


FAFSA Series Part 1: Universal FAFSA Policy – Examples of Advocacy, Adoption, and Implementation

August 22, 2023



Welcome!



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Questions & Conversation

- Submit your questions in the box
- Share on social media
 - Twitter: @FLCollegeAccess
 - #FCAN
 - #TalentStrongFL

This webinar is being recorded; all materials will be available within a week of recording



Louisiana



VISION for **SUCCESS**

Introduction

Barrye Bailey

Education Program Consultant Postsecondary Readiness

Office of Career and College Readiness

Louisiana Department of Education

Our division manages financial aid planning, Community Service, Fast Forward, course codes, credit recovery, diplomas and endorsement seals, Extension Academies, JAG Aim High!, transcripts, high school equivalency, Students of the Year, U.S. Senate Youth, gifted and talented academics, proficiency exams, high school academics/policy, and the Jump Start Construction Connect Scholarship

Financial Aid Working Group

In order to provide even greater access to financial aid for Louisiana students in 2014, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) formed the Financial Aid Working Group (FAWG) to evaluate the state's financial aid application completion rates, identify deficiencies and solutions for communities with low completion rates, and provide a comprehensive list of recommendations to the LDOE on how to improve financial aid completion rates statewide. The Financial Aid working group continues to meet quarterly to analyze current trends and best practices in financial aid planning and create a network of resources for students around the state.



FAWG Tasks

1. Develop a state action plan to track school-level financial aid form completion and make recommendations to the Department regarding changes in policy or funding opportunities deemed necessary to ensure that the new policy is implemented with fidelity;
2. Support the Department in the ongoing identification of services and programs available for schools and families; and
3. Assist in the development of partnerships and alliances with financial aid-related support programs, services, and stakeholders.



Policy

In December of 2015 the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved a policy regarding postsecondary planning for graduating public high school seniors. The policy sought to increase student access to state and federal financial aid by requiring graduating seniors to either

- complete the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) application or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- declare a hardship by waiver; or
- submit a parental or student of age waiver to the local school system.

These policies were made effective with the start of the 2017-2018 school year and applied to the Class of 2018. The data is collected in the Student Transcript System.



The State of Financial Aid in Louisiana

An additional charge of the FAWG was for the LDOE to create an annual report called [the State of Financial Aid in Louisiana](#). It can be found on the LDOE website's [Financial Aid page](#). It details FAFSA submission rates by school system as well as a breakdown of data by subgroup categories.

In addition the LDOE hired one full time financial aid specialist and a part time counselor to aid schools with FAFSA submission.



Contact Information

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LOSFA

LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

— A PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS —

ABOUT ME

Ebony Holmes
Director of Public Information & Advising
College Access, Success, and Communications



BOARD of REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

FAFSA NOW CAMPAIGN

A promotional graphic for the FAFSA NOW campaign. At the top left is the LOSFA logo. The word "FAFSA" is written in large, bold, blue letters, with "(FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID)" in smaller blue text below it. Below this, a dark blue banner contains the text "There is still time to complete your FAFSA." in white and yellow. The bottom section is yellow and features the text "The priority deadline for Louisiana students is FEBRUARY 1, 2023" in blue and black, followed by "to ensure any errors are corrected, and aid is processed in a timely manner." in smaller black text. At the very bottom, it says "COMPLETE YOUR FAFSA NOW AT STUDENTAID.GOV" in white and yellow.

 **LOSFA**

FAFSA

(FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID)

There is still time to complete your **FAFSA.**

The priority deadline for Louisiana students is **FEBRUARY 1, 2023**
to ensure any errors are corrected, and aid is processed in a timely manner.

COMPLETE YOUR FAFSA NOW AT **STUDENTAID.GOV**

- Pilot launched October 2020
- Urge high school seniors to complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by February 1 each year.
- Use text messaging and social media outlets to get the word out to students about the importance of completing the FAFSA.
- Encourage stakeholders to get involved by downloading our press kit, which contains FAFSA NOW logos, graphic templates, and social media posts.

OUTREACH EFFORTS



VIRTUAL FAFSA MARATHON

Monday, May 15 -
Thursday, May 18, 2023

9AM - 7PM

Need help **completing your FAFSA?**

Whether it's your first time submitting a FAFSA or if you need to correct a current FAFSA, LOSFA is here to help you cross the finish line.

mylosfa.la.gov

- FAFSA Completion Events: assist students and parents in completing their respective portions of the FAFSA.
- LOSFA FAFSA Lab
- Virtual Office Hours: FAFSA Assistance
- GeauxFAFSA.la.gov
- Text 50056 (SignalVine, texting platform) for assistance
- FAFSA Error Reports
- Virtual FAFSA Marathon
- Partnerships with other members of the college access community: FAA at postsecondary institutions, high school stakeholders, community partners, etc.

FAFSA COMPLETION PROJECT

- Federal initiative to encourage all high school seniors to complete the FAFSA. To participate, school boards, charter schools, and non-public schools must enter agreements with the agency to ensure that all data exchanged is handled securely and will be used only as intended.
 - Public school boards will enter the agreement on behalf of all public schools within the district, and charter and non-public schools will enter individual agreements.
 - An authorized requestor is assigned to receive the FAFSA data for the district. The authorized requestor then provides the data to each individual high school in the district.
- School boards/schools receive student-level data to know which students to follow up with.
 - The only data that will transfer between the agency and the school boards/schools is the student's name and whether the student has completed the FAFSA.
 - These schools will still be able to receive aggregate data from the USDOE.

COMPLETE TO COMPETE PORTAL

- Statewide tracker of completed FAFSAs broke down by district and school.
- The “monthly champion” measures the percent increase of completion for the month to date being reported. The current rankings measure the highest percentage increase on a week-to-week basis.
- A school can lead in increase from week to week but not lead in monthly overall completions.



CELEBRATING OUR EFFORTS

- Virtual FAFSA Ceremony
 - Schools of Excellence – 100% completion
 - Schools of Achievement – Exceeded the national completion average
- Recognition of Schools of Excellence and Schools of Achievement at our Advisory Board Meeting
- Recognition of Monthly FAFSA Champions
- Highlight student and counselor voices





Contact Information

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Alabama



Alabama Possible



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Manisha Mishra | Program Director
mmishra@alabamapossible.org



About Alabama Possible



Alabama Possible is a statewide nonprofit organization that breaks down barriers to prosperity through advocacy, education, and collaboration.

Sponsors

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**COMPLETE
COLLEGE
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GET EDUCated!



EDU, Inc.

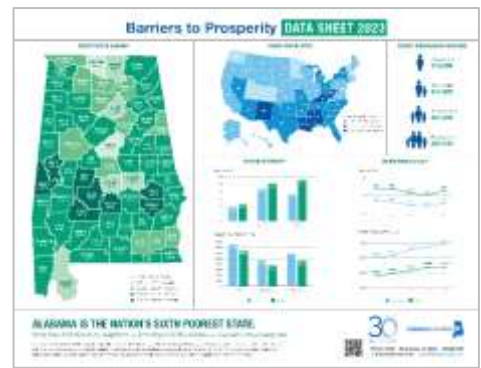
COMMON BLACK COLLEGE APPLICATION



Alabama Possible | Scope of Work



Alabama Possible | Initiatives



Postsecondary Access Alabama Goes to College Campaign

Campaign Components



CASH FOR COLLEGE

Cash for College's goal is for every graduating senior to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) before they graduate from high school so that they can access federal, state, and institutional aid to pay for their education after high school.

ALABAMA COLLEGE APPLICATION WEEK

Alabama College Application Week is part of a national effort to increase the number of first-generation college students and students from low-income families pursuing a college degree or other higher education credential. The primary purpose of this effort is to help high school seniors navigate the complex college application and admissions process and ensure they apply to at least one postsecondary institution.

COLLEGE AND CAREER DECISION DAY

College and Career Decision Day celebrates students committing to pursue their education past high school: whether to obtain a two-year degree, a four-year degree, a certificate or industry recognized credential, enter the military, or pursue a skilled trade.

ALABAMA
Goes to
College
alabamagoes2college.org



Postsecondary Success

Alabama College Attainment Network and Higher Education Alliance

- **Alabama College Attainment Network**
 - Regional College Attainment Network
- **Higher Education Alliance**
 - (Re)Engage Alabama
 - Historically Black Community Colleges/
Predominantly Black Community Colleges Network



**Alabama
College
Attainment
Network**



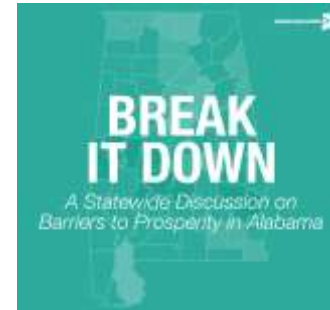
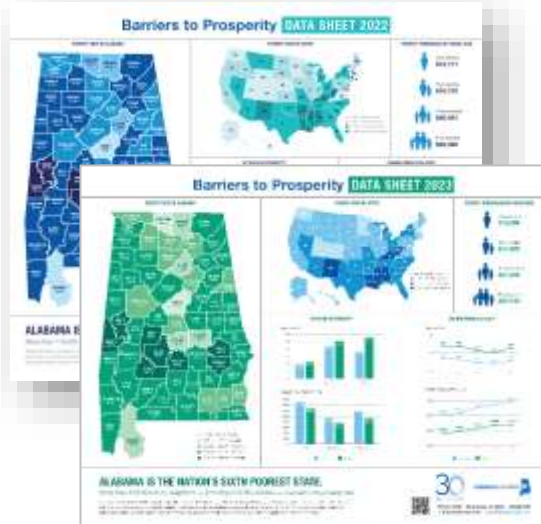
**Higher
Education
Alliance**



Civic Engagement

Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet

- Barriers to Prosperity Toolkit



Advocacy

alabamapossible

About Us - Programs - Our Impact - Donate - Blog - Podcast - Events - Contact Us

URGЕ YOUR STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER TO PRIORITIZE FAFSA COMPLETION

Recent Posts

- 138 Alabama High Schools Win "Best Possible Award"
- Navigating Financial Aid for Immigrant Families
- FAFSA Lessons From Award-Winning Educators
- The Importance of FAFSA in Postsecondary Education
- ALABAMA POSSIBLE HOSTS COLLEGE PRESIDENTS LUNCHEON

Archives

- December 2022
- October 2022
- September 2022
- June 2022
- May 2022
- March 2022

REMOVING FINANCIAL BARRIERS FOR THE STRANDED WORKFORCE

Alabama Possible

Alabama Possible is a statewide nonprofit organization that works to break down barriers to postsecondary education, job training and economic mobility. We believe in the power of the education system to support those who are economically disadvantaged and enhance outcomes in Alabama. Economic Mobility supports the achievement of all students by providing financial assistance and other resources to help them complete their education.

ALABAMA WANTS THE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED TO HAVE ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION WITH VALUABLE OPPORTUNITIES BY 2025.

Supporting Our Shared Future by Investing in College Completion

A VIRTUAL BRIEFING CALLING FOR A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION INVESTMENT

Panel Participants:

- Terrie Crawford Drake
- Latrelle Harolds
- Kelly McManus
- Annabel Hartung
- Chandra Scott
- Terrance Wiggins

SEPTEMBER 10 | 12 - 1 PM ET | REGISTER: IHEP.ORG/CCF

MEET OUR STUDENT ADVOCACY FELLOWS

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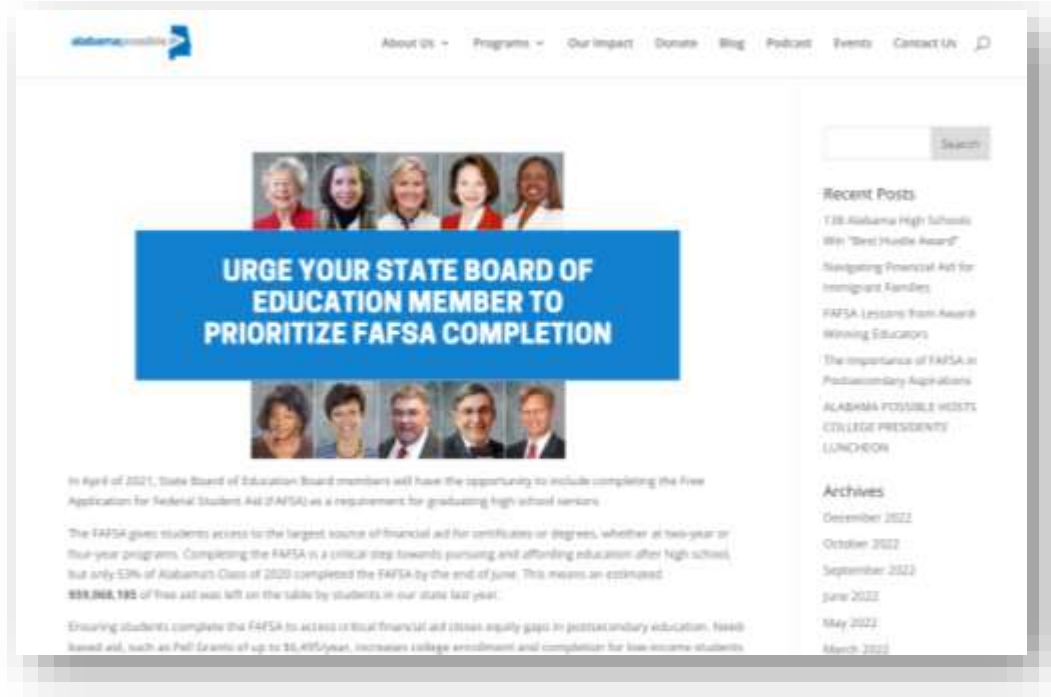
Montgomery Advertiser

New FAFSA graduation requirement is a step forward for Alabama

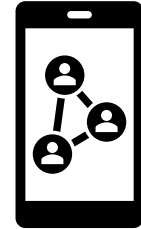
Chandra Scott Special to the Advertiser

Published 4:10 p.m. CT April 15, 2021 | Updated 4:47 p.m. CT April 15, 2021

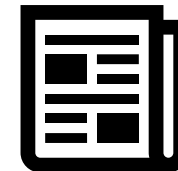
FAFSA Advocacy Strategy



Student
Voices



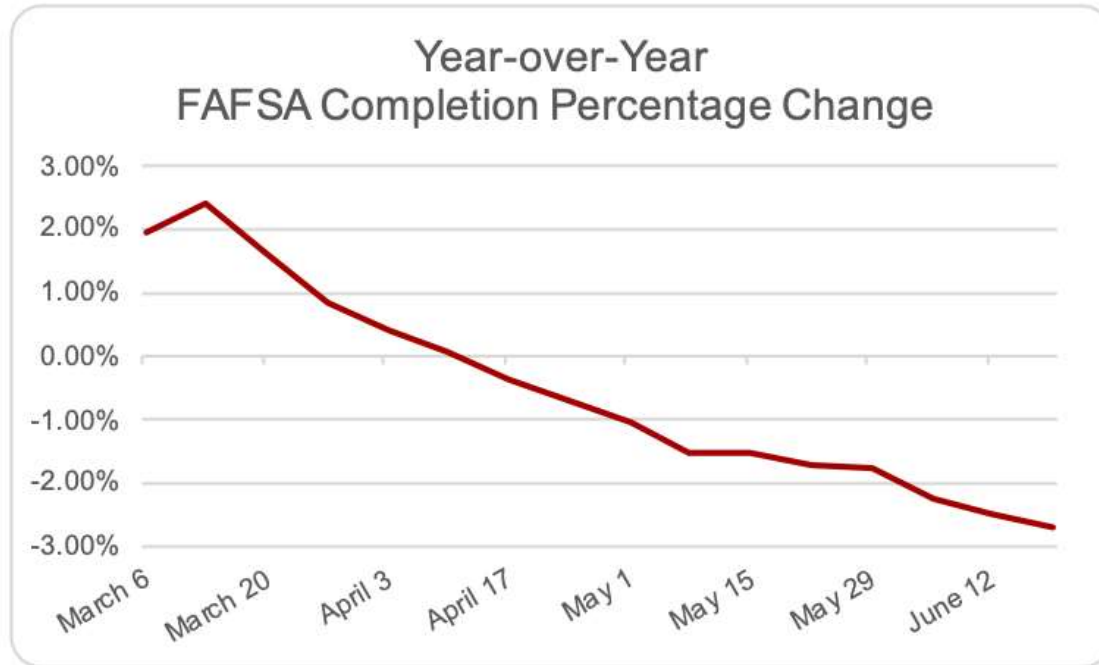
Social
media



Media
outlets

FAFSA + COVID

FAFSA is more important than ever!



March 6: Class of 2020 had 1.96% *more* FAFSA completions than Class of 2019

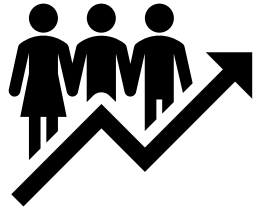
June 26: Class of 2020 had 3.05% *fewer* FAFSA completions than Class of 2019

Why This Matters



Why This Matters

Source: [Alabama Workforce Council](#)



Only **45%** of the Alabama workforce has a high-value credential beyond a high school diploma.



Alabama needs **500,000+** highly skilled workers with valuable credentials by 2025.

FAFSA Completion in Alabama

(Class of 2021)

ALABAMA RANKED

#32

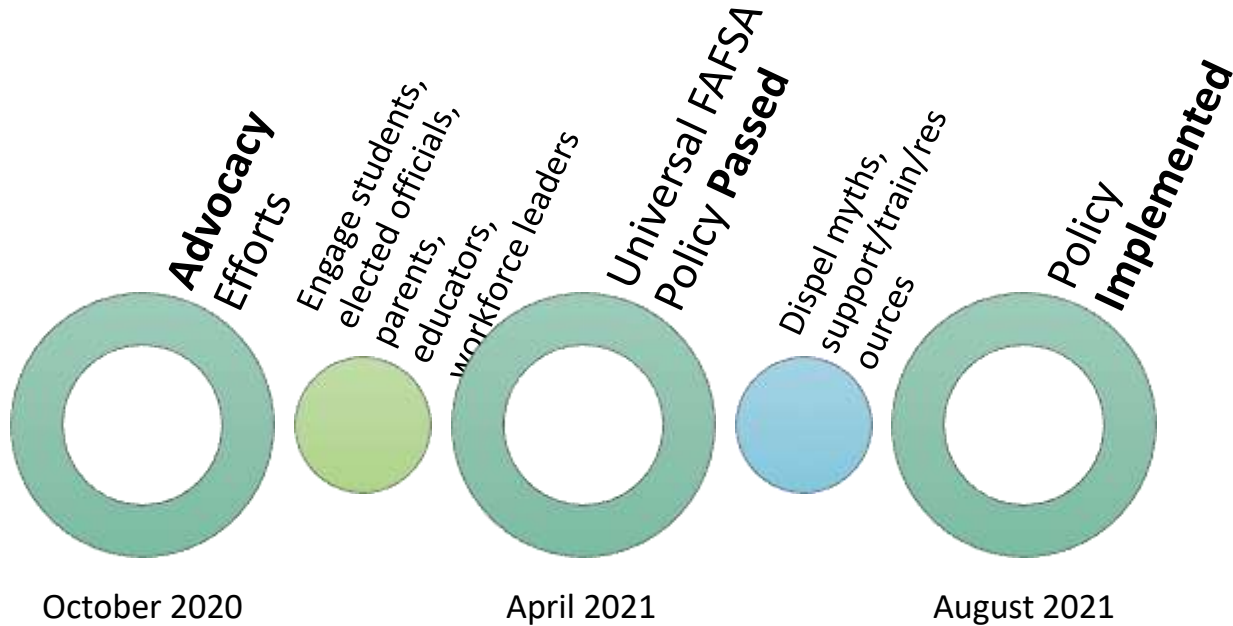
IN FAFSA COMPLETION

FAFSA Completion in Alabama



For Alabama's Class of 2021, around 2 out of 5 seniors had completed the FAFSA by the time they graduated high school

FAFSA Advocacy Strategy



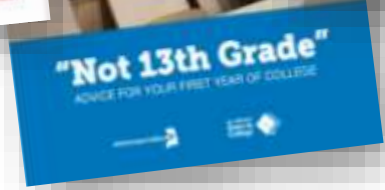
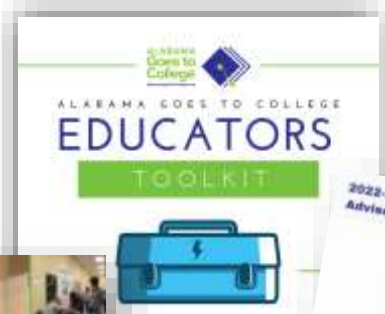
FAFSA In-Person Workshops

300+

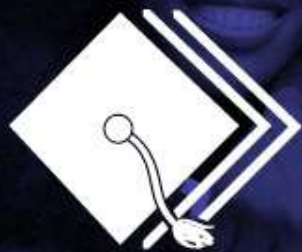
- Calhoun Community College
- Trenholm State Community College
- Lawson State Community College
- Bishop State Community College
- Wallace State Community College, Dothan



Postsecondary Access Alabama Goes to College Campaign Resources



**ALABAMA
Goes to
College**



HELP DESK

College Planning | Admissions | Financial Aid

   **@algoes2college**



(334) 316-6155

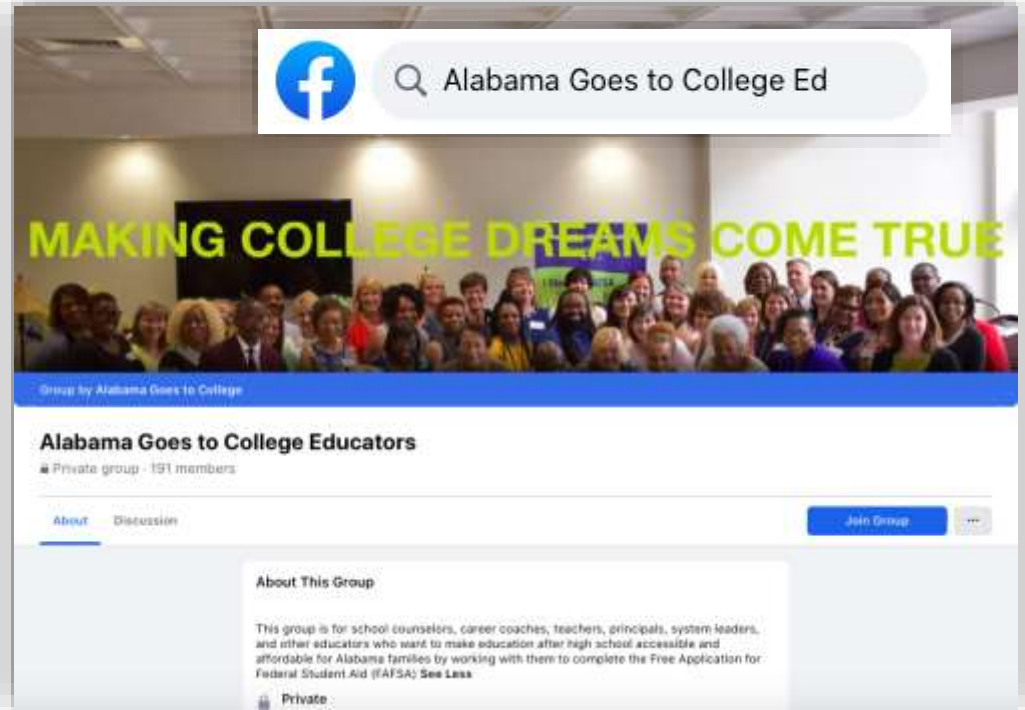
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Social Media & Webinar Resources



Cash for College Data Dashboard

alabamapossible.org/dashboard

Cash for College Data Dashboard

State Overview | By School | By District/County | School Detail | District Detail

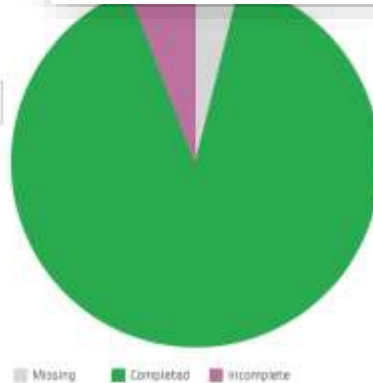
Select School:

Sulligent School, Sulligent

Sulligent School

City: Sulligent District: Lamar County
Low-income rate: 58.2%

This Year (10/1/20 - 6/4/21)	Last Year (10/1/19 - 6/5/20)	Improvement
FAFSAs Completed: 46	FAFSAs Completed: 41	Compared to same period last year
12th Grade Enrollment: 51	12th Grade Enrollment: 55	FAFSAs Completed: + 5
Completion Percentage: 90.2%	Completion Percentage: 74.5%	Improvement Rate: + 21.0%



Cash for College Data Dashboard

State Overview | By School | By District/County | School Detail | District Detail



Most Alabama high school seniors who file their FAFSA get financial aid to help pay for education after high school - including Pell Grants of up to \$6,495/year. This money can be used for technical and academic programs at two- and four-year colleges and universities and does not have to be paid back. Alabama's 2020 high school graduates left approximately \$60 million in grants on the table because they did not complete their FAFSA. You can see FAFSA completion data for more than 350 Alabama high schools with the dashboard and search tools below.



Data Tools

fafsa.ache.edu

FAFSA Completion

Summary Resources District Maps

2021-2022 FAFSA Completion Project
 Student Cohort: 49,778 | Submitted: 21,983 (44.2%) | Completed: 20,971 (42.1%)

Disclaimer: Data in this table are compiled from the U.S. Department of Education and other sources. Various matching techniques have been applied to maximize identification of eligible students. This information is dynamic and changes occur on a regular basis. As a result, representations may be slightly higher or lower than that shown in an earlier reporting period. Please check the Contact page for information on how to reach us.

Data updated 6/11/2021 2:34:23 PM

Page 1 of 1 Size: 10

Type a whole or partial value and tab/click out of the text box. Data will refresh automatically.

District Name: School Name:

* is shown in place of cohort counts ID or less

District Name	School Name	# Cohort	# Submitted	% Submitted	# Complete	% Complete
Alabama School for the Blind	Alabama School for the Blind	*	*	0.0	*	0.0
Alabama School of Fine Arts	Alabama School of Fine Arts	85	30	35.3	*	75.4
Alabaster City	Thompson High School	469	229	48.8	223	47.5
Albertville City	Albertville High School	373	179	48.0	163	43.7
Alexander City	Benjamin Russell High School	201	111	55.2	109	54.2
Andalusia City	Andalusia High School	113	*	38.4	*	36.8
Anniston City	Anniston High School	103	*	24.0	*	30.1

Welcome to the FAFSA Application Detail

Page 1 of 5

Page 1 of 5

District Name	School Name	First Name	Last Name	State ID	DOB	Completed FAFSA	FAFSA Detail	Date App Submitted	Selected for Verification
Dallas County	Dallas County High School					Complete	Complete FAFSA Application	2020-10-19	N
Dallas County	Dallas County High School					Complete	Complete FAFSA Application	2020-10-02	Y
Dallas County	Dallas County High School					Complete	Complete FAFSA Application	2020-10-02	Y
Dallas County	Dallas County High School					Complete	Complete FAFSA Application	2020-12-25	N
Dallas County	Dallas County High School					Complete	Complete FAFSA Application	2021-04-27	N

Celebrate

2021-22 CASH FOR COLLEGE WINNERS

MVP



HARTSELLE HIGH SCHOOL
84.00% COMPLETION RATE



RAMSAY HIGH SCHOOL
96.00% COMPLETION RATE



GENEVA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
98.15% COMPLETION RATE

MOST IMPROVED



DECATUR HIGH SCHOOL
100.63% IMPROVEMENT RATE



WOODLAWN HIGH SCHOOL
195.59% IMPROVEMENT RATE



BARBOUR COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
647.50% IMPROVEMENT RATE

Awards are based on data collected as of April 25, 2022.



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National Ranking: 10th

% of Seniors Completing the FAFSA (Class of 2022)

	Rank	% of Seniors Completing
Tennessee	1	65.8%
Louisiana	2	64.6%
Washington, D.C.	3	60.5%
Illinois	4	60.0%
Texas	5	58.8%
Delaware	6	58.2%
Connecticut	7	56.3%
California	8	55.2%
New Jersey	9	54.8%
Alabama	10	54.8%

Source: NCAN

National Ranking: 2nd

% Change in FAFSA Completion Year-Over-Year (Class of 2022)

State: **Alabama**

Current Rank: **2**

Alabama: Total FAFSA Completions Through Most Recent Date

Current Cycle: 16,705

Previous Cycle: 14,588

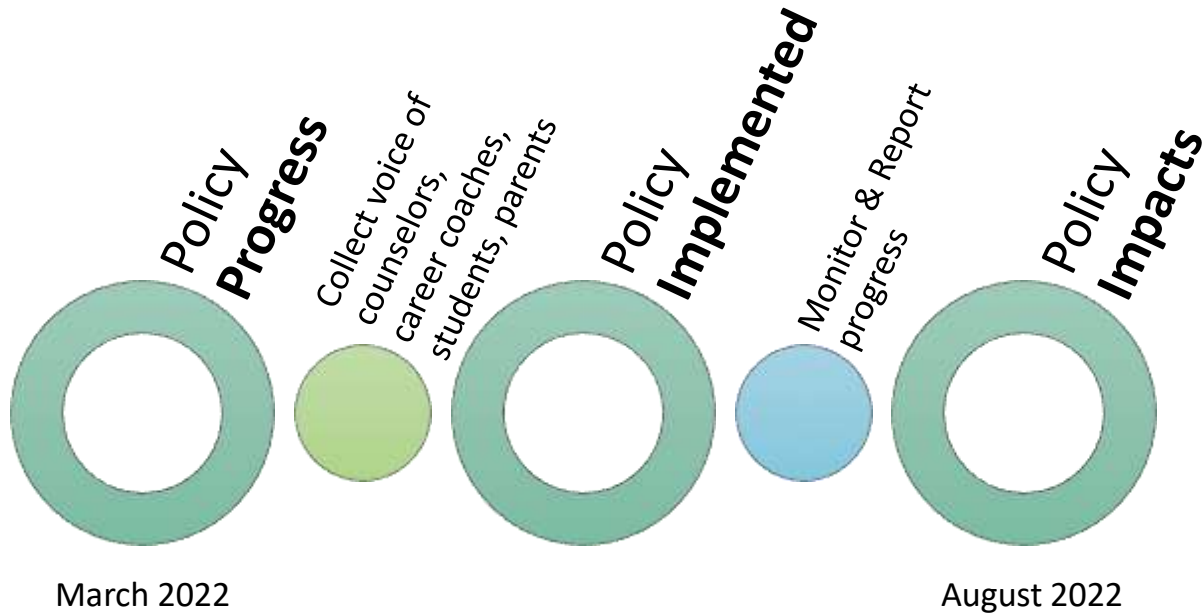
Difference: 2,117

% Change in FAFSA Completion Year-Over-Year: **Alabama** vs. **National**



Source: NCAN

Advocacy Strategy



Data Tools...Evolved

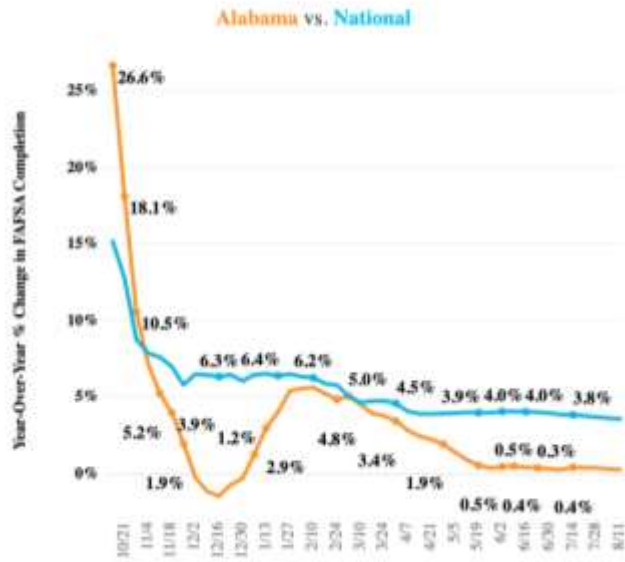
fafsa.ache.edu



National Rankings: 11th & 44th

% of Seniors Completing the FAFSA (Class of 2023)

Year-Over-Year % Change in FAFSA Completions



Estimated Percent of Seniors Completing a FAFSA



Source: NCAN

What We've Learned



WHAT WE LEARNED



Set Goals and Create a Timeline



Build and Leverage Strong Partnerships



Incorporate College-Going Activities into Curricula



WHAT WE LEARNED



Family/Parent Engagement is a Major Challenge



Communicate through Multiple Channels



Use Data to Track Progress and Celebrate Success



Alabama Goes to College

Feb 26 · 🌐

Already applied to college? The next step is to complete your [#FAFSA](#) [#ALGoes2College](#) [#WhyApply](#) [#ReachHigher](#)

HOW TO FILL OUT THE FAFSA

- 1 Go to [fafsa.gov](#) or use the myStudentAid app and log in using your FSA ID.
- 2 Choose which FAFSA you'd like to complete (select the year in which you will be attending college).
- 3 Enter your personal information exactly as it appears on official government documents.
- 4 Choose up to 10 schools. Add any school that you plan on attending.
- 5 Sign and submit with your FSA ID

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college
cash for

Write a comment...



THANK YOU



STAY CONNECTED

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www.alabamapossible.org



@AlabamaPossible

Indiana



Universal FAFSA Webinar

Florida College Access Network

Greg Harrell
Director of Legislation

UNIVERSAL FAFSA



WHERE WE STARTED

- ▶ FAFSA is the **gateway** to state, federal, and most institutional financial aid.
- ▶ The Commission has an **outreach team** dedicated to helping students and families file the FAFSA and training schools and community partners to provide support.
- ▶ However, Indiana's FAFSA-filing rate has remained **below** target goals set by the Commission.

WHERE WE STARTED

- ▶ According to NCAN, Hoosier students from the class of 2022 left **\$70 million on the table** simply by not completing the FAFSA.
- ▶ Indiana finished **40th nationally** for FAFSA filing for the class of 2022.

WHERE WE STARTED

- ▶ FAFSA percentages across the state have rebounded, but **still trail** pre-pandemic levels.
- ▶ Schools with more free and reduced lunch students, rural schools, and schools that enroll larger populations of students of color have experienced **greater declines** in FAFSA filing.
- ▶ These declines mirror the **decline in postsecondary enrollment** for short-term certificates to four-year degrees.

CALL TO ACTION

- ▶ Failure to address this issue will have a **long-term impact** on Indiana's economy.
- ▶ In response, the Commission has strongly supported legislation aimed at making FAFSA filing a **default option** for Indiana students during successive legislative sessions.

CALL TO ACTION

- ▶ Prior to the 2023 legislative session, bills centered on creating a FAFSA requirement **passed one chamber** but would fail afterwards in the House or Senate.
- ▶ Progress was made in 2022 with the passage of **Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 82**.
- ▶ The bill originally included FAFSA requirement language, but this information was stricken by an amendment in the House Education Committee.

CALL TO ACTION

- ▶ SEA 82-2022 required the Commission to create a **FAFSA Affirmation Form**.
- ▶ The FAFSA Affirmation Form was built into the Commission's Learn More Indiana webpage and shared with high schools.
- ▶ The form allows students and parents to submit requests to the Commission for assistance with filing the FAFSA.

UNIVERSAL FAFSA PASSES

- ▶ During the 2023 legislative session, universal FAFSA legislation **passed**.
- ▶ SEA 167-2023 makes FAFSA filing a **default option** for high school seniors beginning with the class of 2024.
- ▶ It includes broad **opt-out provisions**:
 - ▶ Parents or emancipated students can opt out of filing.
 - ▶ A high school can waive the requirement after April 15, Indiana's priority deadline for financial aid, if the school has made two reasonable attempts to contact the student and/or parent.

IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

- ▶ The Commission has begun implementation efforts for SEA 167-2023.
 - ▶ A form will be created for parents or emancipated students to opt out and will be made available prior to the 24-25 FAFSA launching in December.
 - ▶ Additionally, a widget will be made available after April 15 in ScholarTrack, Indiana's one-stop-shop for state financial aid, through which high schools can submit batch uploads of students to opt out of filing the FAFSA after two reasonable attempts have been made to contact them.

LOOKING FORWARD

- ▶ There is evidence that SEA 167-2023 will help reverse current FAFSA-filing trends based on results in other states with similar legislation.
- ▶ After the implementation of a universal FAFSA requirement:
 - ▶ Alabama jumped from 34th to 9th and Texas rose from 23rd to 5th nationally for the percent of high school seniors who filed the FAFSA.

The background of the slide features a large, faint, circular seal of the State of Indiana. The seal contains the text "SEAL OF THE STATE OF INDIANA" around the top and "1816" at the bottom. In the center of the seal is a figure of a Native American man, likely a representation of the state's indigenous heritage.

Greg Harrell

Director of Legislation

Email: gharrell@che.in.gov



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*
HIGHER EDUCATION

Questions?

Conclusion

