

Secretary Miguel Cardona
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

October 13, 2023

Dear Secretary Cardona,

We write to thank you and your team for the hard work that has gone into preparing for the release of the Better FAFSA, and to urge you to announce a release date for the 2024-25 FAFSA. We have appreciated the regular communication that we have received about the status of the form as well as the tools and resources your team has developed to help prepare counselors, college and financial aid administrators, state leaders, and students and families for the significant changes to come. With the traditional launch date of October 1 in the past, it is imperative now that you finalize and announce the form's release date. Stakeholders are hard at work planning for the release, but there is a limit to how much they can do without knowing exactly when the form will become available. Because the timeline for completing the FAFSA will be much shorter than it has been in recent years, *every day counts* when it comes to supporting students and families through the new process.

High school and college access counselors across the country are eager to finalize their plans for supporting students, including by announcing the dates of counselor trainings and FAFSA completion nights. Twelve states now require students to complete the FAFSA to graduate from high school and they need to announce their plans for how they will ensure that students can meet this requirement. State and institutional financial aid administrators need to finalize their timelines for considering financial aid applications and launch timely outreach efforts to reach key stakeholders with specific information about the form and process. Advocates and college access counselors have questions about the alternate process for obtaining an FSA ID that can only be answered once more information about that new process is unveiled.

We understand that the Better FAFSA transition is complex, and that many security and other checks must take place before it can go live. We are not requesting that the form be released on an accelerated timeline that compromises any of the work that has to take place. But with less than three months before January 1, the latest date by which the FAFSA can be released under statute, the continued lack of a public release date risks compromises our members' ability to do all they can to support a smooth rollout.

Sincerely,

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

American Council on Education (ACE)
Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
Council for Opportunity in Education (COE)
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
National Association of State Student Grant & Aid Programs (NASSGAP)
National College Attainment Network (NCAN)
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)
SchoolHouse Connection
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO)

Cc: Under Secretary of Education James Kvaal, Domestic Policy Advisor Neera Tanden, Federal Student Aid Chief Operating Officer Richard Cordray