

FAFSA Reboot: Powering Up Completion Rates for the 2024-25 FAFSA Webinar FAQ

Question: How can TRIOs get access to check FAFSA completions? Is there a point of contact who can grant TRIOs access to completions? Several TRIO groups have to report on how many students in their programs complete the FAFSA.

Answer: TRIO programs can gain access to FAFSA completion data through the Federal Student Aid (FSA) system. The U.S. Department of Education provides a FAFSA Completion Tool that allows authorized users to view FAFSA completion data for their students. The primary point of contact for granting access to the FAFSA Completion Tool is the TRIO program's assigned program specialist at the U.S. Department of Education. TRIO program directors should reach out to their program specialist for guidance and assistance throughout the process. It's essential to note that access to the FAFSA Completion Tool is granted only to authorized individuals, and the data should be used solely for the purpose of assisting students and tracking FAFSA completion rates for reporting purposes.

Question: As we hear and see FAFSA data, I am wondering if U.S. DOE has the most recent survey data (school enrollment) for it appears there is a significant difference in total enrollment on the US DOE Excel file when compared to the February enrollment in a local school district-Citrus Co.?

Answer: If there is a significant difference between the enrollment data in the US DOE Excel file and the February enrollment data for Citrus County, it could be due to several reasons such as timing of data collection. To obtain the most accurate and up-to-date enrollment data for Citrus County, it would be best to contact the school district directly or the Florida Department of Education. They should be able to provide the most recent enrollment figures and clarify any discrepancies with the U.S. DOE data.

Question: Do any of the states that are doing well with completion have mandatory completion policies?

Answer: Yes, some states that have high FAFSA completion rates have implemented mandatory FAFSA completion policies. These policies require high school seniors to complete the FAFSA as a graduation requirement or as a condition for receiving a diploma. It's important to note that while these policies aim to increase FAFSA completion rates and help students access financial aid, they also include opt-out provisions for students who choose not to complete the FAFSA due to personal or family circumstances.

Question: Is there a theory as to why the FAFSA completion rate is so low in Florida?

Answer: There are several theories and factors that may contribute to the low FAFSA completion rate in Florida, such as **lack of awareness** (some students and families may not be aware of the FAFSA or understand its importance in accessing financial aid for college); **insufficient support** (some students may not have access to adequate support or resources to help them navigate the FAFSA process, such as school counselors or financial aid workshops); **cultural barriers** (some families, particularly those from immigrant backgrounds, may be unfamiliar with the U.S. higher education system and the financial aid process); **lack of state-level policies** such as universal FAFSA completion; and **competing priorities** (some students may prioritize work or family obligations over completing the FAFSA, especially if they are not planning to attend college immediately after high school).

Question: If students have TPS are they allowed to apply for FAFSA? Also students who have the Biden Parole eligible to apply?

Answer: Yes, students with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) are eligible to apply for federal financial aid, including FAFSA. TPS is a temporary immigration status granted to eligible nationals of designated countries who are already in the United States.

Regarding the Biden Parole, it is unclear which specific program you are referring to. However, if you are referring to the "Parole Process for Venezuelans" implemented by the Biden administration in October 2022, the eligibility for federal financial aid may vary depending on the individual's circumstances and the specific terms of the parole. In general, parolees are not eligible for federal student aid unless they have a separate qualifying immigration status, such as being a Cuban-Haitian entrant, a conditional entrant, or having a pending application for asylum or withholding of removal.

It is essential for students to consult with their school's financial aid office and an immigration attorney to determine their eligibility for federal financial aid based on their specific immigration status and circumstances.

Question: If a student is currently enrolled in college, use their parent information last year to complete the FAFSA, but this year does not plan to use their parent information, but does not have Tax information, can that student complete the FAFSA?

Answer: Yes, a student who is currently enrolled in college and previously used their parent's information to complete the FAFSA can still complete the FAFSA this year without their parent's information, even if they don't have their own tax information. In this situation, the student would need to indicate on the FAFSA that they are independent and not providing parent

information. The student may qualify as an independent student for various reasons, such as being married, having dependents, being a veteran, or meeting other criteria.

If the student does not have their own tax information, they can still complete the FAFSA by following these steps:

1. Indicate that they have not filed and will not file a tax return for the relevant year.
2. Provide any income information they have, such as W-2 forms or other records of earned money.
3. If the student had no income, they can enter zeros for the income questions.

It's important to note that not providing parent information or tax information may limit the student's eligibility for certain types of financial aid, such as the need-based Pell Grant. However, the student may still qualify for other types of aid, such as federal student loans.

Question: I thought parents that didn't have an SSN did not have to verify anymore?

Answer: Parents, stepparents and spouses without a Social Security number will have to create a StudentAid.gov account and be invited to participate as a contributor to a student's FAFSA form. Once you've added your personal information (skipping over the section for SSNs), manually enter your tax information before filling out the remaining contributor sections. [More information can be found here](#); the last update as of this posting is May 6, 2024.

Question: Are there any implementations being considered within the education system to encourage FAFSA completion?

Answer: Yes, many schools and districts actively encourage FAFSA completion (though not traditionally in the summer). For example, often in partnership with LCANs, they: host FAFSA completion events, such as "FAFSA nights" or "FAFSA marathons," where students and families can receive one-on-one assistance from financial aid experts. Others are integrating FAFSA into the curriculum: pursuing partnerships with community organizations and higher education institutions; engaging in text message campaigns; offering incentives, such as scholarships or prize drawings; and supporting targeted data-driven outreach.