



INDIANA COMMISSION *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

TO: Indiana Superintendents
High School Principals and School Counselors

FROM: Josh Garrison, *Chief of Staff*, Indiana Commission for Higher Education

DATE: November 8, 2023

SUBJECT: Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 167-2023: FAFSA

Overview

During the 2023 legislative session, the Indiana General Assembly passed [Senate Enrolled Act \(SEA\) 167-2023](#) which requires high school seniors to file the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) or affirmatively opt out of filing by April 15. Completing the FAFSA is an important step in a postsecondary education. Students pursuing short-term certificate training, associate/bachelor's degrees and even some apprenticeships may receive financial aid by completing the FAFSA.

Tracking FAFSA Completion

High school administrators and counselors can see which students have completed the FAFSA in real-time in [ScholarTrack](#) via the FAFSA Completion Project. Additionally, high schools will be able to report the students who choose to opt out and those waived by the high school after April 15 via the Graduation Details upload in ScholarTrack. High schools will not be asked to provide verification of their two attempts to contact students.

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education (Commission) will report the number of students who complete the FAFSA, opt out and are waived by the high school to the Indiana Department of Education for inclusion on the Indiana [Graduates Prepared to Succeed Dashboard](#).

Further, high schools' FAFSA completion rates can be accessed without logging into ScholarTrack via the Learn More Indiana FAFSA Completion Dashboard which will launch in January 2024.

Model Notice

To assist high schools, the Indiana General Assembly charged the Commission with annually sending a [FAFSA model notice](#) that includes:

- a statement regarding the existence and availability of the FAFSA;
- a description that provides students and parents with an understanding of the process for and benefits of completing the FAFSA; and
- the state financial aid available to Indiana students.

The Commission requests for schools to safelist emails from @che.in.gov and @subscriptions.in.gov so FAFSA communications can be sent directly to students. This will allow the Commission to partner with counselors and educators on FAFSA outreach.

Opting Out



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Students who do not wish to file the FAFSA may opt out in one of the following ways:

- **a parent/guardian** of the student submits a FAFSA Waiver Form certifying the student understands what the FAFSA is and declines to complete it;
- **the student**, *if* the student is an emancipated minor or is at least 18 years old, submits a signed waiver certifying the student understands what the FAFSA is and declines to complete it; or
- **the high school principal or counselor** of the student waives the requirement due to not being able to reach the family of the student by April 15 after at least two reasonable attempts.

The FAFSA Waiver Form will be released on an annual basis on the opening day of the FAFSA. However, the Commission will release this year's waiver early due to the United States Department of Education delaying the release of the 2024-2025 FAFSA until December 2023. The waiver may be found at <https://www.in.gov/che/state-financial-aid/state-financial-aid-by-program/>.

Questions

High school partners may send questions to schools@che.in.gov or to their [Regional Outreach Coordinator](#).

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