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5 Things College Access Professionals Should Know

1. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) Updates

- Contributor is a new term being introduced on the 2024–25 FAFSA® form—it refers to anyone (the student, the student's spouse, a biological or adoptive parent, or the parent's spouse [stepparent]) who is required to provide their information and signature on the FAFSA form. All contributors must also provide consent and approval to have their federal tax information transferred from the IRS directly into the FAFSA form. Contributors are not responsible for paying for the student's education costs.
- The parent wizard on the FAFSA form will offer a series of filtering questions that determine which parent of a dependent student will need an invitation to be a contributor. The parent wizard will also identify if there's another parent whose information must be included on the FAFSA form. The information provided by the parent on the FAFSA form will determine if a second parent or parent's spouse will also be a required contributor.
- Students will be able to include up to 20 colleges on the online FAFSA form (double the previous limit).
- The save key has been eliminated on the FAFSA form.
- Demographic questions about the student's gender, race, and ethnicity have been added to the FAFSA form. These questions are for research only and do not affect federal student aid eligibility.

2. Requirement for StudentAid.gov Account

- Beginning in the 2024–25 award year, everyone contributing to the FAFSA form online must have their own StudentAid.gov account.
- Each contributor, including the student, will access their StudentAid.gov account by using their FSA ID (account username and password).
- Parents and other contributors (not including the student) without a Social Security number (SSN) will be able to create a StudentAid.gov account to fill out and sign their section of the student's FAFSA form online.
- Students will need to provide their SSN to create their StudentAid.gov account. However, a student who is a citizen of the Freely Associated States can create a StudentAid.gov account without an SSN.

3. Consent and Approval To Transfer Federal Tax Information

- All contributors, including the student, must provide consent and approval to have their federal tax information transferred directly from the IRS into the FAFSA form via direct data exchange.

- Consent and approval for the transfer of federal tax information is required even if the contributor didn't file a tax return.
- Federal tax information will be used to determine the student's eligibility for federal student aid.
- If the student or another contributor doesn't provide consent and approval, the student will not be eligible for federal student aid—even if they manually enter tax information into the FAFSA form.

4. Changes to Federal Pell Grant Eligibility

- New formulas expand Federal Pell Grant eligibility to more students and link eligibility to family size, household income, and the federal poverty level.
- Federal Pell Grant eligibility has a calculation that is separate from the Student Aid Index (SAI) calculation. For some applicants, the Federal Pell Grant eligibility criteria will only include tax information and federal poverty guidelines. For other applicants, the formula may also use the separately calculated SAI.
- The SAI replaces the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) in the calculation to determine eligibility for need-based funding. The formula is: Cost of Attendance – Student Aid Index – Other Financial Assistance = Financial Need.
- Federal Pell Grant access has been expanded to include students who are confined or incarcerated and enrolled in an approved Prison Education Program.
- Federal Pell Grant lifetime eligibility has been restored for students who had an eligible federal student loan discharge.

5. Applicants Unable To Provide Parent Information

- There is federal student aid available for students who cannot provide parent information on their FAFSA form due to unusual circumstances.
- Students who are homeless, orphans, former foster youth, or who have unusual circumstances that prevent them from providing parent information will benefit from simplified questions that more efficiently determine their independent status.
- Students who indicate unusual circumstances on their FAFSA form will be granted provisionally independent status and will be able to complete the form without providing parent information.
- A financial aid administrator will make the final determination of a student's dependency status based on the documentation that the student submits to the school, or the financial aid administrator may perform their own personal assessment.

Federal Student Aid Resources



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