student corrections are made available.
- The Department recently identified a vendor issue that was incorrectly calculating the Student Aid Index for records of dependent students with assets. This issue affected less than 10 percent of the 4 million records that have already been processed and has been resolved since the issue was identified.
- As these records are reprocessed, they will be identified as a system-generated transaction in the transaction source field (ISIR field 16).
- On March 22, 2024, President Biden signed H.R. 2882, the “Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024” into law which level funds the Federal Pell Grant program with a Pell Grant maximum of \$7,395. No additional reprocessing will be required to adjust Pell Grant awards.



GENERAL-24-27

COD

- As many institutions plan for summer terms and crossover payment periods (a payment period that begins prior to July 1 but ends after July 1), the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System will be available in the second half of April.
- EDEXpress 2024–25, Release 2.0, which includes the Pell Grant and Direct Loan modules, will be also available in the second half of April.
- Detailed information about the April 2024 COD System update and EDEXpress 2024-25, Release 2.0 will be provided in Electronic Announcements posted to the Knowledge Center with the system releases.



GENERAL-24-27

Updates

- To help support institutions and states, in addition to regular Knowledge Center updates, the Department will be holding regular webinars to cover important updates and provide details on topics that are the subject of large numbers of questions.
- Webinar announcements will be posted on the Knowledge Center and recordings of all webinars will be posted on the FSA Training Center.



GENERAL-24-27

Future ISIRs Delivery

- In the coming week, ISIR delivery will proceed on a regular processing schedule of 1 to 3 days following FAFSA form submission.
- We encourage institutions and states to proceed with processing ISIRs and preparing aid packages for students as quickly as possible.
- If a school needs assistance getting started, the Department continues to provide resources to help.

The Electronic Announcement also provides contact information help over various issues



Secretary Cardona Letter to Governors



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

March 26, 2024

Dear Governor:

Higher education opens doors, unlocks students' dreams, and strengthens our economy and our society. But for too long, too many have been shut out of accessing the life-changing potential of higher education.

The U.S. Department of Education's recent work to transform the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form expands that access to federal Pell Grants to more than 600,000 additional students who may have been too daunted by the cost and complexity of the system to pursue higher education.

The newer, Better FAFSA reflects changes to systems and processes that had not been updated in 40 years—including changes to the FAFSA form, eligibility calculations, and institutional procedures for packaging financial aid.

We estimate more than 7 million students will receive a Pell Grant next year, and 5.7 million will be eligible for the maximum Pell Grant of \$7,395.



Secretary Letter - Updates

Today, I'm writing to a) share additional steps the Department has taken to support students, families, and institutions during this unprecedented transition, and b) outline steps you can take in your state to encourage students to complete the 2024-25 Better FAFSA and support institutions of higher education in your state as they prepare financial aid packages.

Updates on Implementing the Better FAFSA

- Delivering FAFSA information to states and institutions.
- Launching the FAFSA College Support Strategy.
- Providing Flexibility on Requirements for the 2024–25 Award Year.
- Announcing the Timeline for Corrections to FAFSA.



Secretary Letter – What You Can Do

Increasing Better FAFSA Completion in Your State

- Adjust deadlines for state financial aid and ensure enough state grant aid is available through later processing timelines.
- Consider encouraging colleges and universities in your state to delay institutional decision deadlines.
- Ensure your state has budgeted for state grant aid increases that may be needed based on changes to eligibility calculations.
- Ensure that your state agencies and institutions have the capacity and support they need.
- Motivate as Many Students as Possible to Complete and Submit a 2024-25 FAFSA.



Secretary Letter – What's Missing

- Sorry for all the bad ISIR data we're sending your schools
- Sorry for all the errors in the SAI formula
- Sorry for making it more challenging for schools to do what they need to do to support your students and enroll your class
- Sorry we don't have a timeline set for when schools can start making corrections
- Sorry your schools don't have confidence that the SAI's they are seeing are accurate
- Sorry for the high reject rate of FAFSA's due to.....
- Need I go on?



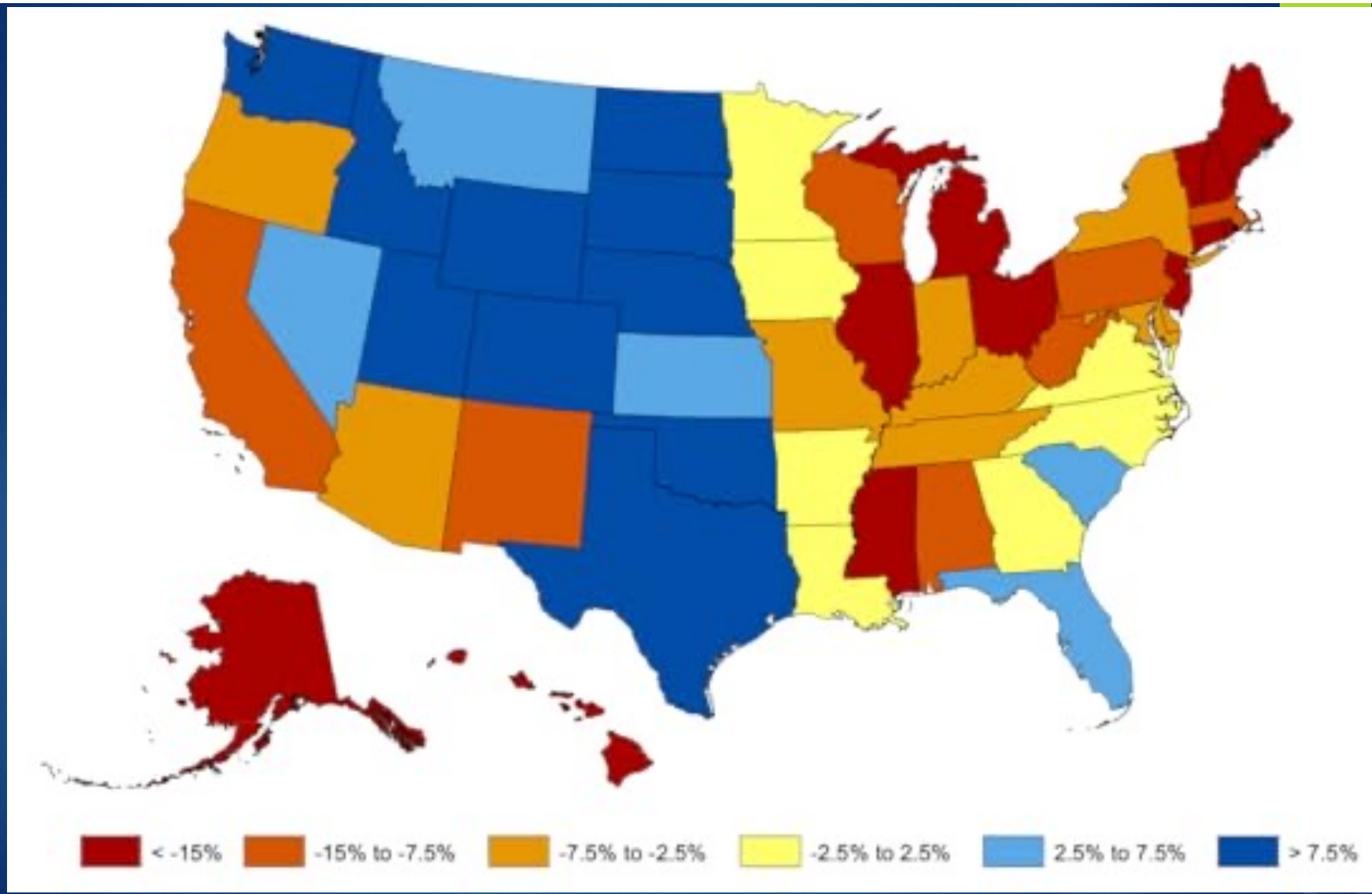
What Can You Really Do?

- Let your administration know asap this letter was sent to Governors
- Make sure your administration
 - ▶ Knows the real story
 - ▶ Is kept up to date on what you are doing
 - ▶ Understands the challenges you are facing
- Be as positive as you can and give them confidence in YOU, while understanding letters like this don't paint the full picture
- It's easy to jump into negativity in delivering this message...be realistic of the situation and mindful of what you're portraying
- Your administration may not understand the "weeds," so it's important they feel confident in you



Do the FAFSA
Problems make
the Enrollment
Cliff issue worse?





NCAN H.S. FAFSA Tracker

Through March 15, 2024

- Nationally, 32.3% of high school seniors (class of 2024) submitted a FAFSA
- Nationally, this is -30.7% from the same time last year!
- Tennessee is -45.9% from the same time last year!
- My home state of Virginia is -20.9% over last year



Out-of-State Recruitment Challenges

JMU

- Northeast/New England JMU enrollment is less than it was 10 years ago (Enrollment Cliff related)
- Still, the largest percentage of OS undergrads enrolled are from that region
- Over 20% decline in the number of high school seniors who have submitted a FAFSA for every state in that region
- Likely to see even fewer of our OS admits with a FAFSA on file (no way to confirm right now)
- Even when we get all the FAFSA's, what will they look like (over 20% reject rates and other problems)
- When you factor fewer OS students nationally with fewer OS students who have a FAFSA, that means the competition to attract an OS student is more challenging than we've seen it in a very long time



Out-of-State Request

JMU

- We have two big scholarships we offer to out-of-state prospective students
- Based on the funding source, some level of financial need is required (not endowed funds)
- When we settled on the current allocations with JMU no one could have known we would be where we are with the FAFSA process
- I have requested the authority to increase the number of offers

This is an enrollment management issue for the university



Tennessee Programs

All require the FAFSA

- UT Promise
- Tennessee Promise
- Lottery Scholarships
- TSAC Grants
- Others?



Tennessee Concerns

- Impact on high school seniors eligible for TN funds
- Impact on out-state-recruiting pools (where are your OS students coming from)
- Impact on in-state recruitment (fewer students?)
- Even if your admissions applications are up, that doesn't necessarily mean more students....it may be fewer students applying to more schools

If you have fewer overall students to pull from and fewer of those who remain completed a FAFSA, what does that mean for recruitment?



Hang on...packaging is right around the corner!



Packaging Considerations

- Priority - Prospective or Returning Students?
- System - Is it ready?
- Reprocessed ISIRs – When will we get them?
- Critical Mass – Wait for this, or package as you get your batches (race to get offers out)?
- Priority FAFSA Filing Dates – Stick with it, change it, other options?



Where We Are

- Priority - Prospective Students (and summer)
- System – Testing a lot! Getting ready to "go live"
- Reprocessed ISIRs – Deal with them when we get them
- Critical Mass – Can wait...will start once we're up and running
- Priority FAFSA Filing Dates – Internally extended to April 1st, may do later



Lend A Hand!



Resources

- [NASFAA Slack Channels](#)...very active!
- NASFAA FAFSA Simplification [Web Center](#)
- 2024-25 FAFSA Issue Alerts [website](#)
- FSA Knowledge Center [Subscription](#) (notification when new guidance is dropped)

Knowledge Center Subscription

Subscribe to get the latest news and updates from the Knowledge Center.

[Subscribe](#)



GENERAL-24-26: Keeping You Informed – Updates to the 2024-25 FAFSA Simplification Information Area on Knowledge Center (Posted March 22, 2024)

[FAFSA Simplification Information](#) (website)

- Federal Register Notices Including Regulations
- Dear Colleague Letters and Electronic Announcements
- Resources
- 2024-25 FAFSA Updates
- 2024-25 FAFSA Issue Alerts
- 2024-25 FAFSA Frequently Asked Questions



2024-25 Student Aid Index (SAI) and Pell Grant Eligibility Guide (Updated March 21, 2024)

- **Update on March 21:** On March 21, 2024, we replaced the 2024-25 Student Aid Index (SAI) and Pell Grant Eligibility Guide with a new version....
- New guide...trash your old one!



Encouragement

- 10 minute FAFSA application!
- People questioning if they did something wrong because it was so fast and easy
- The future is bright...we just need to get through the transition

Anyone remember CARES?



Finish Line – We'll Get There!





Thank you!

Brad Barnett

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(one "t" in my e-mail)