



FAFSA and Workforce Pell: What Florida Students and Institutions Need to Know

September 24, 2026

About FCAN



MISSION

We lead the collaborative movement to ensure every Floridian achieves an education beyond high school toward a rewarding career.

VISION

A thriving Florida working together where education is the pathway to economic mobility and a prosperous economy for all.

FCAN's 7 Conditions for Success



1

Opportunity for Everyone

To build a talent-strong economy, all Floridians need access to a postsecondary education and the supports to complete it.

2

Lifelong Learning

No degree or credential is “one and done;” Floridians need to prepare for career changes through continuous learning.

3

Clear Information and Guidance

Students of all ages and families need exposure and counseling early and often to make informed decisions about their futures.

4

Effective Use of Data

Transparent access to data on education and economic outcomes help achieve our goals.

5

Affordable

Postsecondary education needs to be within everyone’s financial reach, regardless of household income or life circumstances.

6

Community Collaboration

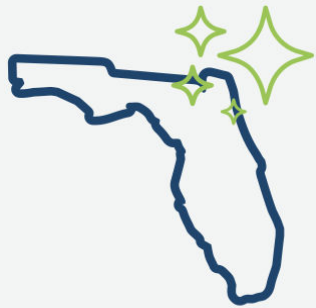
When community partners work together toward a shared vision, they remove barriers, build a robust workforce, and improve the quality of life for their regions.

7

Multiple Pathways to Success

Floridians benefit from multiple learning opportunities for academic achievement and career advancement.

FCAN's Major Roles



Convener

FCAN is uniquely positioned to unite multiple sectors in building a talent-strong economy by increasing college and career success across the state.



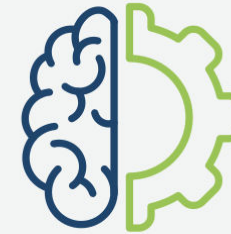
Capacity Builder

FCAN serves as a catalyst to strengthen stakeholders' capacity for coalition building, data gathering and analysis, implementing programmatic best practices, and championing change.



Thought Leader

FCAN is an influential expert on education issues, policies, and practices that inform college and career success in Florida. FCAN also inspires organizations and communities to challenge their own paradigms and create positive change.



Knowledge Developer

FCAN champions objective, data-informed research and policy analysis for accelerating student success.



Champion

FCAN encourages the adoption of student-centered policies so that all Floridians can achieve a postsecondary education.

Questions and Conversation

Submit your questions in the Q + A box.

Share your thoughts on social media, follow us and tag us



[Facebook.com/FloridaCollegeAccessNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaCollegeAccessNetwork)



[Twitter.com/FLCollegeAccess](https://twitter.com/FLCollegeAccess)



[Linkedin.com/company/Florida-College-Access-Network](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Florida-College-Access-Network)



[Instagram.com/FLCollegeAccess](https://www.instagram.com/FLCollegeAccess)

This webinar is being recorded; all materials will be available within 1 week.

Special Guests



Bill DeBaun
Senior Director,
Data and Strategic
Initiatives
*National College
Attainment Network*



Catherine Brown
Senior Policy and
Advocacy Director
*National College
Attainment Network*



Carrie Henderson, Ph.D.
Managing Principal
TSG Advisors - Education

FCAN Research Team

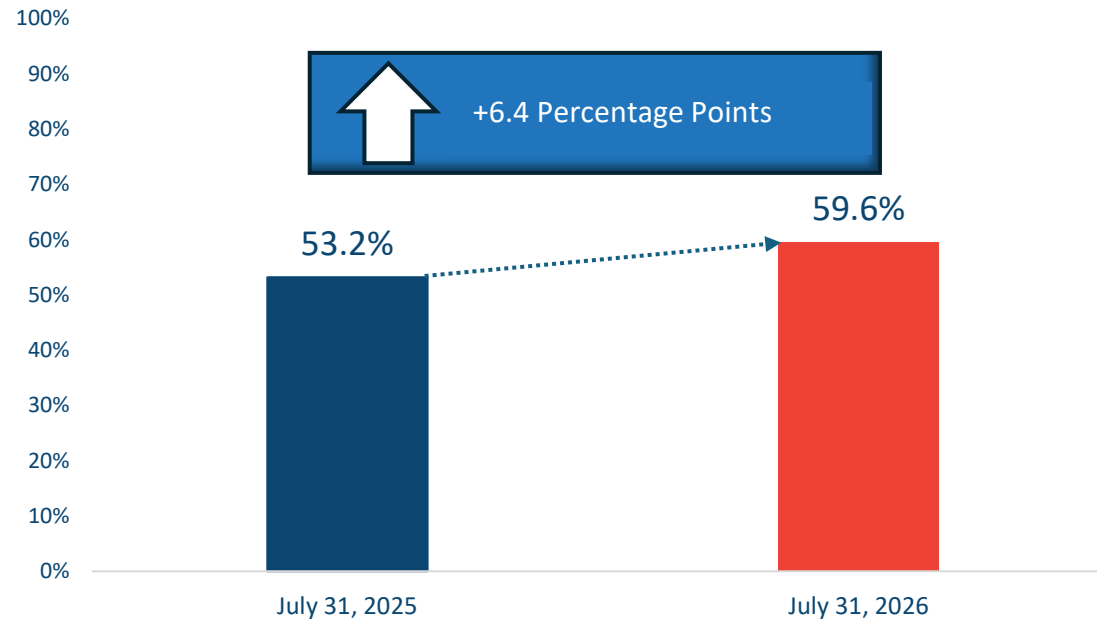


Keyna Wintjen
Research Analyst
*Florida College
Access Network*



Dane Shelton
Research Analyst
*Florida College
Access Network*

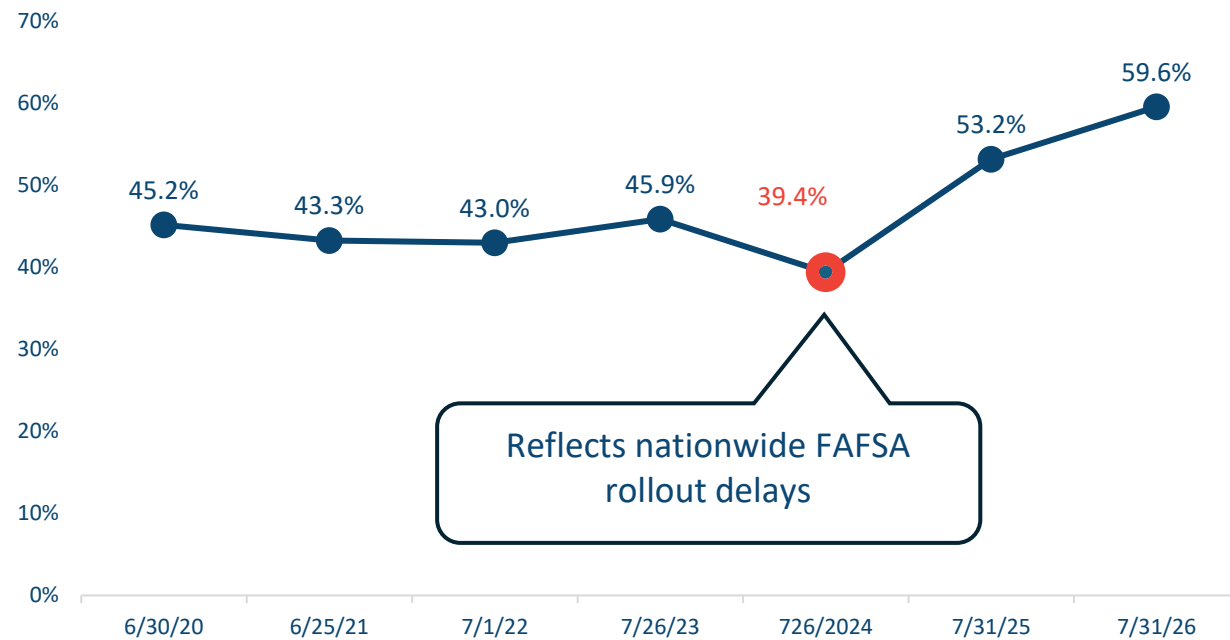
Big Statewide Win



As of July 31, 2026 –

- **FAFSA completions grew by 6.4 percentage points year-over-year**
- **Nearly 6 in 10 Florida high school seniors had completed the FAFSA**

Florida's FAFSA Completion Trend is Improving



Florida's FAFSA completion rate has climbed sharply over the past two cycles.

FAFSA Completion Rates Vary Across Florida

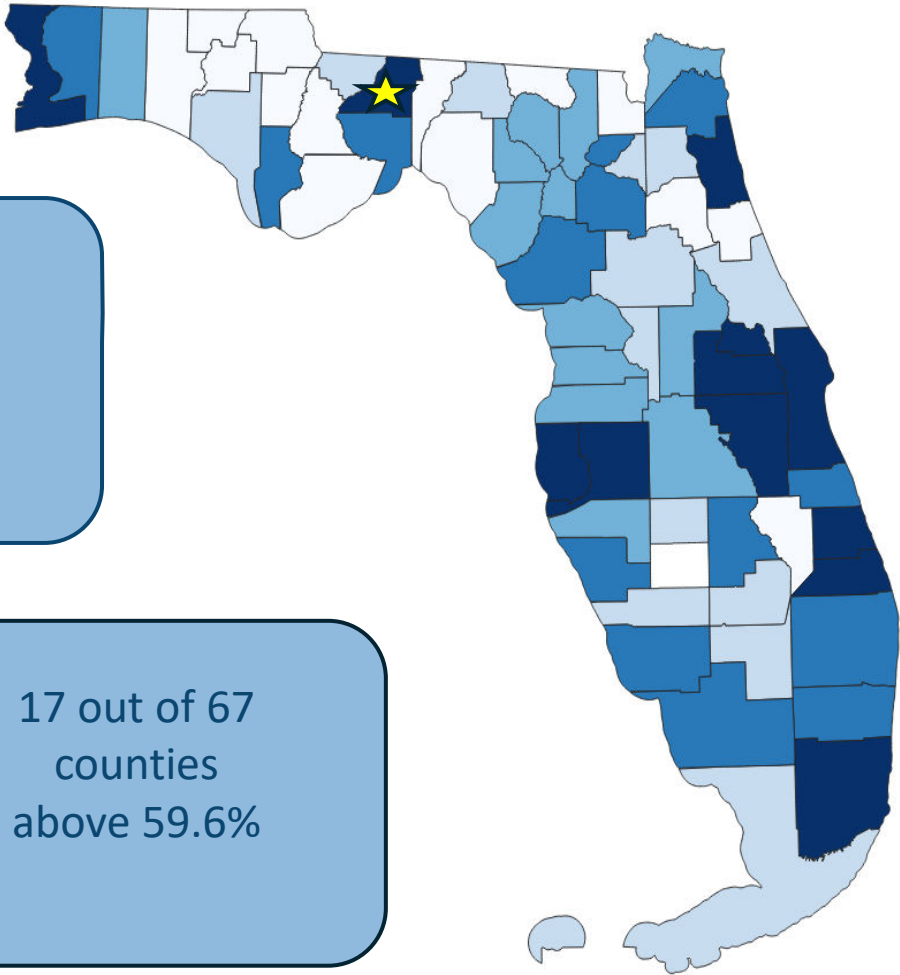
As of July 31, 2026 –

Highest
67.4%

Lowest
35.1%

Difference
32.3
percentage
points

17 out of 67
counties
above 59.6%



FAFSA Completion Unlocks Real Money

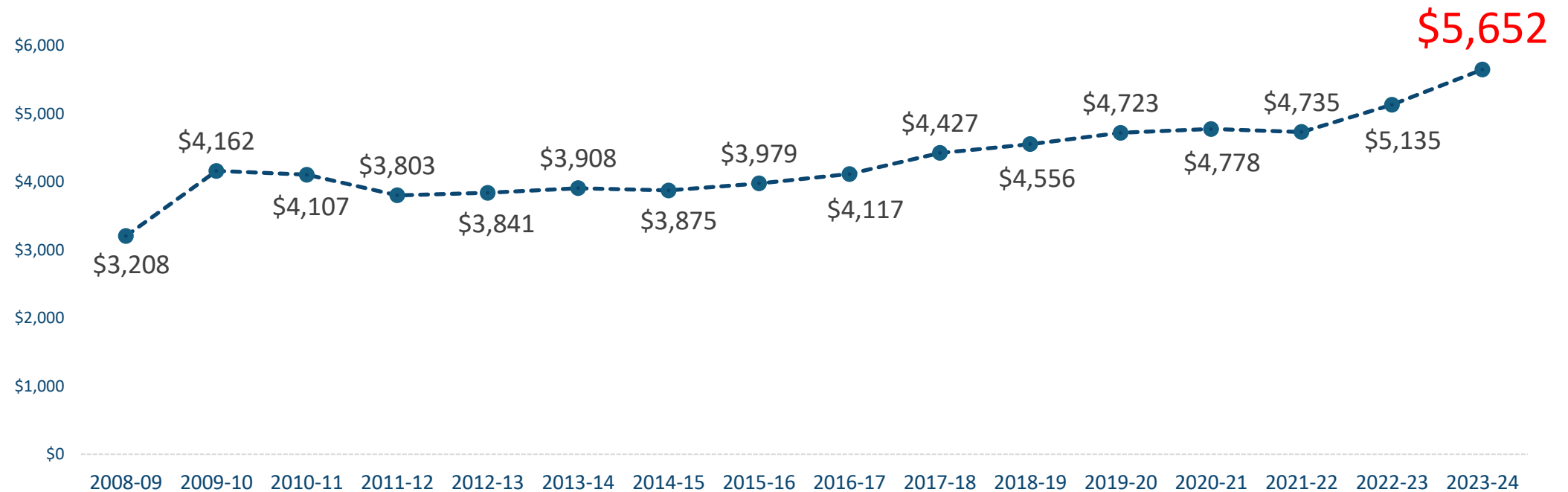
FLORIDA STUDENTS EARNED ESTIMATED

\$191.1M+

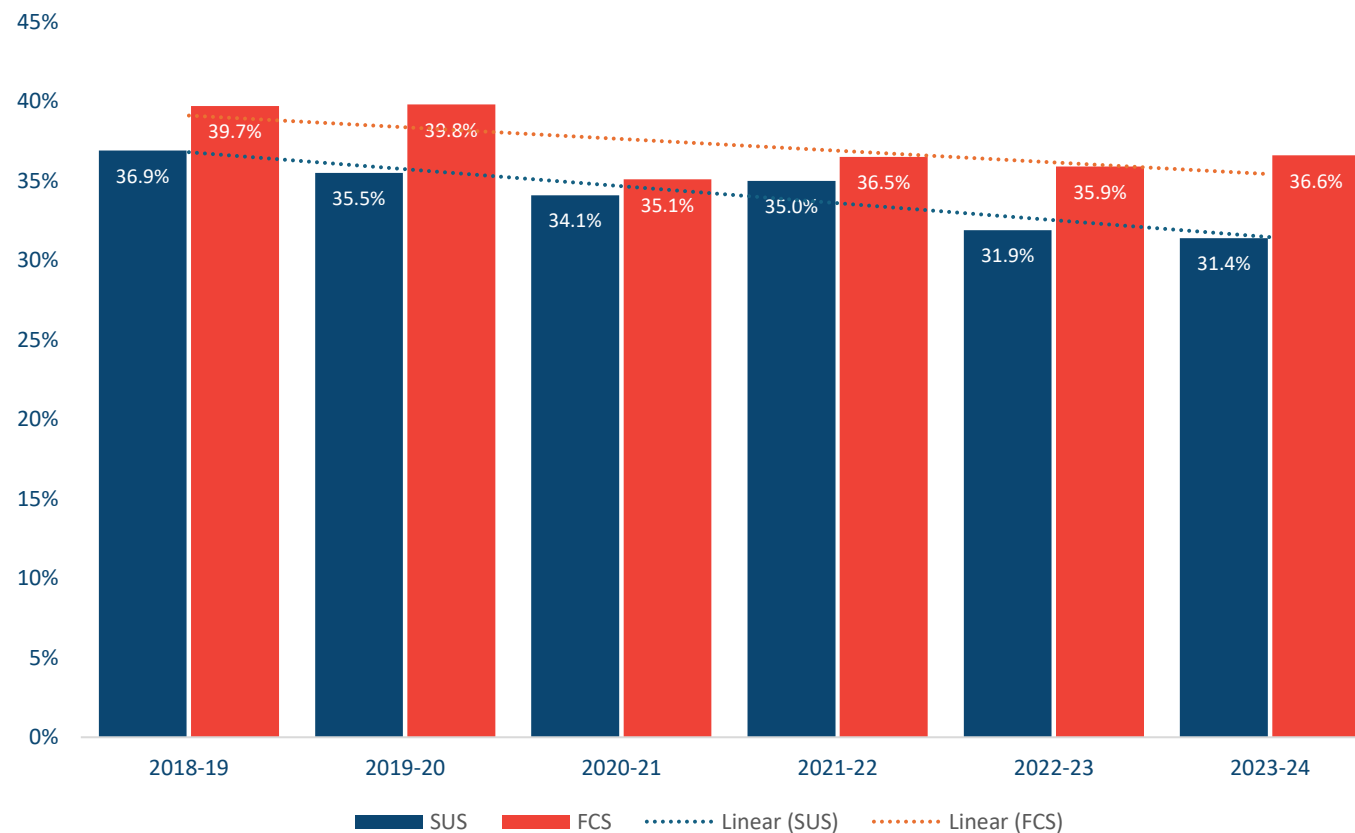
In Federal Pell Grants Awarded as of July 31, 2026



Average Pell Amount Awarded is Climbing



Share of Students Awarded Pell by SUS vs FCS



FAFSA COMPLETION TRENDS IN FLORIDA AND BEYOND

FCAN Webinar
September 24, 2026

HI FLORIDA! PLEASE REACH OUT IF I CAN HELP!



Bill DeBaun

*Senior Director, Data and
Strategic Initiatives*

NCAN

debaunb@ncan.org

2026-29 NCAN PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

01

**Building a
Stronger
Field for
College
Attainment**

02

**Scaling
Innovative
Solutions**

03

**Leveraging
Policy to
Advance
Access,
Affordability,
and
Completion**

04

**Positioning
NCAN's
Voice in a
Changing
Environment**

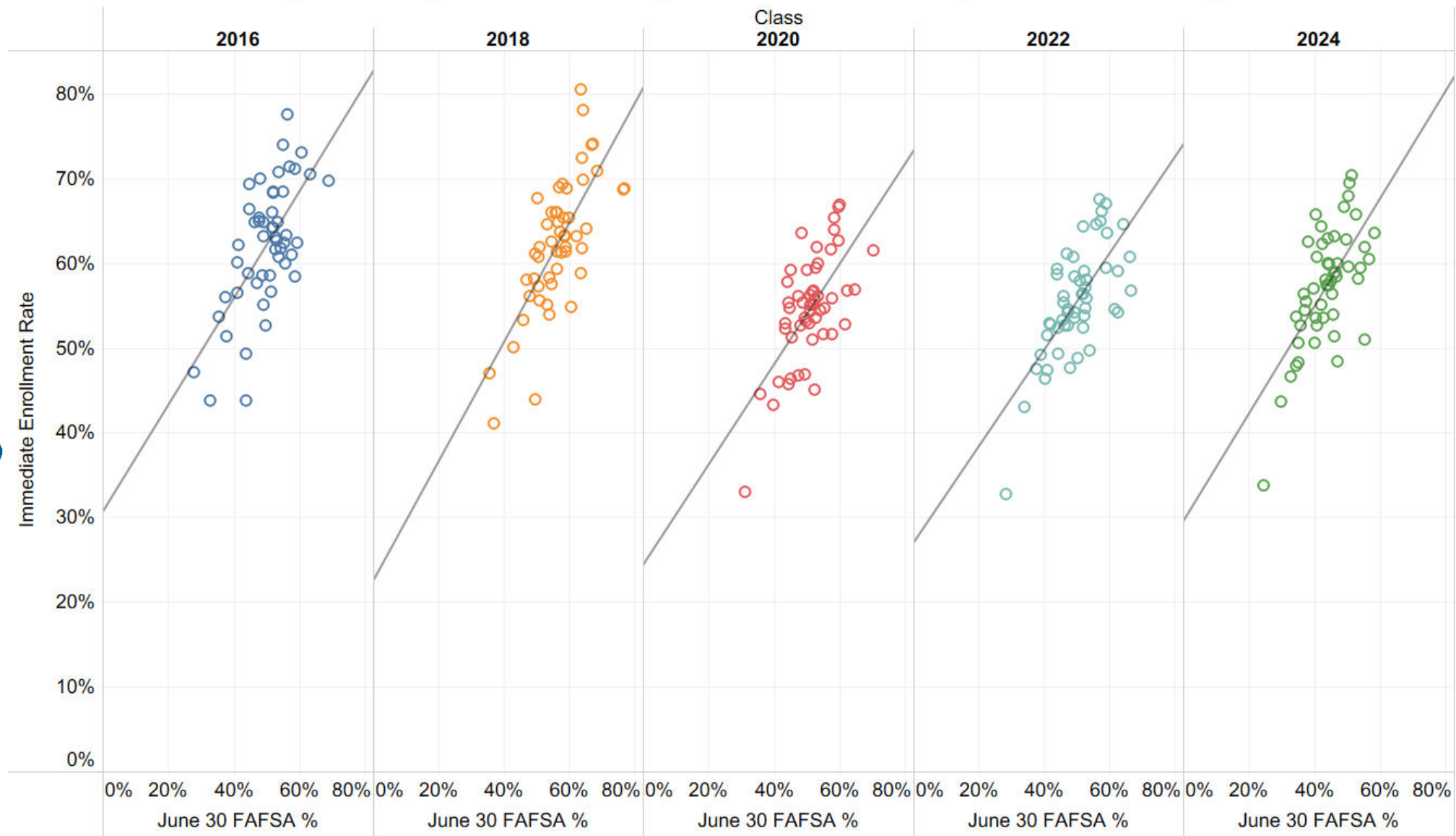
05

**Strengthening
NCAN's
Organizational
Foundation**

FAFSA

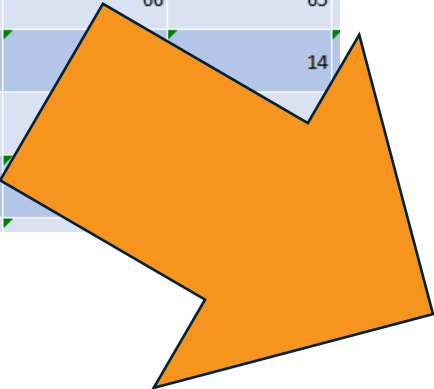
WHY FAFSA COMPLETION MATTERS SO MUCH

June 30 FAFSA Completion % by Immediate College Enrollment Rate of High School Seniors, by State and Class



Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Submissions by High School
Applications processed through January 5 of the first 15 months of each cycle

	City	State	2024/ 2025 Cycle			
			Through January 5, 2024		Through January 5, 2023	
			Applications Submitted	Applications Complete	Applications Submitted	Applications Complete
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5	9	9
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5	<5	<5
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5	33	31
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5	<5	<5
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5	49	42
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5	66	65
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5		14
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5		
	ANCHORAGE	AK	<5	<5		



NCAN's FAFSA Tracker transforms publicly-available, high school-level data into national, state, and local insights on FAFSA completion trends within and across years

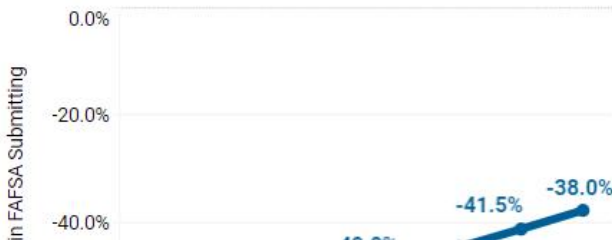


Through **February 23, 2024**, **26.4%** of the **high school class of 2024** has submitted a FAFSA. There have been **1,095,852** submissions nationally, a **-38.0%** change compared to last academic year.

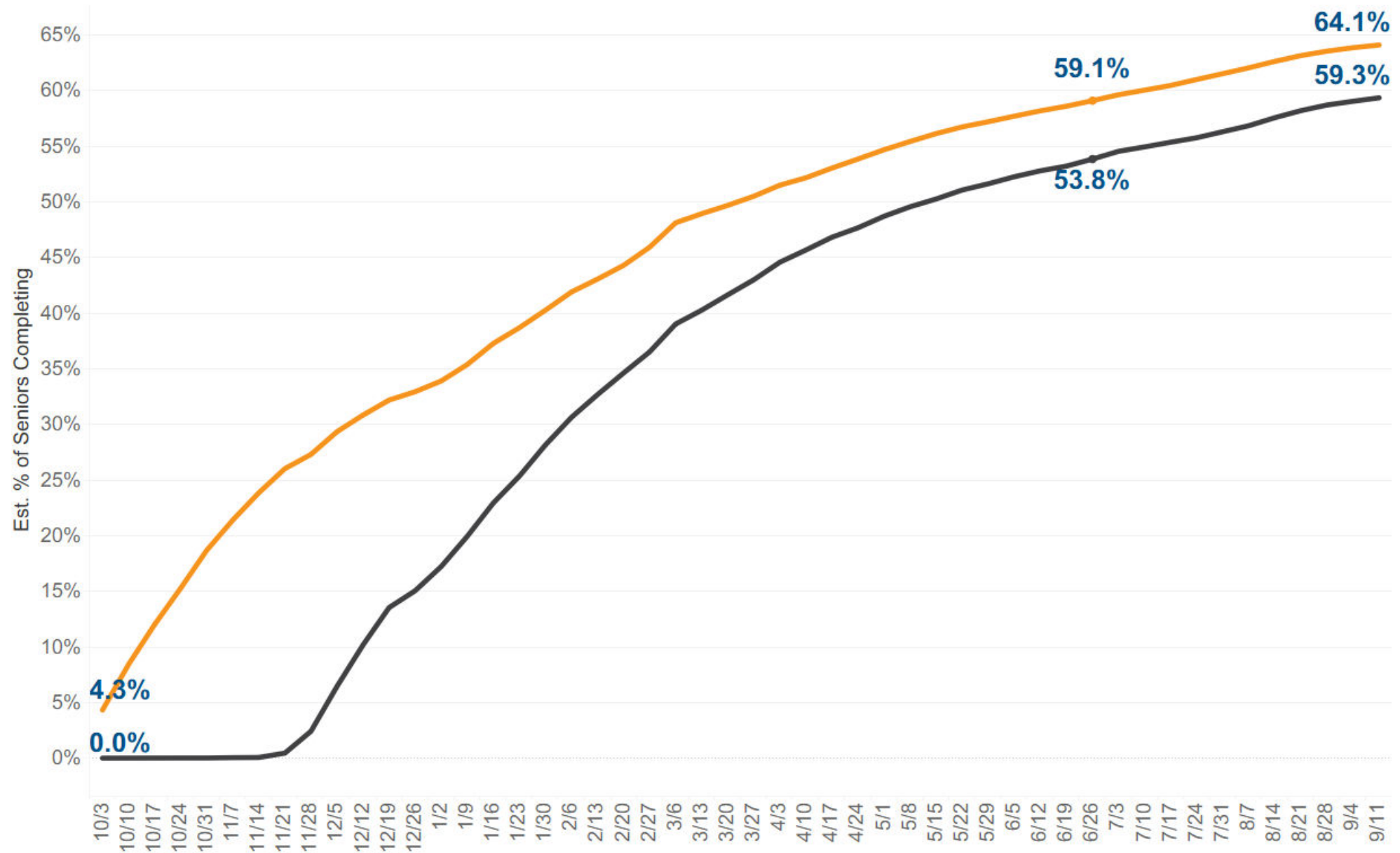
Estimated Percent of Seniors Submitting a FAFSA



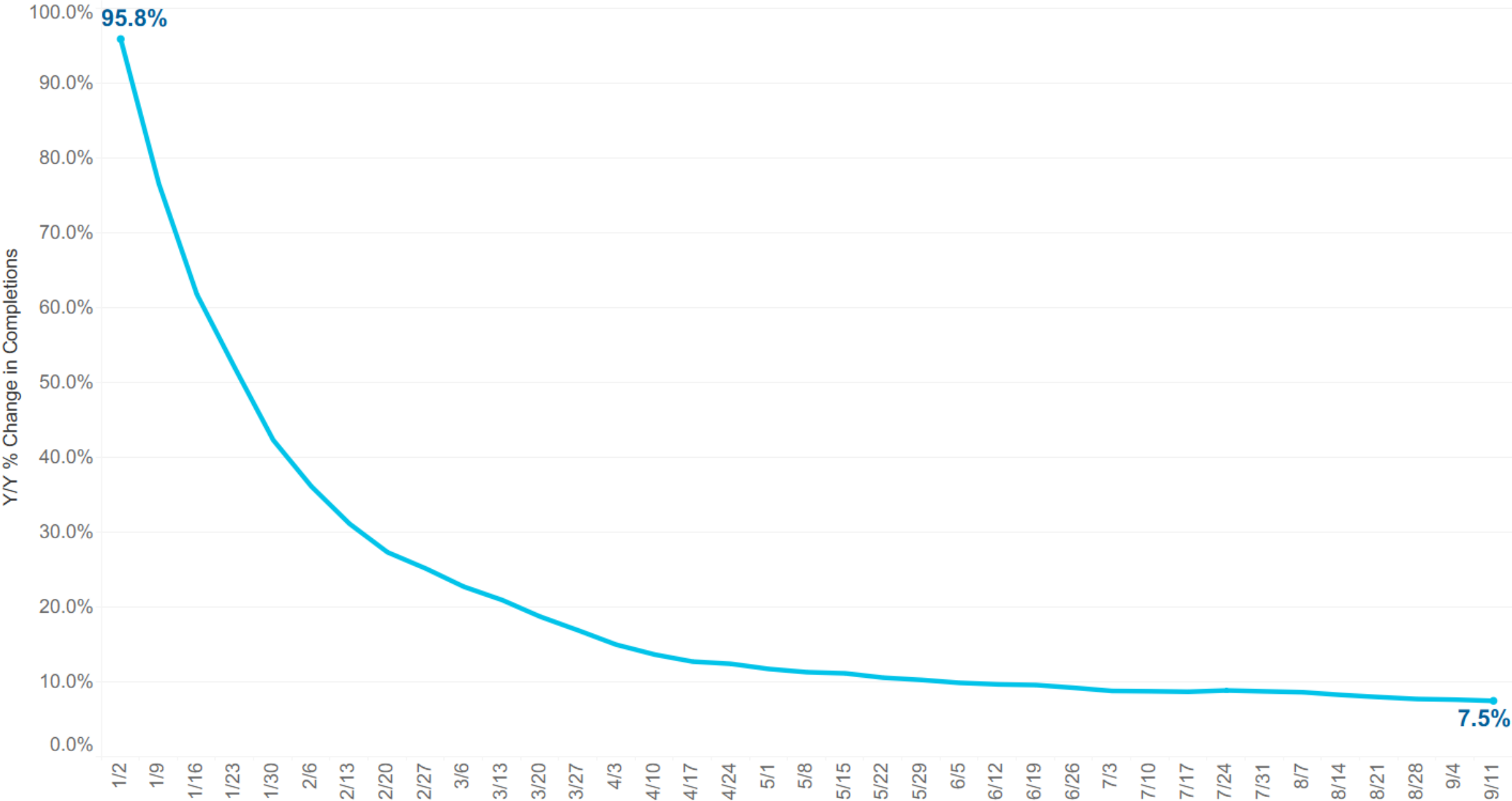
Year-Over-Year % Change in FAFSA Submissions



Est. % of Seniors Completing FAFSA, Class of 2025 and 2026



% Change in FAFSA Completions Relative to High School Class of 2025



1	2	3	4	5
TN	MS	IL*	TX*	NJ*
76.0%	74.9%	74.3%	72.7%	71.7%

1	2	3	4	5
AK	NM	FL	AZ	NV
16.9%	14.4%	12.6%	12.6%	12.2%

* - Universal FAFSA Policy	Rank	Est. FAFSA Completion % for Class of 2026 Seniors
Tennessee	1	76.0%
Mississippi	2	74.9%
Illinois*	3	74.3%
Texas*	4	72.7%
New Jersey*	5	71.7%
New York*	6	70.3%
California*	7	70.1%
Massachusetts	8	66.8%
Alabama*	9	66.7%
Georgia	10	66.5%

	Rank	% Chg (to 2025)
Alaska	1	16.9%
New Mexico	2	14.4%
Florida	3	12.6%
Arizona	4	12.6%
Nevada	5	12.2%
North Carolina	6	12.1%
Montana	7	11.9%
Arkansas	8	11.3%
Alabama	9	11.2%
Wyoming	10	10.5%

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* - Universal FAFSA Policy

Rank

Est. FAFSA Completion % for Class of 2026 Seniors

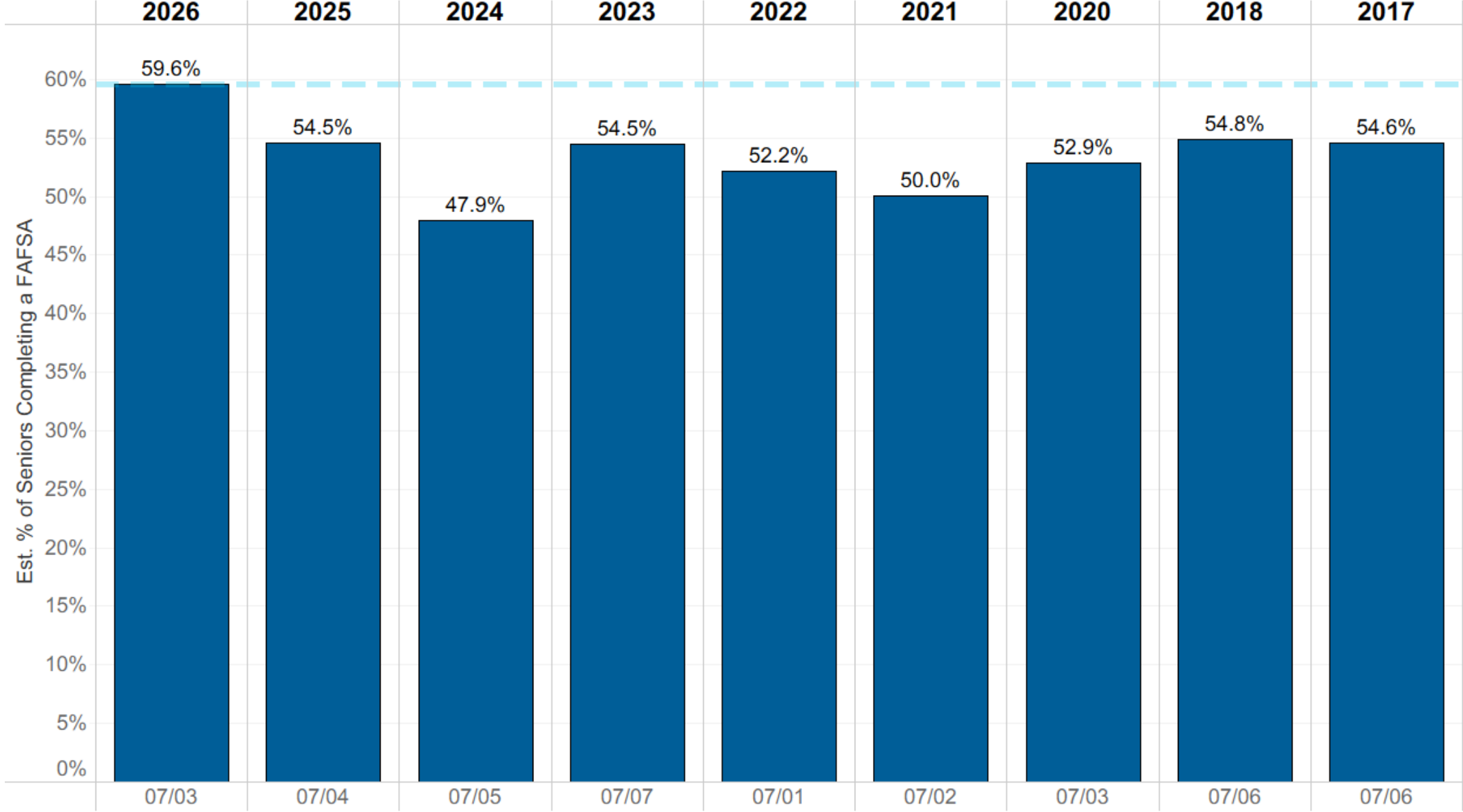
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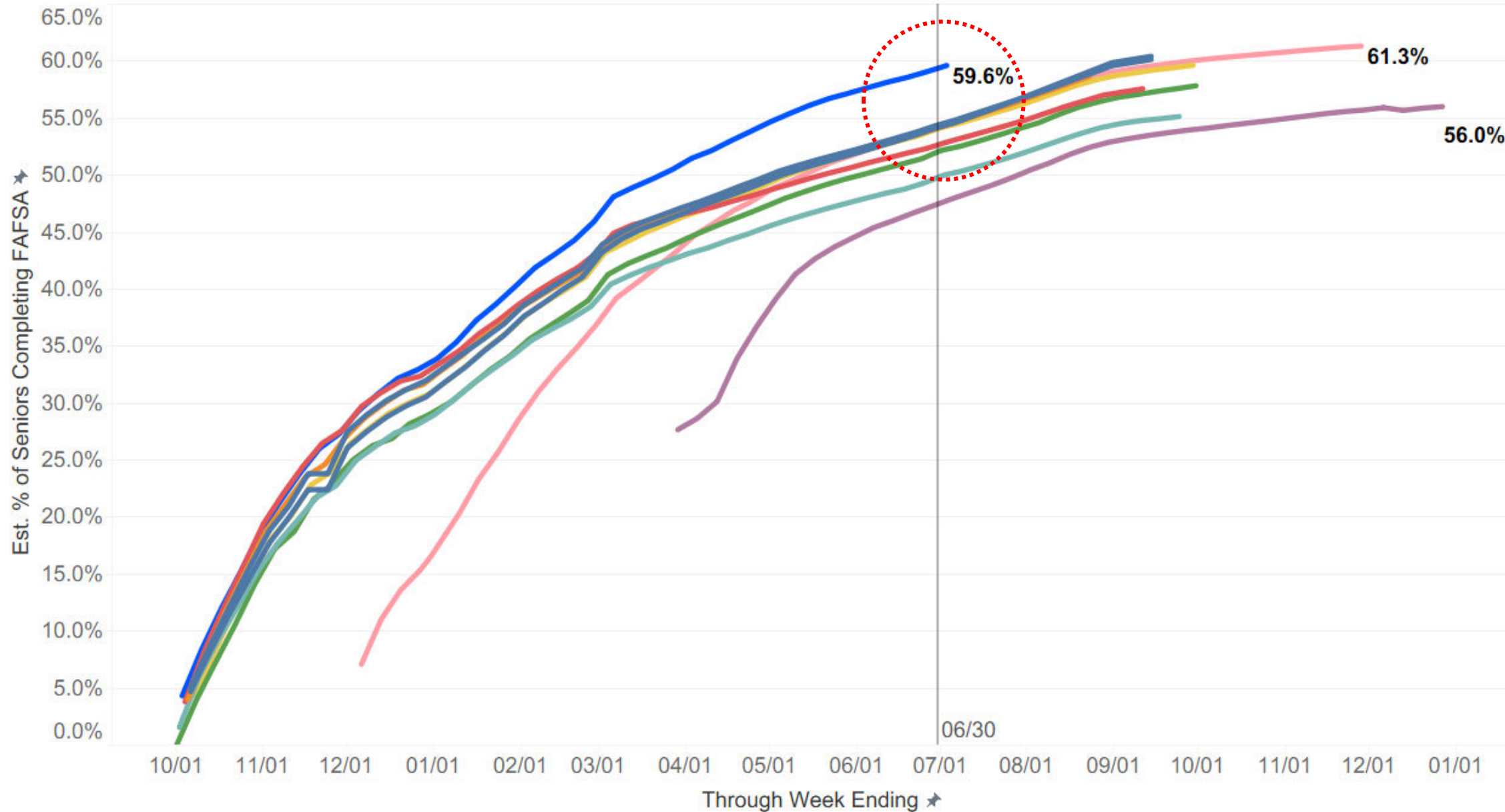
Estimated % of Seniors Completing a FAFSA Through
Various Dates of the FAFSA Cycle, **National**



National

Class

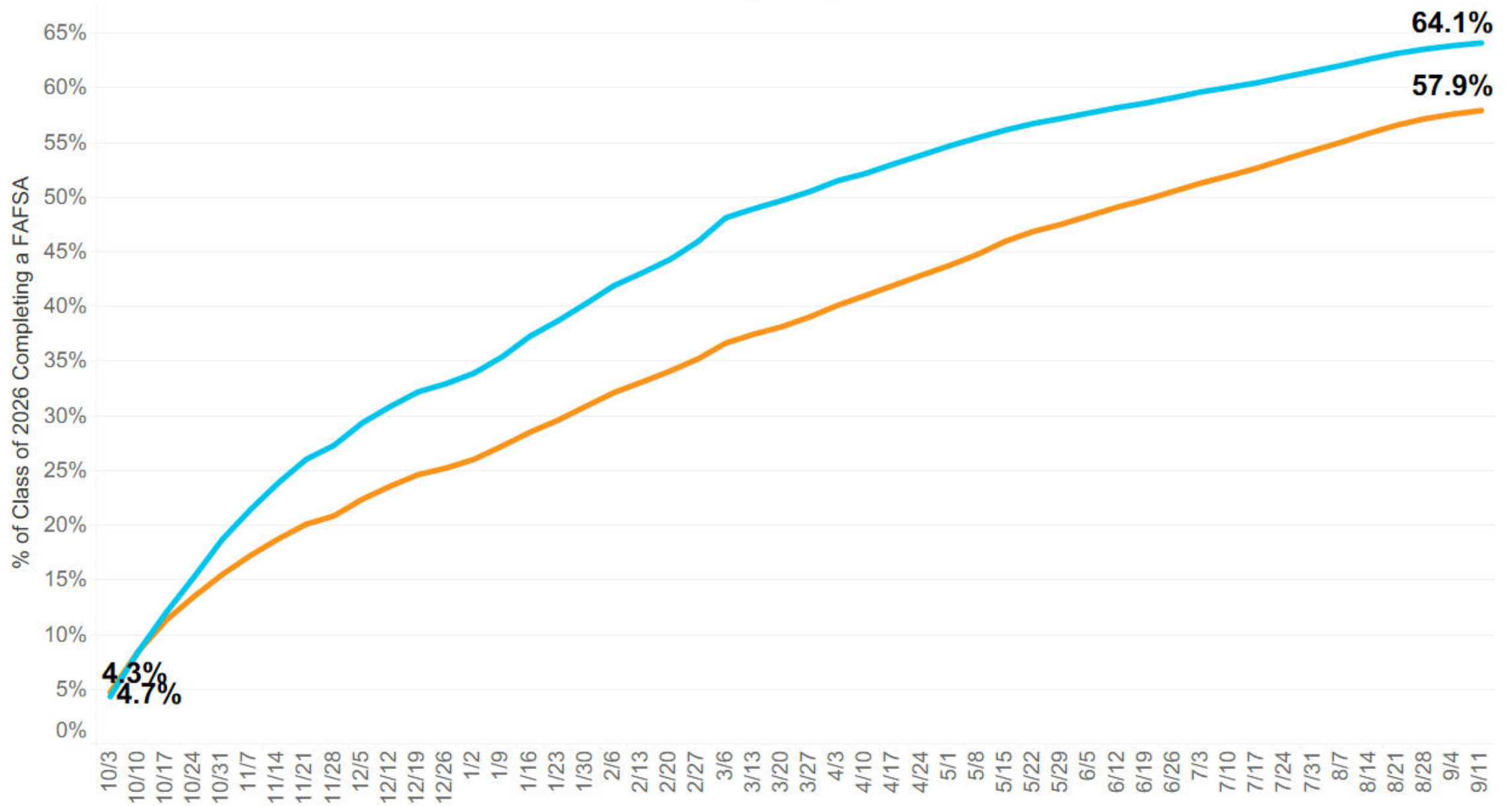
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023
- 2024
- 2025
- 2026



WHY?

**OKAY, WHAT
ABOUT
FLORIDA?**

Est. % of Class of 2026 Seniors Completing a FAFSA, Florida vs. National

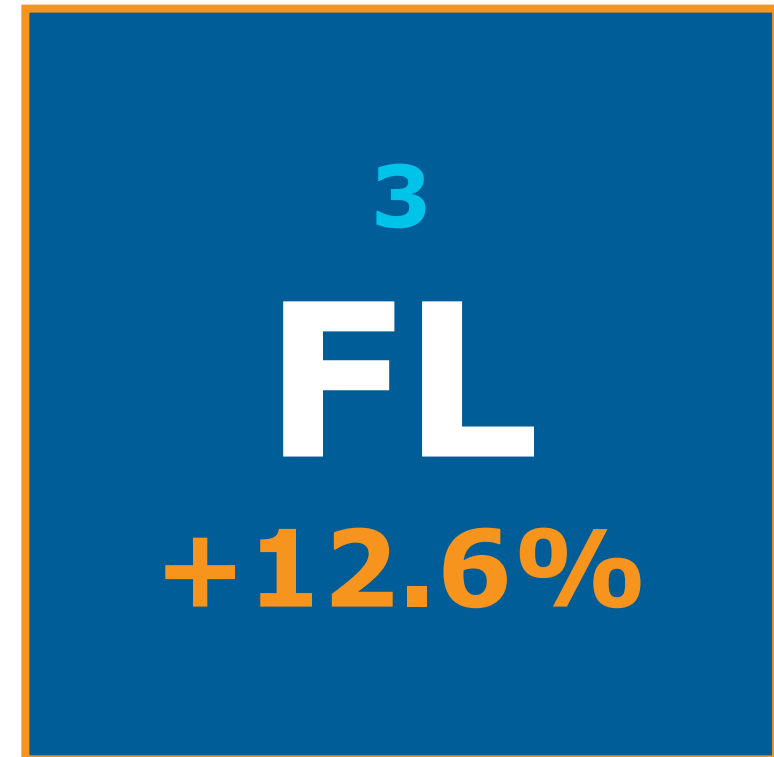
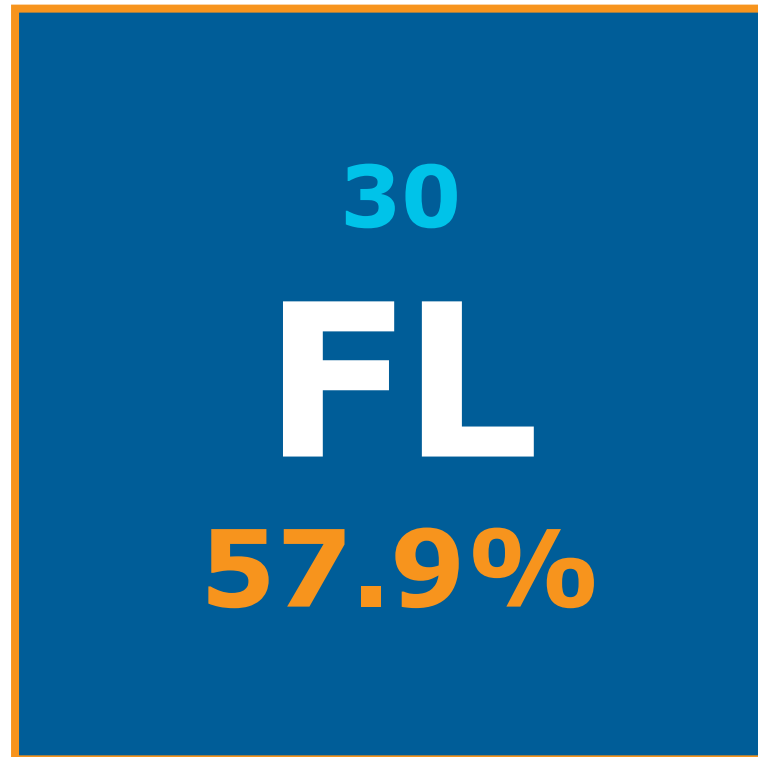


% OF SENIORS COMPLETING A FAFSA

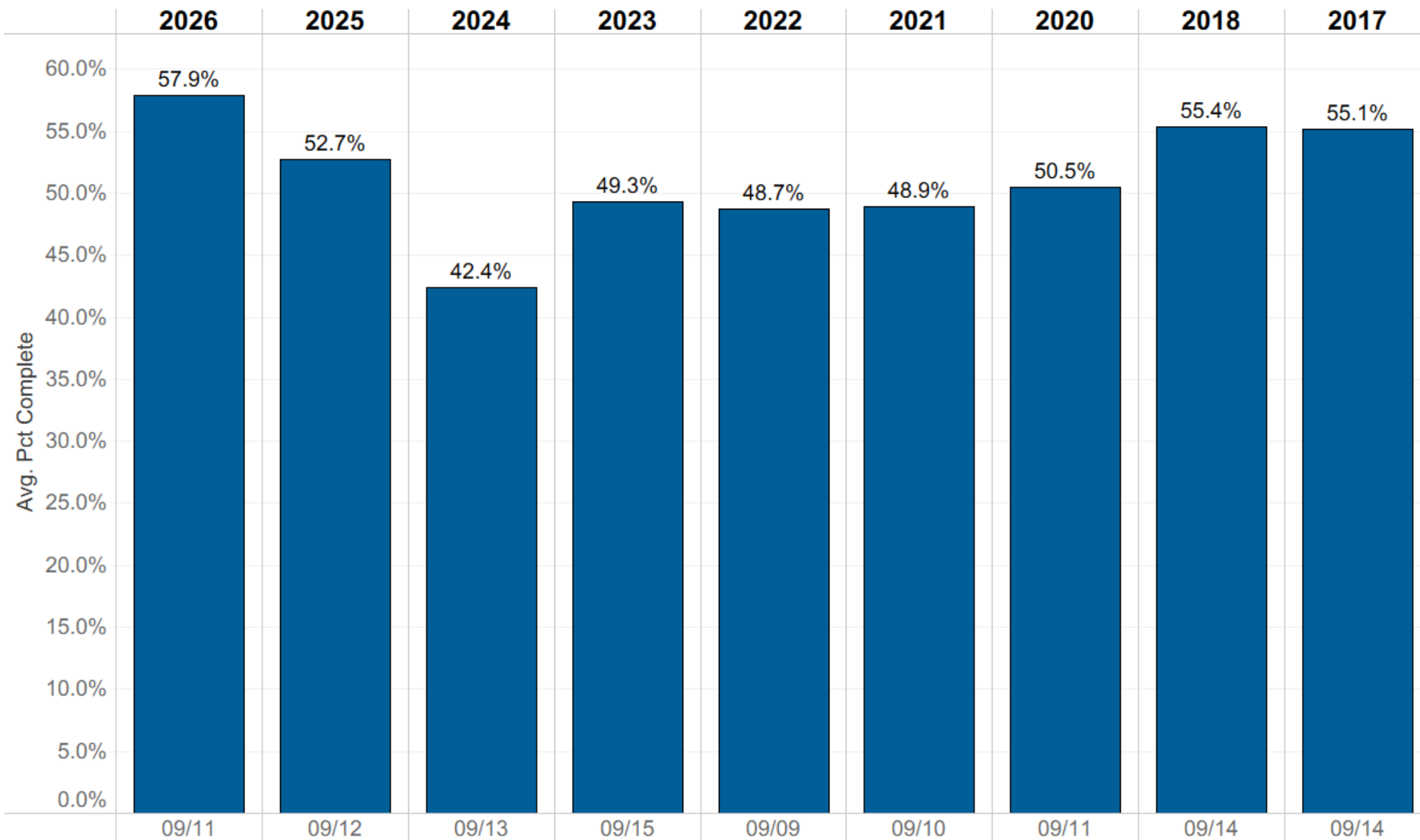
1	2	3	4	5
TN	MS	IL*	TX*	NJ*
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YEAR-OVER-YEAR % CHANGE

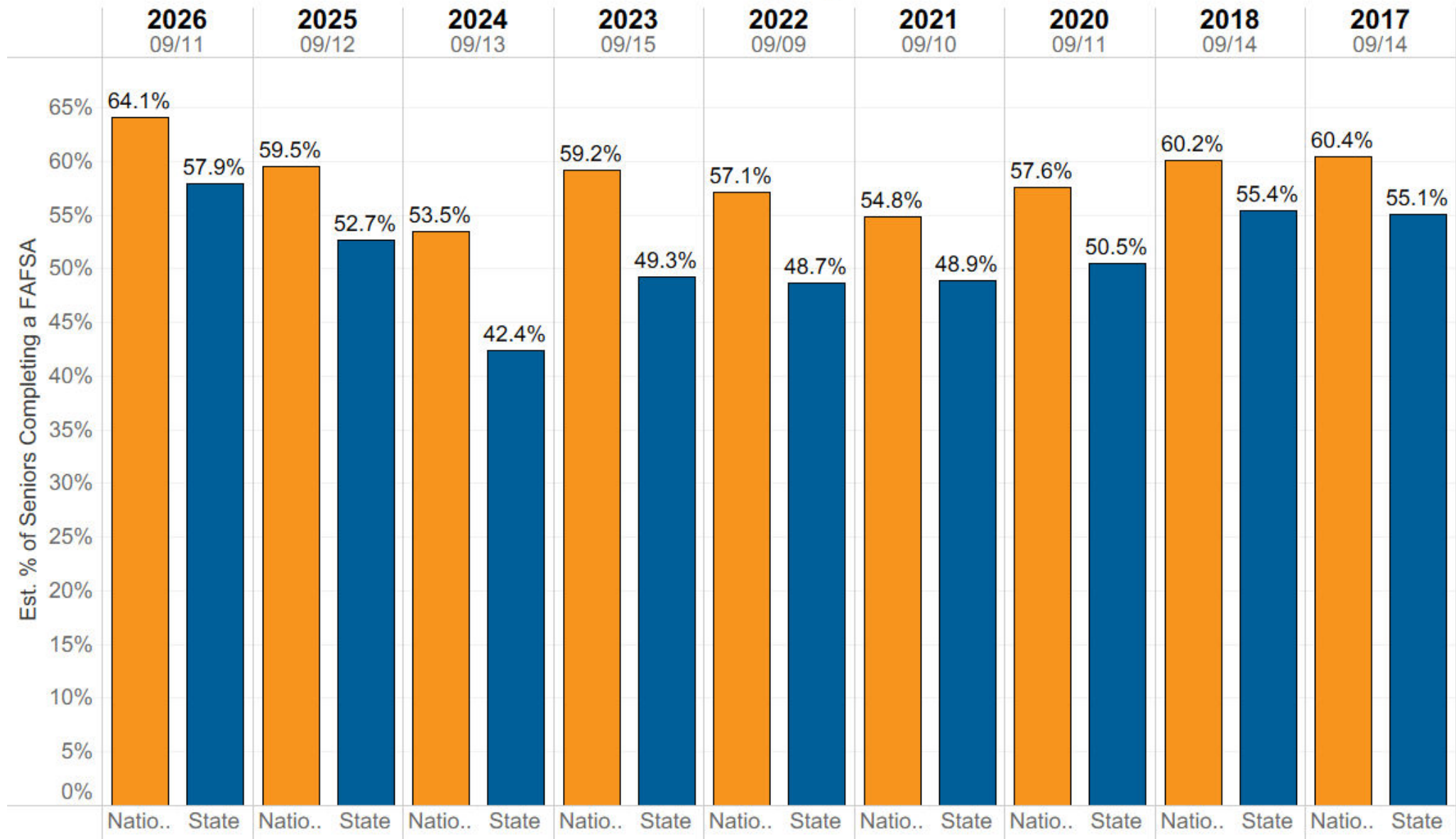
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**Estimated % of Seniors Completing a FAFSA Through
Various Dates of the FAFSA Cycle, **Florida****



Estimated % of Seniors Completing a FAFSA Through Various Dates of the FAFSA Cycle, **National** vs. **Florida**



THANKS FOR LISTENING! PLEASE REACH OUT IF I CAN HELP!



Bill DeBaun

*Senior Director, Data and
Strategic Initiatives*

NCAN

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FAFSA and Pell Grants: Updates, Opportunities and Challenges

September 24, 2026

Catherine Brown
Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy
brownc@ncan.org



FAFSA CHANGES FOR '27- '28: WHAT'S NEW AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

FAFSA IS LIVE!

abc NEWS • Live Video Shows ▾ Good Morning America ShopGMA

'We've simplified it': Education Department rolls out FAFSA form earlier than ever before

The Department of Education is launching its earliest FAFSA form ever.

By [Arthur Jones II](#)
September 23, 2026, 7:22 AM



NEW FINANCIAL AID FORMS RELEASED

New financial aid forms released The new FAFSA forms are out this morning — the earliest-ever release for the 2027-28 school year, for classes starting July 1, 2027.

The Department of Education is launching the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) earlier than ever before -- a change it says will help families navigate the rising cost of college amid affordability concerns.

- Earliest release in history
- Takes only 15 minutes to complete
- Thoroughly Beta tested by NCAN members
- Improvements aimed at addressing drop-off points

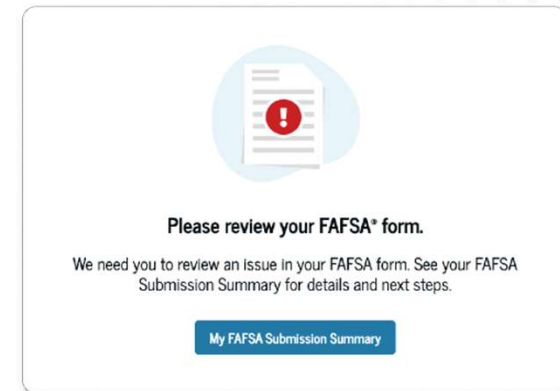
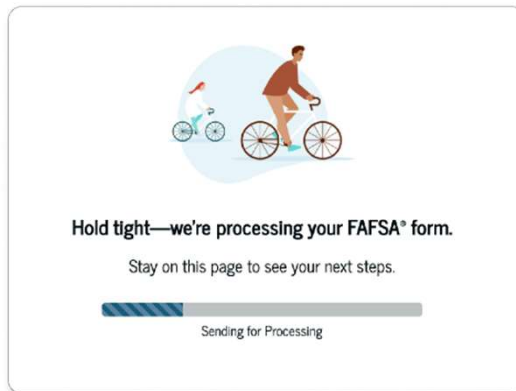
MAJOR 2026-2027 CHANGES WILL REMAIN

- Simpler contributor invitation process.
- SSNs instantly verified and FAFSAs can be completed in one sitting.
- Easier access to StudentAid.gov accounts:
 - fewer screens and data elements
 - no challenge questions
 - preferred language choice moved to the front of the process
- Streamlined signature process
- Family Fast Pass
- Students directed to state financial aid applications
- State of residence clarified
- Low-earnings flag



Real-Time Results

Most students now receive their fully processed results immediately, including their Student Aid Index (SAI), Index (SAI), Federal Pell Grant eligibility information, and any comment or reject. They can also make make corrections immediately.



Students who are veterans are not yet eligible for real-time results but we will be adding that capability for capability for them soon!

Fraud Screening

Continue on your mobile device

No device? Select 'Decline Identity Verification.' Then contact any of your schools to be verified.

Option 1: Receive a link via SMS text message

We'll text a secure link to the number you enter.

 +1

Standard messaging and data rates may apply.

Send SMS

Option 2: Scan QR code

Use your mobile device's camera to scan the QR Code below. Select the link that appears on your device's screen to continue.



powered by  Secure

[Decline Identity Verification](#)

If you decline to verify your identity now, you won't be able to get federal student aid until a school verifies your identity.

Identity Verification Needed

We've flagged your FAFSA form for potential fraud. Clear this up right now by verifying your identity. You will need:



Your government-issued photo ID



Your smartphone or tablet

Get started

powered by  Secure

[Decline Identity Verification](#)

If you decline to verify your identity now, you won't be able to get federal student aid until a school verifies your identity.

If they cannot show ID, they can still submit their FAFSA form but must contact their school's financial aid office to verify their identity.

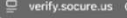
5:12   

Federal Student Aid

Let's get you verified

It will only take 2 minutes.

Start Verification

1:34   



You're done with this step

Please return to your FAFSA form for next steps.

powered by  Secure

Students are screened for fraud risk in real-time as they complete their FAFSA form. **Most students will see no difference**, but a small portion of applicants that are flagged for fraud risk will be asked to show a government-issued photo ID.

NEW CHANGES FOR 2027-2028 FORM

Already Live!

- Question and instruction wording changes to make the form easier to understand.
- Text invites to your contributor from desktop or mobile
- Contributors with an ITIN can transfer data from IRS
- Asset question changed so that less than \$1,000 in cash no longer needs to be reported

Coming Soon!

- Pre-filled responses for renewals
- In-progress completion statuses to improve targeted outreach

PELL UPDATE

PELL COSTS HAVE RISEN AS A RESULT OF INCREASED ELIGIBILITY

- In AY 2024-25, as reported by the GAO...
- **570,000** more students were Pell eligible **(+6%)**
- **1.9 million** more students were eligible for a maximum Pell grant **(+31%)**
- FAFSA completers that were Pell eligible rose from **65%** to **71%**
- Average Pell award **increased by \$278**, from **\$6,409** to **\$6,687**

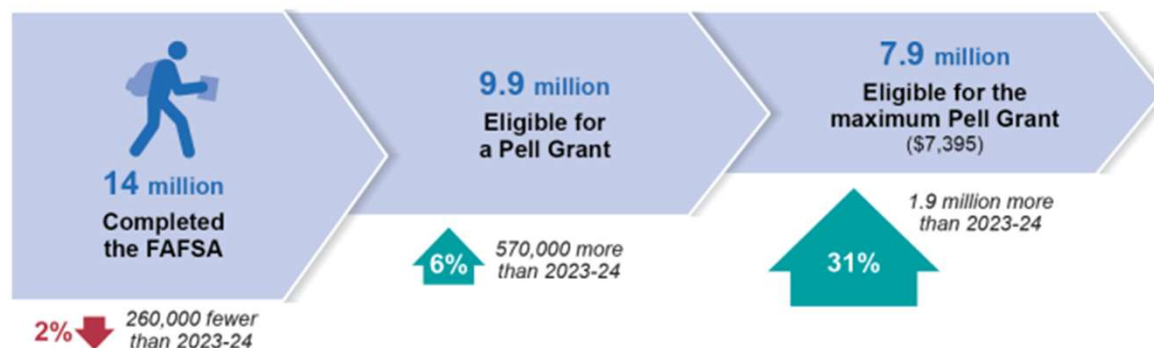


WHO GAINED THE MOST?

Expanded Pell eligibility most impacted middle-income families:

- Incomes between **\$60,000-\$125,000**
- **350,000** more students in this income range became eligible with the new formula
- These students represent **61%** of the overall increase in Pell eligible students

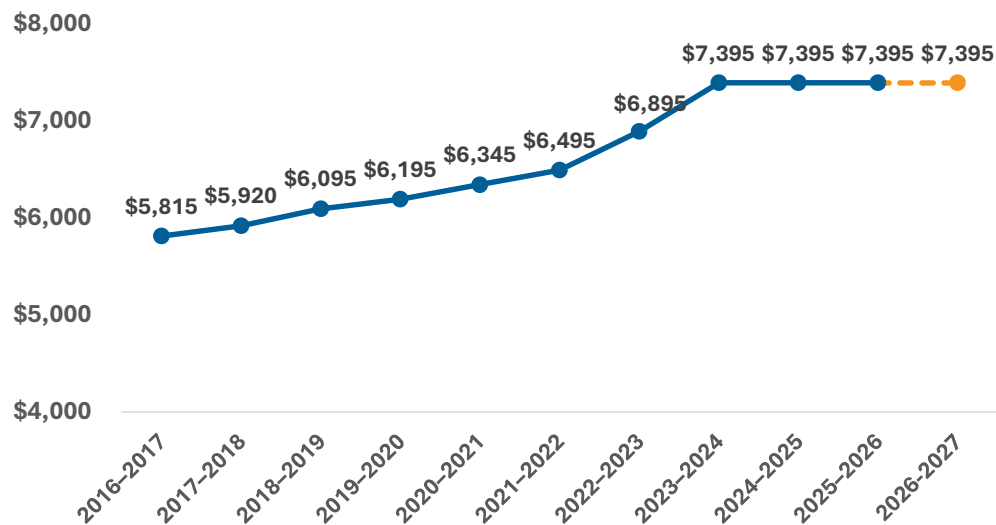
Figure 1: Pell Grant Eligibility in School Year 2024–25 Compared with School Year 2023–24



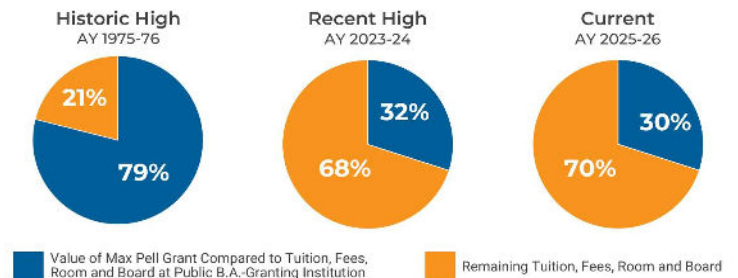
Source: GAO analysis of Department of Education Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data. | GAO-26-107928

PELL FUNDING: LOOMING CONCERN

Maximum Pell Grant Award, AY 2016-17 to 2026-27



#Protect Pell to Address College Affordability Gap



Learn more: ncan.org/Pell

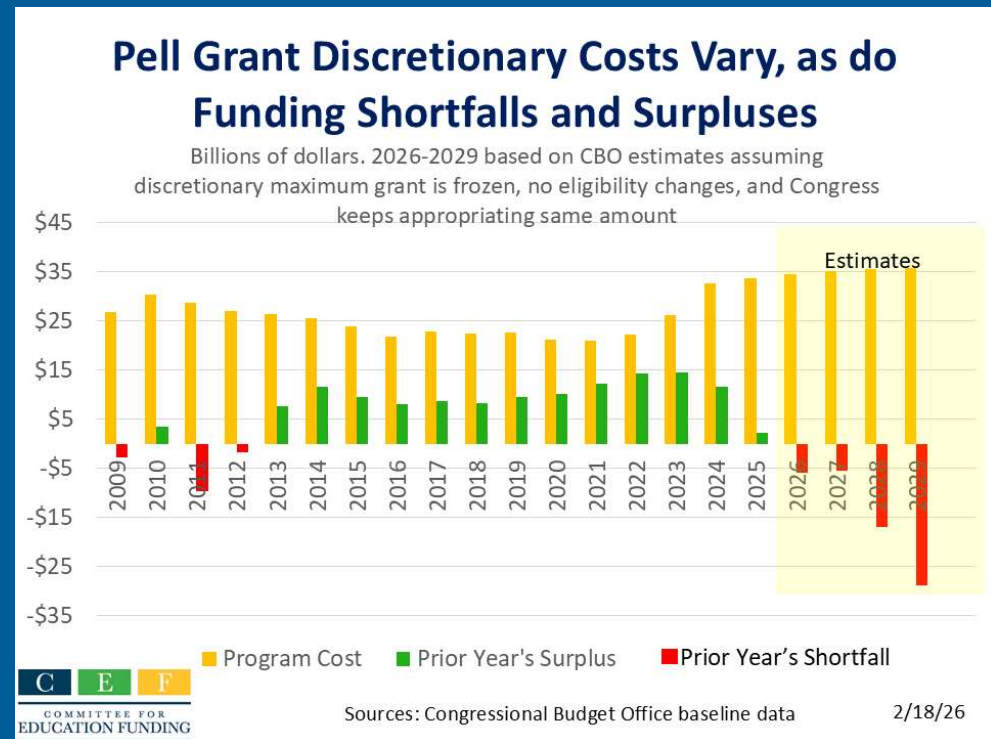


The Congressional Budget Office is now projecting a **\$15 Billion** shortfall in Pell funding.

PELL SHORTFALL

Large funding shortfall leaves lawmakers with two options:

1. Find additional funding
2. Cut Pell eligibility or maximum award



PELL SHORTFALL CONT.

Pell Grant Discretionary Costs Exceed Discretionary Appropriation Most Years

Billions of dollars. 2026-2031 are CBO estimates assuming discretionary maximum grant is frozen, no eligibility changes, and Congress keeps appropriating same amount



Proposals to cut Pell from last summer's budget reconciliation debate:

- Eliminate Pell for less than half-time students
- Require students to take 30 credit hours to receive a max Pell award

Pell cuts enacted in the past:

- Reduced lifetime eligibility from 18 to 12 semesters.
- Eliminating summer Pell Grants.
- Cut the maximum award.

WORKFORCE PELL UPDATE

WORKFORCE PELL REQUIREMENTS



Aligned with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations



Leads to stackable, portable, industry-recognized postsecondary credential



In existence for at least one year



70% completion rate and 70% job placement rate



Must be approved from state and federal level



Meets Value Added Earnings (VAE) requirement



Funded through same pot of funding as regular Pell – more reason to address the shortfall!

Grants **prorated** based on program duration.

CBO estimates that Congress will invest over **\$1 billion** into Workforce Pell over the next 10 years and that by 2034, about **100,000 new recipients** each year. The roll out has been slow.

WORKFORCE PELL APPROVAL PROCESS

Value-Added Earnings Test

VAE defined as:

- **Median earnings of program completers** three years after completion,
- Adjusted for **regional cost of living**,
- **Minus 150% of the federal poverty line**

ED calculates VAE using **federal earnings data**.

- **At least 16 completers** are required
- Certain **categories of students are excluded** including those who die, become incarcerated, or have a serious medical condition
- Students who are enrolled in further education at the time are **NOT** excluded from this earnings calculation.

ED releases final regulations

States establish approval process

IHEs submit programs to states

States submit programs to ED

ED issues final approval

Students complete the FAFSA and enroll

WORKFORCE PELL APPROVAL STATUS

36 # of jurisdictions with an operational approval process, an application process open, a pilot cohort or a list being submitted to ED

11 # of programs with ED approval

5 # of colleges with approved programs

4 # of states with approved programs

2 # of jurisdictions that have not yet taken action

Approved Programs Lean Health:

Advanced Machining
Basic Machining
Clinical Medical Assistant
Emergency Medical Technician x2
Electrical Power Lineman
HVAC
Pharmacy Technician x2
Phlebotomy Technician x2

Source: *Workforce Pell by State: 2026 Implementation Record | Opportunity Data*



LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

MARCH 15-16, 2027
WASHINGTON, DC

Register @ ncan.org/summit



THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

Contact us anytime:

**Catherine Brown, Senior Director of Policy and
Advocacy, brownc@ncan.org**



Florida College Access Network: FAFSA and Workforce Pell: What Florida Students and Institutions Need to Know

Florida Workforce Pell

September 24, 2026 | 3:30–4:30 p.m. ET

Carrie E. Henderson, Ph.D.

Managing Principal
TSG Advisors – Education

Florida's Implementation Framework

Florida built Workforce Pell on its existing education and workforce systems rather than a new structure.

State Authority

Commissioner of Education

Certifies programs under authority delegated by the Governor on August 24, 2026. FDOE administers state approval and validation.

Master Credentials List

Credential quality, employer demand, and portability

Targeted Occupations List

In-demand occupations with competitive wages

Hometown Heroes Occupations

Statewide priority occupations under s. 420.5096, F.S.

Framework of Quality

Employer recognition, wage progression, and career pathways

Stage 1: State approves the program type



Stage 2: Each institution certifies its own offering

Statewide Program Inventory

As of September 2026

107

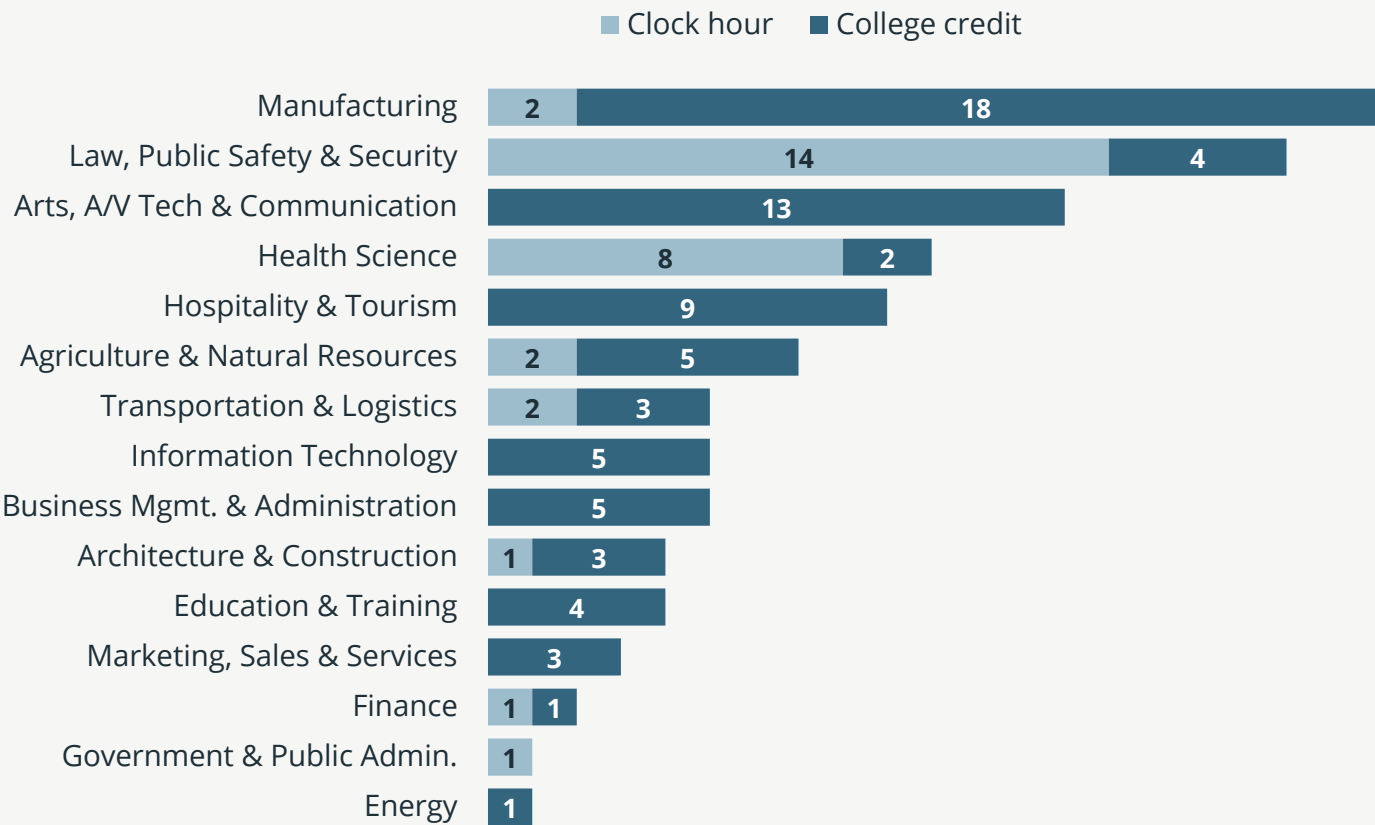
distinct certificates/applied tech diplomas on the statewide inventory*

- 31 clock hour
- 76 college credit

The inventory applies to FCS institutions and school district technical colleges.

*State list shows 109 programs; two programs appear under both current and replacement codes.

Programs by Career Cluster



Institutional Certification and State Validation

Being on the state inventory is only the first step. Each college or district must show that its own program qualifies.

- 1 State List**
Program appears on the statewide inventory
- 2 Institutional Review**
Verify the offering against the requirements below
- 3 Submission**
Federal certification form and documentation sent to FDOE
- 4 State Validation**
FDOE reviews for state and federal consistency
- 5 Commissioner Approval**
Certified under authority delegated by the Governor
- 6 Federal Process**
E-App and Title IV program inventory before disbursement

Minimum Requirements to Document			
Length 8 to under 15 weeks; 150–599 clock hours or credit equivalent	Completion At least 70% within 150% of normal time	Placement At least 70% employed 180 days after completion	History At least 12 months of operation before certification

Additional Participation Pathways

Application materials forthcoming

Registered Apprenticeship

- Separate application from the Title IV institution and RA sponsor
- No statewide list; approval covers only the specific program and partnership
- Partners may deliver 25% to under 50% under a written arrangement
- Outcome standards still apply

In development

Commission for Independent Education (CIE) Institutions

- Tailored participation pathway being finalized
- Institution-initiated, program-specific review
- Guidance and eligible program lists to be published

In development

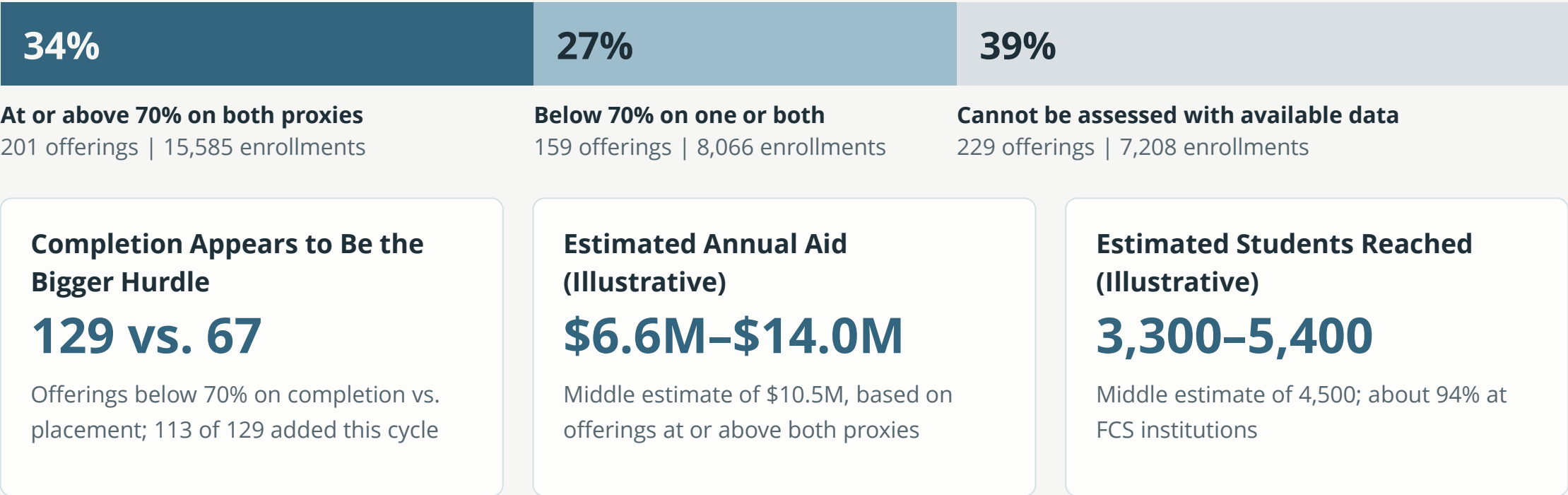
Continuing Workforce Education

- Non-credit training; not categorically excluded
- Requires a program-specific review because state data are not standardized

Estimated Workforce Pell Opportunity in Florida

TSG Advisors estimated the potential impact using the closest available state data. These are not eligibility determinations, and actual results will differ.

589 local offerings of listed programs, about 30,900 enrollments (2023–24)



Source: Henderson, C. E. (2026). *Workforce Pell in Florida: Which programs are positioned to qualify, and how many students could benefit?* TSG Advisors – Education.

Implementation Questions for Institutions

Issues Florida institutions are working through as implementation moves forward.

1 Program of Study

For newly eligible CCCs, is the certificate the student's actual program of study, or is it embedded in an A.S. pathway the student is pursuing?

2 Outcome Documentation

Can the institution document 70% completion within 150% of normal time and 70% placement at 180 days?

3 Title IV Readiness

Does the institution participate in Title IV, and is it ready to complete the E-App and program inventory updates after state validation?

4 Apprenticeship Partnerships

How will written arrangements with RA sponsors be structured, and has the institution's accreditor determined they meet its standards?

Key Takeaways for FCAN Network and Students

What the FCAN Network Needs to Know

- **Listing ≠ approval.** Institutions must complete certification before advertising Workforce Pell.
- **Pathways matter.** Credentials must be portable, stackable, and carry credit toward further education.
- **Lifetime limits apply.** Workforce Pell counts toward the 12-semester Pell limit.
- **Coverage is limited.** The current list includes FCS institutions and school district technical colleges.

What Students Need to Know

- **Complete the FAFSA.** The same application applies.
- **Verify approval.** Ask the college whether the specific program qualifies.
- **Know the conditions.** Academic progress requirements apply; withdrawal may trigger repayment.
- **Plan ahead.** Consider how Workforce Pell affects future aid and how credits apply toward additional credentials.

Additional Information

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TSG Advisors Report | Sept. 2026

Workforce Pell in Florida: Which Programs Are Positioned to Qualify, and How Many Students Could Benefit?

[Read the full report](#)

Program list, forms, and guidance

fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/workforcepell



Q & A

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Call for Proposals opens Oct. 1, 2026

Proposals due by Nov. 13, 2026

Join FCAN's Next Webinar



October 15, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Osceola Prosper...and Beyond: Inside the Rise of County-Funded Last Dollar Scholarships

FCAN will present findings from its study of local government-funded scholarship programs, including *Osceola Prosper*, the tuition-free college and technical training initiative that moved Osceola County from 61st to 3rd in college-going rates among Florida's 67 counties. A similar model has been implemented by Miami-Dade County through its *Future Ready Miami-Dade* scholarships and, just recently, Manatee County has funded *Suncoast Prosper*.

The session will examine what has incited these programs, outcomes achieved, and considerations for other Florida communities and institutions contemplating similar initiatives.

Register [HERE](#) or via the link in chat.

Thank you!