



## INDIANA COMMISSION <sup>for</sup> HIGHER EDUCATION

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## 2026-2027 FAFSA Opens Earlier with New Features to Improve the Filing Process

*Students are encouraged to file before Indiana's April 15 deadline*

(INDIANAPOLIS) – Earlier last week, the U.S. Department of Education [announced](#) the 2026-2027 [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) online form is available earlier than the typical October 1 launch. This provides students and families with a head start on the college application process and gives more time to complete the form and make corrections. FAFSA is the key to unlocking over \$400 million in state aid and over a billion dollars in federal aid, and the earlier students complete their form, the better chance they have at receiving the full amount of eligible aid.

In conjunction with the opening of the FAFSA, the [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](#) has once again set a 60 percent statewide filing goal for the 2026-2027 cycle. Last year, the Commission [reported](#) Indiana high school seniors achieved that target for the first time since setting that goal, previously only reaching 54 percent (2023) and 58 percent (2024). Individuals can begin to monitor Indiana's 2026-2027 FAFSA filing rate beginning in November by using the Commission's [FAFSA Completion Dashboard](#).

"Indiana made great strides in FAFSA filings last year, reaching our goal of 60 percent filing rates. We should remain pleased but not satisfied with our efforts," said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Chris Lowery. "With a more user-friendly process and continued collaboration with our K-12, higher education, philanthropic, and nonprofit partners, we have an opportunity to continue this progress and ensure even more Hoosier students take this important step toward their future."

In addition to providing more time for students and parents to submit the form, new features have been introduced to streamline the process. These updates include:

- **Redesigned Contributor Invite Process:** Students can now invite a parent or contributor to complete their portion of the FAFSA form through a code.
- **Instant Verification for New StudentAid.gov Accounts:** Students and parents now receive faster account confirmation rather than waiting one to seven days for the verification.

In 2023, Indiana became the eighth state to adopt a FAFSA completion requirement for high school seniors with opt-out provisions available. Now, over a dozen states have implemented a similar requirement. Since this legislation, Indiana has seen a steady growth in filings. Students can choose to opt out of the requirement by completing and submitting a [waiver](#).

### Help is Available

The Commission's Outreach Coordinators are available to assist students and families in the filing process. Outreach Coordinators are strategically located in eight geographic regions in Indiana and can help students, families, and educators with questions about state financial aid and filing the FAFSA.

To send a direct message to your region's Outreach Coordinator, visit [www.learnmoreindiana.org/contact](http://www.learnmoreindiana.org/contact).

Additional resources:

- Hoosier families can also access free FAFSA help through INvestEd by email ([outreach@investedindiana.org](mailto:outreach@investedindiana.org)) or phone at 317-715-9007.
- The U.S. Department of Education provides email and live chat assistance for FAFSA filers as well as a helpline at 1-800-4-FED-AID.
- ¿Necesitas ayuda en español? Llame al 317-715-9007.

### **FAFSA Filing Events**

Higher education institutions around the state are hosting FAFSA filing events for students and families.

To view the upcoming events calendar, visit [learnmoreindiana.org](http://learnmoreindiana.org).

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### **About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education**

Created in 1971, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE, Commission) is the State's higher education coordinating agency, driven to improve economic and social mobility for fellow Hoosiers through postsecondary education and training, and is a part of Governor Mike Braun's Office of Education. The Commission's [HOPE \(Hoosier Opportunities & Possibilities through Education\) Agenda](#) serves as the agency's strategic plan and mission through 2030, providing seven goals around enrollment, completion, and graduate retention efforts. The Commission also administers Indiana's state financial aid programs, including [21st Century Scholars](#), which celebrates 35 years in 2025.