

Financial Aid and College Access Community Urges Colleges to Extend Financial Aid, Enrollment Commitment Deadlines

WASHINGTON, D.C., JANUARY 31, 2024 — The Department of Education (ED) recently announced that it will now update, in accordance with the law, the tables used to protect a portion of a family’s income from being considered available for college expenses by inflation-adjusted amounts, which will result in some students qualifying for more federal Pell Grants.

The FAFSA Simplification Act of 2020, the law that Congress passed to significantly streamline the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), required that ED annually update the Income Protection Allowance (IPA) tables to account for inflation and other economic changes. For a greater number of students, bringing those numbers current will reduce the portion of a family’s income that is considered available for educational expenses, resulting in a lower Student Aid Index (SAI) and potentially increased financial aid eligibility.

However, the delivery of FAFSA applicant data to institutions — which was already delayed until the end of January — will not take place until after these changes are implemented, until the first half of March. This means additional delays in the delivery of financial aid offers to students and families, further compressing the available window for them to make informed enrollment decisions.

In response to this news, the undersigned organizations issued the following statement:

“Due to the continued delays in the availability of FAFSA applicant data announced by the U.S. Department of Education, we encourage colleges and universities to provide flexibility to students and families as they consider their offers of admission and financial aid.

During the pandemic, many institutions extended their enrollment, scholarship, and financial aid deadlines beyond the traditional May 1 date, and we urge institutions to make similar accommodations this year. We all want students and families to have the time they need to consider their financial options before making enrollment decisions.”

American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC)

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

American Council on Education (ACE)

Association of American Universities (AAU)
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
National College Attainment Network (NCAN)

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Media Contacts

AACC

Martha Parham
Senior Vice President, Public Relations
mparham@aacc.nche.edu

AACRAO

Tiffany Aurora
Director, Marketing and Communication
aurorat@aacrao.org

AASCU

Kellee Edmonds
Vice President of Communications and
Public Relations
edmondsk@aascu.org

ACE

Jon Riskind
Vice President, Public Affairs and
Strategic Communications
jriskind@acenet.edu

AAU

Win Boerckel
Senior Vice President for
Communications
winfield.boerckel@aau.edu

APLU

Jeff Lieberson
Executive Vice President & Senior Vice
President, Public Affairs
jlieberson@aplu.org

NACAC

Melanie Marquez Parra
Chief Communications Officer
mparra@nacacnet.org

NASFAA

Allie Arcese
Director of Communications
arcesea@nasfaa.org

NCAN

Elizabeth Morgan
Chief External Relations Officer
morgane@ncan.org