



FAFSA Simplification Overview

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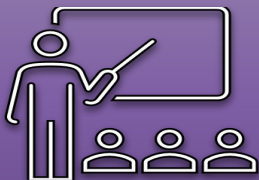
About ISAC



“Providing Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable”



We administer scholarships and grants to students across the State of Illinois



We provide professional development offerings on navigating the financial aid process, resources and support for underrepresented students, and understanding student loan repayment/forgiveness programs

Agenda

1. Background
2. Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID
3. Student Aid Index (SAI)
4. Reporting Parental and Financial Information
5. Changes for Independent Students
6. Open Issues
7. Resources

Background

FAFSA Simplification Act

Goal is to make applying for aid easier and more streamlined

Full implementation goes into effect for the **2024-2025** award year

Reduces the number of questions a student and family will answer

The Student Aid Index (SAI) will replace the Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

Amends the Federal Pell Grant program

FAFSA Changes

- Students are required to answer questions about race and ethnicity – these answers are not shared with the colleges
- Students and parents will access the FAFSA using their own FSA ID
- A parent wizard tool has been developed to help students and families determine which parent(s) will be reported on the FAFSA
- Household size will be referred to as family size
- Students will be able to list up to 20 colleges online
 - List 10 colleges on the paper FAFSA

Technical Updates

The Student Aid Report (SAR) *is now* the FAFSA Submission Summary

The save key feature *has been removed*

The FAFSA *will be available* in the 11 most common languages- through an interpreter

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool *has been removed*

FAFSA Submission Summary's and Institutional Student Information Records will not be sent until **late January**

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FSA IDs & The Roles of Contributors

Who is a contributor?

Anyone who is required to provide:

- A signature on the FAFSA and
- Consent and approval to have their Federal Tax Information transferred directly from the IRS

A contributor is:

- A student
- A student's spouse, if applicable
- A student's parent or parent's spouse

A contributor is not:

- Non-adoptive grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, aunts or uncles, and brothers or sisters, even if they helped provide⁹ for the student

The Roles of Student & Parents

The student is the main contributor - Their answers on the FAFSA will determine if any additional contributors will be required



Each student **will invite a contributor(s)** to complete their section of the form



Students **will submit** the contributor's name, email, date of birth (DOB), and social security number (SSN) – this must match the FSA ID



If a contributor (e.g., parent) does not have an SSN, **they will be asked to provide their mailing address**



Dependent students **will not** see a submit button until the parent section is complete

Steps for Contributors

Step 1

- Contributor receives email saying they've been identified as a contributor

Step 2

- Contributor creates FSA ID, if they don't already have one

Step 3

- Contributor logs in using their FSA ID

Step 4

- Contributor reviews information about completing their section of the FAFSA

Step 5

- Contributor provides the required information, provides consent + approval, and signs the student's FAFSA

Note: Being a contributor (e.g., parent) does not indicate financial responsibility


Invitation for Parent Contributors



Parent

First Name

Last Name

Date of Birth
Month: Day: Year: 




Social Security Number (SSN)
 

My parent doesn't have a SSN

Email Address

Confirm Email Address

Social Security Number (SSN)
 


My parent doesn't have a SSN

Email Address

Confirm Email Address

Example of the Email Contributor Receives

- A contributor will see one of two emails:
 - If a contributor has an FSA ID, they will see the option to log in
 - If a contributor does not have an FSA ID, they will see the option to create one



[Contributor First Name],

[StudentFirstName] [StudentLastInitial] can't be eligible for federal student aid without your input. Help them complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)* form.

Providing information as a contributor does not make you financially responsible for [StudentFirstName]'s education costs. Completing the FAFSA form is how they qualify for student aid including

- Federal Pell Grants,
- federal student loans,
- state financial aid, and
- school financial aid.

[Log in with your FSA ID (account username and password) to complete your section.]

Note: Forms are deleted after 45 days of inactivity.

Don't recognize [StudentFirstname]? Read [\[Help topic title\]](#).

Log In

Everyone Needs an FSA ID – Yes, Everyone!

- Each contributor (e.g., student and parent) will each need their own FSA ID to complete their sections
- If parents are married and file jointly, only one parent will need an FSA ID
- For parents who are married but file separately, or unmarried but parents are still living together: **both** parents will need an FSA ID
- For parent(s) who does not have an SSN, they also need an FSA ID

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Everyone Needs an FSA ID – Yes, Everyone! (continued)

- An FSA ID needs to be created before the FAFSA is started if you want tax data to transfer over
- If students and parents create an FSA ID, the same day:
 - Will be asked to enter tax information manually
 - SAI will not be calculated
 - No Pell Grant estimate will be shown
 - FSA ID processing should take 1-3 days

Creating an FSA ID without an SSN

Warning: Your Account Will Be Limited Without SSN

If you create an account without an SSN, you'll be limited in what you can do. You should only continue creating an account without an SSN if one of the following statements is true for you:

- I am a parent or spouse of a student who is applying for aid, and I do not have an SSN.
- I am a citizen of the [Freely Associated States](#) and need to complete the FAFSA® form online.

Note: Any previously completed FAFSA forms won't be linked to your account. You will still be able to access information from 2023-24 FAFSA form if you use your identifiers on the FAFSA roles page.

Go Back

Continue Without SSN

Identity Verification Questions

- These questions must be answered to verify your FSA ID account

Create an Account

Step 7 of 7

Identity Verification

One last step! We're required to ask additional questions when you don't have a Social Security number (SSN) to verify your identity. You must answer these to finish creating your account.

The results of the identity verification will be displayed on the next page—note that you won't be able to return to this page to answer these questions again.

Which of the following is the street name of your most recent previous address?

- Florida Ave NW
- Sesame Street
- Langston Plkwy
- None of the above

Which of these phone numbers have you ever used previously?

- (316) 775-5152
- (970) 680-6986
- (128) 791-0911
- None of the above

Which of the following is a current or previous employer?

- Adidas
- The Walt Disney Company
- Nokia
- None of the above

Which of the following people lives or owns property in Tafuna?

- Aasiya Jayavant

FSA ID Verification without SSN's –Required Documents

Complete Attestation Form

- Will be available on Studentaid.gov

Proof of Identity (One of the following):

- Driver's license
- State or City ID Card
- Passport

Utility Bill + One of the following forms of ID

- Municipal Card
- Community ID
- Consular ID Card

FSA ID Verification Without SSN's – Process

- Contact [Federal Student Aid Information Center \(FSAIC\)](#) at 1-800-433-3243 (1-800-4 FED AID)
- A customer service representative will look up your account and initiate the identity verification process
- You will receive an email with a case number and instructions for providing the proper documentation for FSA to verify your identity
- Submit required documentation
- Within 1-3 days FSA will send an email confirmation that your identity has been verified

Student Aid Index (SAI)

EFC to Student Aid Index (SAI)

EFC will be changed to SAI

Can be a negative number and as low as \$-1500

The SAI:

- “An index that reflects the evaluation of a student’s approximate financial resources” that can be contributed to their education rather than an amount the family is reasonably expected to contribute
- Individuals not required to file taxes, both dependent and independent students, will automatically receive a negative SAI of \$-1500
- May contribute to a student’s Pell grant eligibility, but **it is not the sole factor**
- Will calculate eligibility for other FSA programs
- Will **no longer** be divided by the number enrolled in college

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Pell Grant Calculation

- A student's family size, financial information, and the federal poverty guidelines will be used
- Students are considered for a Pell Grant in this order:
 - Maximum Pell Grant
 - Calculated Pell (Max Pell minus SAI)
 - Minimum Pell Grant
- If a student does not receive a Pell Grant amount from the calculation, they will not be eligible for a Pell Grant ²²

How do students determine their financial need?

Cost of Attendance (COA)*

- Student Aid Index (SAI)
 - Other Financial Assistance (OFA)
- = Financial Need
-

***Note:** The COA may not be exceeded when packaging a negative SAI

Reporting Parental and Financial Information

Parental Information

- Who is a parent for purposes of financial aid ***has not*** changed
 - Adoptive parents
 - Biological parents
 - Step-parents if married to a biological or adoptive parent
- If both parents (biological or adoptive) are unmarried but living together, report information for both parents
- For parents who are divorced or separated, **a student will report the parent who provides the most financial support within the last 12 months**
 - If the financial support is equal, then report the parent with greater income or assets

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NEW! Parent Wizard Tool

- Designed to help students determine which parent(s) to report on the FAFSA
- The tool will ask the student a series of questions to help them determine who to report

Tell Us About Your Parents

On the FAFSA® form, your “Parent” is your legal (biological or adoptive) parent or stepparent who supports you financially.

Are your parents married to each other?

Yes

No



You will need to provide information for your parents

Based on your answers in this section, you'll need to provide information about both of your parents on your FAFSA form. You can invite your parents to your form so they can complete their required sections.

Reporting Tax Information

- Through the Direct Data Exchange, **everyone** will be required to provide consent for their tax information to be shared by the IRS with FSA, including non-tax filers
 - **Non-tax filers:** the IRS will report no tax return is on file
 - **Each parent must provide consent if:**
 - Filed married filing-separately
 - Unmarried but living together
- If no consent is provided:
 - A student's SAI will not be calculated
 - A student will be ineligible for federal financial aid

Reporting Investment Information

Investment questions will not be asked for:

1. Those who make less than \$60,000 a year
 - Parent(s) of dependent students/Independent students
2. Anyone in the household who has received means-tested federal benefit programs within the previous 24 months
3. A student with a negative SAI

If required to report investments:

- The net worth of any business and/or family farm
 - Exclude the home in which the student/family live in
- Child support received for the most recent calendar year

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Changes for Independent Students

Professional Judgment Policies

- There are two categories of professional judgment
 1. **Special Circumstances:** adjusting data elements in the Cost of Attendance or in the FAFSA that can impact the SAI calculation
 2. **Unusual Circumstances:** adjusting a student's dependency status based on a unique situation
- Schools **can no longer** maintain a policy of denying all professional judgment requests
- Schools **are required** to have a list of adequate documentation that can be used for making the request

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What's the difference?

Unusual Circumstances

- Victim of human trafficking
- Legally granted refugee or asylum status
- Parental abandonment or estrangement
- Student or parental incarceration

Special Circumstances

- Loss of employment or financial assets
- Reduction in income
- Tuition expenses at an elementary or secondary school
- Unusual medical or dental expenses not covered by insurance

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NEW! Provisionally Independent Student

- Designation for students who believe they may qualify as an independent student based on an unusual circumstance
- These students will:
 - Be able to submit the FAFSA
 - Receive an estimate SAI and Pell Grant
- A school's financial aid office will make the final determination based on documentation submitted
- These students will not be required to answer to answer³² information about their parent(s)

Determinations for Unaccompanied and Homeless Youth

- The list of people who can provide a determination has been expanded
- The following sources are:
 - Homeless District Liaison
 - Financial aid office from a different school that for the same or prior award year
 - Director or designee of a:
 - Transitional or emergency shelter
 - Street outreach program
 - Homeless youth drop-in center
 - Program serving individuals experiencing homelessness
 - Program supported by federal TRIO or GEAR UP grant

What can higher education institutions now do?

- Schools can accept documentation of independent student status from another financial aid administrator at a different institution
- Students who are deemed independent for financial aid purposes, can be considered independent for the subsequent award year(s) **only if** the student attended the same institution – the student no longer must submit documentation every year to meet the criteria

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Cost of Attendance (COA)

- ED now has the authority to regulate what is included in a school's COA, **except** for tuition and fees:
 - Room & Board – Food & Housing
 - Books & Supplies – Books, Course Materials, & Equipment
 - Dependent Care
 - Study Abroad Expenses
 - Transportation expenses will include travel between home, school, and work
 - Federal Student Loan origination fees
 - Cost of professional licensing, certification or professional credentials
- Schools will be required to disclose all elements of COA on their website where information about tuition and fees are reported 35

Open Issues

<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/topics/fafsa-simplification-information/2024-25-fafsa-issu-e-alerts>

Known Issues w/ Workarounds

Known Issue	Workaround
If a student incorrectly selects “eligible noncitizen” and completes the demographic section, they will not be able to submit FAFSA after correcting their citizenship status.	Delete current application and start anew one
Student or parent who returns to signed and saved FAFSA that still requires contributors will find the FAFSA no longer has their signature	Re-sign the FAFSA
College names are truncated and difficult to distinguish between when colleges have multiple programs.	Search by federal school code (https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/resource-type/Federal%20School%20Code%20Lists)

Known Issues w/ Workarounds

Known Issue

If a user changes from married filed jointly to married filed separately, after the spouse information has already been entered, the user is not shown the page to invite the spouse even though an invitation is now required to capture the spouse's financial information.

In some cases, a parent who has started a 2024-25 FAFSA form on behalf of a student is unable to continue past the Student Information page and receives an error message stating that there is already an application on file for the student.

If a married student or parent starts to enter a spouse's information on the "Invite page" but then exits the form from *that* page without completing the information, the student or parent will not be able to add this information when re-entering the form and thus can't submit.

Workaround

Navigate to "My Activity", and select "Edit Contributor Information" and then "Update Information". Re-entering the spouse's information will effectively remove and re-add the contributor, allowing an invitation to be sent.

Students need to access or restart the FAFSA form. Starting the application and inviting parents to contribute

The married student or parent in this situation can re-enter the FAFSA, manually navigate back to the start of the "Financials" section, move through the form to the "Invite" page, complete the information on that page in full, and then select "Continue" to complete and submit the 2024-25 FAFSA form online.

Known Issues w/out Workarounds

Known Issue

Students without SSNs that exit FAFSA form before “State of Legal Residency” question will be unable to continue or start new form

Parent with no SSN is unable to start FAFSA form for student or contribute to an existing form, even if the student starts the application

<https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/fafsa-support/contributor-social-security-number>

"You're Almost There!" page, Go to the bottom of this page, past “Things You Should Know,” and select the link to enter your contributor’s information manually.

Some Student with birth year 2000 are continuously looped to student unusual circumstances page, not allowing them to complete application

Student Unable To Save or Submit FAFSA Form When Entering an A-Number That Ends In Zero

- **Description:** If a student selects the Eligible Noncitizen status on the 2024-25 FAFSA form and proceeds to enter an A-Number that ends in zero, the student receives an error message stating that the application failed to save. This message displays to the student on each subsequent page, regardless of the data the student enters in the form. As a result of the application not saving, the student is unable to proceed beyond the “Selected Colleges and Career Schools” page to the “Review” page.
- **Workaround:** None

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FSA Call Center

- The call center is completely overwhelmed resulting in long waits and the system dropping calls. If it is a complicated ID issue-ask for a Tier 2 FSA ID Specialist. You can also try the chat on studentaid.gov to request FSA ID case numbers.
 - Ensure these are manual verification case numbers (MANVER)

Resources

NEW! FAFSA Simplification Webpage

- ISAC has developed a new webpage to help professionals know the top changes coming to the 2024-25 FAFSA
- Includes FAQ section to help you discuss information with students and families

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – As of 9/26/2023

Click on the plus (+) sign next to each question to view the answer.

+ Q1: When will the 2024-25 FAFSA become available?

+ Q2: What is the Student Aid Index (SAI)?

+ Q3: What is a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID?

+ Q4: Who needs an FSA ID?

+ Q5: Who is considered a parent, for purposes of the FAFSA? Who is reported on the FAFSA?

+ Q6: How many questions will be on the 2024-25 FAFSA?

+ Q7: My family owns a business or an investment farm. Do I need to report it on the FAFSA?

+ Q8: Can I still use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to import my tax information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to the FAFSA?

+ Q9: How do I know if I am eligible for a Pell grant?

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The FAFSA® Communication Toolkit from ISAC

- **NEW** resource guide to assist practitioners in communication with families and best practices regarding the changes to this year's financial aid applications
- Utilize the guide's examples to connect with stakeholders:
 - Emails to families in English and Spanish
 - Email to volunteers
 - Robocall script in English and Spanish
 - Flyers
 - Social media posts in English and Spanish

Sample Student Flyer – Workshop Date

FREE \$\$\$

We will be hosting a **FREE** workshop to help you complete a FAFSA® or Alternative App on [DATE] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]!

Don't miss out on your opportunity to be considered for free money to pay for college.

Funds are limited, so mark your calendar!

Professional Development from ISAC

- **Free** in-person and virtual trainings for school counselors, college and career staff, college-access professionals, and more
- Trainings include:
 - FAFSA Line-by-Line
 - Working with Special Student Populations
 - Monthly Webinars
 - Financial Aid Certification Series

Professional Development Request

To request Professional Development training, complete and submit the Professional Development Request Form below no more than six (6) months and no less than four (4) weeks prior to the event.

For questions or training inquiries, contact the Professional Development Team at isac.outreachtraining@illinois.gov.

At this time, all trainings are being held virtually until further notice due to COVID-19.

Professional Development Request Form

Event Name: *

Is this request for virtual or in-person support? *

Virtual

In-Person

Event Contact *

First: Last:

Title *

School/Organization *

School/Organization Address

Street Address *

City * State * Zip Code *

Email *

Phone Number *

- -

####

SECTION II – Event Details

Support Options (Select One):
A more detailed description of these options is at the bottom of this page. *

Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative

- High schools can track the FAFSA, Alternative Application, and Opt-out waiver completion in Gift Assistance Program (GAP) Access
- Use the ISAC roster for compliance for the FAFSA Graduation Requirement

School Administration Programs

FAFSA Completion: Details Graduation Year 2021

School Summary

Some High School-12345

Address: 123 Some Street, Chicago, IL 60000
Phone: 773-123-0000
Principal: John Smith
Contact: Walter Smith, 773-211-0000, ws@dd12.org

Approval: Closed, Demo Loaded, CPS, CITE

Entries displayed: 10

Select	Opt Out Waiver	Last Name	First Name	MI	DOB	FAFSA Status	Initial FAFSA Received Date	MAP Elig @ 1st Choice College
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				K 07/24/200	Filed, has EFC	10/08/2020	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				A 02/17/200			N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				04/26/2003	No FAFSA Filed		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				T 06/12/2003	Filed, has EFC	01/31/2021	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				P 11/03/2002	Filed, has EFC	10/03/2020	46
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				E 03/06/2003	Filed, has EFC	10/10/2020	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				08/31/2003	Filed, has EFC	10/03/2020	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				G 06/15/2003	Filed, has EFC	11/08/2020	N
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				02/01/2003	Filed, has EFC	10/24/2020	

Buttons: Add, Delete Selected, Save Changes, Excel Report, Back

First Generation Scholars Network

- To join the **First Generation Scholars Network (FGSN)**, students can click the **JOIN NOW!** button on the Student Portal
- Joining allows students to:
 - Connect with an FGSN mentor
 - Find an FGSN program on campus
 - Join “check-in” events with other first-generation students
- Services are **free!**

Join the Network

Ready to join?

You can join using our online form

JOIN NOW!

Have questions? Email us at

ISAC.FirstGen@illinois.gov

Thank You!

Questions? Contact the Professional Development team at isac.outreachtraining@illinois.gov!

Sign up for ISAC's e-messaging service to receive the latest news and updates at www.isac.org/emessaging