

Kentucky students urged to be patient during delays processing new FAFSA form for college financial aid

Joint message from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities, and the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority

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If you're thinking about college next year — as a high school senior or parent, or as an adult wanting to go back to school — you've probably been told that filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form, or FAFSA, is a crucial step on the road to a degree or credential.

That is unequivocally true. FAFSA is the key to unlocking federal, state, and institutional need-based aid that helps low- and moderate-income Kentuckians pay for college. Last year, Kentucky students received nearly \$400 million in Pell grants from the federal government; more than \$200 million in Kentucky Lottery-funded, need-based aid administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority; and hundreds of millions more in institutional aid from Kentucky's public and independent colleges and universities.

The good news is that a new FAFSA form and formula for the 2024-25 school year should make even more Kentuckians eligible for need-based aid.

However, these changes to the FAFSA process have caused delays, confusion, and uncertainty. In normal years, the FAFSA opens October 1 and students who file the FAFSA in the fall would be receiving financial aid notifications by now. Instead, the new FAFSA has only been open to most students for a little over a month.

How FAFSA Works

Once a student files the form, the U.S. Department of Education processes that information, and then transmits it to colleges and universities. The colleges use that information to determine the student's eligibility for federal, state, and institutional aid. They build a financial aid package to provide the student with an estimate of how much aid they are eligible to receive and how much college will actually cost them.

Just last week, the U.S. Department of Education announced that colleges will not receive the FAFSA data they need to calculate student financial aid packages until at least mid-March. That means students likely will not get those financial aid notifications until April, at the earliest.

We understand that this delay is frustrating as students wait for the financial aid information they need to make decisions about their future.

Message to Students and Parents

Our message to students and parents is this: Please be patient with college financial aid offices. Every college and university in the country is in the same situation as they await this FAFSA information.

The FAFSA rollout has been concerning for them as well, as they want nothing more than to make sure students have a full and accurate picture of their financial aid package as soon as possible.

If you've already completed the FAFSA, we applaud you! If you haven't yet, we urge you to go ahead and submit the FAFSA now so that your application is in the queue and schools can begin to process your information as soon as they receive it from the U.S. Department of Education.

Need Help Filing FAFSA?

If you need help filing the FAFSA, contact your KHEAA outreach counselor at kheaa.com or the financial aid office at the Kentucky college or university you're applying to.

College Education Is Great Investment

A college education is the best investment you can make in your future, and we're working to help Kentuckians access every financial aid dollar available to them.



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