FAFSA Collaborative Outreach for Alabama Students

Dr. Jim Purcell, Alabama Commission on Higher Education
FAFSA Completion Initiative

• Per a policy passed by the Alabama State Board of Education, FAFSA Completion became a graduation requirement for high school students on April 8, 2021.
• Policy became effective for the May 2022 high school graduating class.
• Success of the initiative has required collaboration among the following:
  • Alabama State Department of Education
  • Alabama Community College System
  • Alabama Possible (statewide nonprofit focusing on college access)
  • Alabama Commission Higher Education
  • Alabama Public Library System
Why is Completing the FAFSA Important?

• FAFSA is a **gateway** to over **$150 billion** in federal aid as well as most state and institution aid.

• Alabama’s Class of 2021 left roughly **$67.8 million** in **unclaimed Pell Grant money** on the table (ranked **15th** nationally).

• FAFSA Completion is strongly associated with positive outcomes:
  • 92% of seniors who completed FAFSA enrolled in college or university following graduation;
  • Education is linked to higher incomes, better health, and more civic engagement.
Alabama's Estimated Unclaimed Pell Dollars and Student FAFSA Completions

- AL has reduced unclaimed Pell dollars by $1.3M for every percentage increase in FAFSA Completion.

- AL students received an estimated $11.8M in 2022 and $14.4M in 2023 of unclaimed Pell dollars due to improved FAFSA Completion.

Alabama’s annual commitment of $500,000 yielded an average increase of $13,100,000 in federal student aid.
States’ FAFSA Completion Rank and Percentage of Seniors Completing a FAFSA in **Year Before** and **Implementation Year** of Universal FAFSA

Source: National College Attainment Network (NCAN.org)
FAFSA Completions by School District 2021-23

Select Counties

Barbour
25.6% to 86.7%

Sumter
36.9% to 76%

Choctaw
40.4% to 91.8%
Benefits of FAFSA Initiative in Alabama

• Oracle revises software when FAFSA makes changes

• **More students now apply and complete** the FAFSA

• **Significantly increased FAFSA completions** for students from **low income, minority, rural, and urban backgrounds**

• **FAFSA error messages** are **addressed earlier** in the process
  • Reduces duplicative efforts by campuses

• **More students have financial aid support** for college

• College enrollment increases
  • Community colleges had a **17% increase in student applications** and a **7% increase in student enrollment**

• More communication efforts with recent high school graduates **reduced Summer Melt** in 2023
FAFSA 101 & Updates

Mae Whiting, Data & Research Director
Alabama Possible
Alabama Goes to College Campaign

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.

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.
What is the FAFSA and why should students complete it?

What are some of the key changes on the new 2024-25 FAFSA?

What are the steps and documents needed to complete the new FAFSA?

Where can families find resources and support?
Types of Financial Aid

There are **four** main types of financial aid to help you pay for college:

1. **GRANTS**
   Gift aid that doesn’t have to be paid back. Grants are often need-based like the federal Pell Grant.

2. **SCHOLARSHIPS**
   Another form of gift aid. Can be awarded for anything, including academics, athletics, or volunteer work.

3. **WORK-STUDY**
   Get a paid part-time job through the federal work-study program to help you cover part of the cost of college.

4. **LOANS**
   Borrowed money that must be paid back with interest (an extra charge that grows over time).
What is the FAFSA?

The FAFSA is used to determine a student’s eligibility for grants, scholarships, work-study jobs, and low-interest loans.
Access to federal and non-federal aid

• There are many need-based federal aid options, including the Pell Grant which is aid that does not have to be paid back.
• Many non-federal grants and scholarships, including institutional aid from colleges, also require FAFSA completion.
• Most students in AL qualify for Pell Grant aid. The max award is $7,395/yr, which is significant because the average cost of tuition and fees at a 2-year college in AL is $5,048/yr.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (Digest of Education Statistics 2020-21) and National College Attainment Network
# Types of Federal Aid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Aid Type</th>
<th>Main Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pell Grant</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrate financial need; up to $7,395 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Supplemental Ed Opportunity Grant</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrate exceptional financial need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant</strong></td>
<td>Parent/guardian died serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACH Grant</strong></td>
<td>Students take courses and commit to a teaching career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Work-Study</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrate financial need; work part-time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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# Types of Federal Aid

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Direct Subsidized Loan</td>
<td>Some financial need; government pays interest while student is in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan</td>
<td>No financial need required; student responsible for interest during all periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct PLUS Loans</td>
<td>Taken out by parents or graduate students; higher interest rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid for International Study</td>
<td>Students studying abroad or getting a degree from an international school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aid for Military Families</td>
<td>Students serving in the military or those who are related to active duty personnel or a veteran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes in FAFSA Rules for 2024-25

- FAFSA will be reduced the amount of questions.
- Importing income data from tax records will be easier.
- **Formulas** to determine who will qualify for aid and how much money to be received have been changed.
  - New formula emphasizes wealth instead of cash flow.
- Lower-income families should be eligible for more aid.
- Students who are incarcerated and have been convicted of drug-related offenses are now eligible for financial aid.
Changes in FAFSA Rules for 2024-25

• If the student is a dependent student for purposes of the FAFSA, students and their parent(s) must each create a Student Aid Account (FSA ID) before completing the form.
• The Social Security Administration must verify each user’s identity and authenticate their FSA ID before the form can be accessed. This can sometimes take 3 days.
• There is an alternative identity verification process for students whose parents do not have Social Security numbers. This includes students with undocumented parents.
• Students and parents must log in to the FAFSA separately to complete their respective sections of the form.
Changes in FAFSA Rules for 2024-25

• **Unintended/Intended consequences** - less financial aid for some students:
  • **Net worth of family farms and businesses** will now be **required** as part of the FAFSA application.
  • Number of **students a family has enrolled** in college will **no longer factor** into the FAFSA calculation.
  • If parents are divorced/separated, the **parent who provided the most financial support** in the last calendar year now **completes the FAFSA.**
Current issues for 2024-25 FAFSA

• After a delayed launch, there have been several technical glitches and delays associated with the release of the new FAFSA.

• Many families are encountering issues with different aspects of the form, which will delay submission and ultimately postpone the timeline for receiving and accepting aid offers from colleges and universities.
Steps to Complete the FAFSA

• STEP 1: Create FSA IDs
  *These should be done in advance!
• STEP 2: Gather documents
• STEP 3: Student fills out their section of the application
• STEP 4: Contributor completes their section, if applicable
• STEP 5: Review FAFSA Submission Summary
• STEP 6: Complete verification, if applicable
• STEP 7: Receive/accept financial aid offers
Documents Needed for FAFSA

It can save time and ensure accuracy if families have the necessary paperwork before starting the FAFSA:

- Social Security number of student
- Alien Registration number of student [if not a U.S. citizen]
- Date(s) of birth for student & parent(s) [if student is dependent]
- Parent(s) Social Security number(s), if available* [if student is dependent]
- Prior-Prior Year Tax Returns, if manually entering [2022 taxes for 2024-25 cycle]
- Information on child support received and federal benefits received like Medicaid, SSI, SNAP, TANF, etc.
- Information on cash, savings and checking account balances, investments, real estate assets (not including home)
We encourage libraries to support FAFSA completion by building relationships and collaborating with the following groups:

- High school guidance counselors and career coaches within your school district
- Financial Aid Directors and staff at local community colleges and universities
- College access and success organizations like Alabama Possible
Resources

2024-25 FAFSA FAQ Video Playlist

Federal Student Aid
3 videos 194 views Last updated on Oct 6, 2023

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form gives you access to the largest source of financial aid—federal student aid. Check

2024-25 FAFSA Playlist available on
Federal Student Aid’s YouTube
Resources
Resources

Check out our Google Drive folder ➔
Stay Connected!

WEBSITE
alabamagoes2college.org

PHONE
334.316.6155

EMAIL
algoestocollege@alabamapossible.org
Overview of the FAFSA Completion Portal

**What is it?** A web tool that shows the progress of how well all Alabama school districts and their schools are completing the FAFSA.

**Where is it?** https://fafsa.ache.edu

**Who can access it?**

- Public can view the completion metrics by the individual schools, school districts, and statewide
- Approved educators of school districts with a signed ACHE user agreement have access to more detailed information to help students with the completion process
The **FAFSA Completion Portal** has added enhanced graphics and statistical data.

More information about the FAFSA, state financial aid opportunities, and directories and costs of attending Alabama’s institutions of higher education have also been made available.
The **Data and Graph** section on the home page leads to a page with graphs and statistics for the state’s completion rate as well as the top 10 school districts and top 10 schools.

Dividers across the top of this page allows you to search for details per school and district. A district map by county is also available for a statewide overview of completion rates.
# District Top 10 Achievers

Modify your results

**Academic Year:**
- 2022-2023

## Achievement Levels
- **Diamond**: 95%+
- **Gold**: 85% - 94%
- **Silver**: 75% - 84%
- **Bronze**: 50% - 74%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Completion Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Holy Family Cristo Rey</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Opp City</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Marengo County</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Alabama School of Fine Arts</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Guntersville City</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Arab City</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Choctaw County</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Elba City</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sylacauga City</td>
<td>156</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Daleville City</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>88%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**State Average:** 60%
## School Top 10 Achievers

### Modify your results
- **Student Count:** All School Sizes
- **Academic Year:** 2022-2023

### Achievements
- **Diamond:** 95%+
- **Gold:** 85% - 94%
- **Silver:** 75% - 84%
- **Bronze:** 50% - 74%

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Holy Family Cristo Rey 3000000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Georgiana School 70085</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Loveless Academic Magnet Program 510387</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Geneva County 310020</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>98%</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sulligent School 380060</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Marengo 460060</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Amelia L. Johnson 460010</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### State Average
- 60%
## Schools within District

### 2022-2023 Summary Data

#### Review your results

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autauga County</td>
<td>Autaugaville School</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autauga County</td>
<td>Billingsley High School</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autauga County</td>
<td>Louise M Smith Development Center</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autauga County</td>
<td>Marbury High School</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autauga County</td>
<td>Prattville High School</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### District Name: Autauga

#### School Name: 

#### Students:

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<td>399</td>
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#### State Average:

- 60%

#### Completion Progress:

- 47% 6%
- 72% 7%
- 63% 5%
- 52% 7%
Sends participation and status reports by Schools and Districts

Student Applies for Federal Financial Aid using the FAFSA

Federal FAFSA Database

ED Connect

ACHE Downloads Federal FAFSA Data

AL Dept. of Education submits student data to ACHE

Oracle Compares/Matches data to see who has completed the FAFSA

Reports

Oracle Sends participation and status reports by Schools and Districts

School Districts and High Schools

Oracle Identifies and works to correct errors and assist with verifications

Authorized staff work with Students

Feedback Loop

Repeat process as needed.

Oracle Identifies other federal (and state aid) that a student could be eligible for and helps them apply
Other Important FAFSA Portal Information

The portal is updated on a daily basis at the start of the FAFSA year.

• Targeted information supports schools and districts with helping their students complete the FAFSA
• Improved reporting and data analysis capability is provided
• Displays ranks and badges to encourage participation statewide

FAFSA letters are sent via email to all students according to their FAFSA status:
• FAFSA is Missing or Incomplete
• Congratulations – Your FAFSA is Complete!
  o Information to the Birmingham Promise students is shared

Ron Leonard
fafsa@ache.edu (334)242-2211