

Universal FAFSA

What is it and why do we care?

Objectives

- What is 'universal FAFSA'?
 - NCAN (National College Attainment Network)
- Why implement universal FAFSA?
- Landscape of Higher Ed
 - U.S. and Nebraska
- Review the first 4 states to implement
- Nebraska's Law
 - Requirements-still being finalized by NDE
 - Support – Task Force
 - CCPE and data, data, data
- Impact to Financial Aid Offices

Universal FAFSA

- Requiring FAFSA completion as a graduation requirement
- Popular state policy approach
 - 11 states have passed some type of legislation
 - 13 (or so) have proposed, pending legislation

*data from [NCAN](#)-National College Attainment Network

NCAN-National College Attainment Network

- Vision and Mission
- Nebraska Members
- [Dashboard – 8 levers](#)
 - Offering Equitable Dual Enrollment
 - Expanding Higher Ed for DREAMers
 - Investing in Higher Education
 - Focusing on Need-Based Aid
 - Use State-Level Contracts to share Outcomes Data
 - Student-Level FAFSA Completion
 - Statewide CCR Agencies/Campaigns (college & career readiness)
 - **Implementing Universal FAFSA**

Why Implement Universal FAFSA?

“Every year billions of dollars of federal aid go unclaimed by eligible students. ...The states that have implemented this policy have seen impressive increases in FAFSA completion. If universal FAFSA policies can increase FAFSA completions, states hope and suspect there will be knock-on effects on enrollment, persistence and completion.” quote from NCAN website

*NCAN-To explore this dashboard lever

Goal (of the 8 levers)

Enrollment

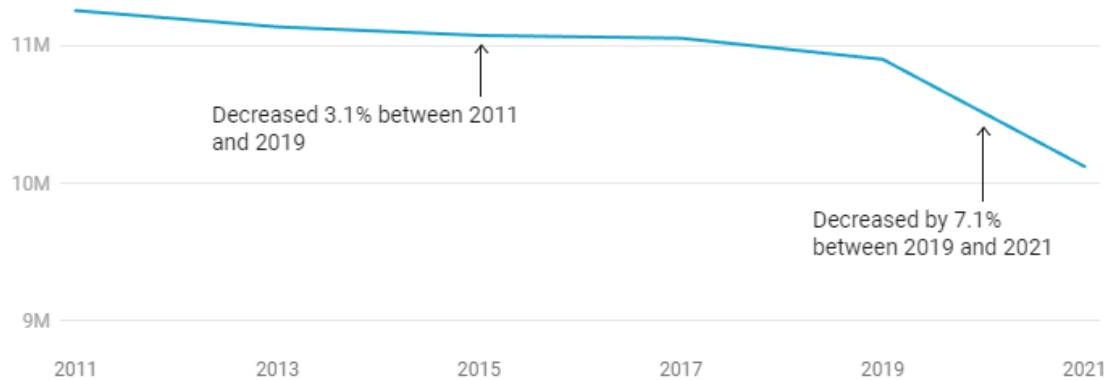
Persistence

Completion

Landscape of higher education

U.S. Undergraduate Enrollment, Ages 18 to 24, 2011-21

— 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled as college undergraduates



Full- and part-time undergraduate enrollment at Title IV-eligible U.S. institutions.

Source: U.S. Department of Education • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

- Nationally undergraduate enrollment (all ages) hit a peak at 18.1 million in 2010-2011, today it is closer to 15 million
- U.S. high school graduate number expected to peak in 2025 at just over 3.9 million...by 2035 pipeline will be 10% smaller

• *Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Chronicle March 11, 2024

Landscape in Nebraska

- Public high school graduate number 2010-2011 was 20,331 with estimates of 23,640 for 2026-2027...prediction in 2036-2037 of 22,790 (*US Dept of education and midwestern higher education compact)
- Nebraska FTE post-secondary enrollment 2012-2013 was 117,463 and 2021-2022 was 104,163 ([ccpe enrollment dashboard](#))
- Nebraska post-secondary enrollment decrease of 13.6% between 2012-2013 and 2022-2023
https://ccpe.nebraska.gov/sites/default/files/FS_Enrollment_Degrees.pdf

U.S. FAFSA Completion Challenges

- 53%-class of 2021 HS graduates completed the FAFSA
 - Estimate of 3.75 billion in Pell Grants unclaimed (the 47%)
 - 1.9 million high school seniors from low-income
 - 1.1 million submitted FAFSA-only 999K complete
 - 442K selected for verification (of 7% melted)
 - only 38% enrolled using Pell or subsidized loan
- Estimated amount of unclaimed Pell Grant dollars increased 60% between the classes of 2017 to the class of 2021
 - 2 things contributed to this sizable jump
 - Maximum Pell Grant increased from \$5920 in 2017 to \$6345
 - FAFSA completion rate changed from 61% of 2017 high school seniors completed the FAFSA compared to 54% of the class of 2021

FAFSA Challenges in Nebraska

- 49%-class of 2023 HS graduates completed the FAFSA
- Nebraska ranks 31st in FAFSA completion for this cycle
- Nebraska's class of 2023 left \$21 million in Pell Grants unclaimed by not completing the FAFSA

Why It Matters and Potential Payoff

- Postsecondary enrollment immediately following high school graduation increases completion rate
- Positive financial outcome for high school graduates who complete associate's, bachelor's, or job/apprenticeship training programs
- Lower unemployment rates and recession resiliency

*other data from National College Attainment Network: ncan.org and forbes.com

The First Four States-What Happened

- Louisiana academic year 2017-2018
 - 2017 to 2018 25.9% more FAFSA completed
 - State rank % of seniors completed from 12th to 2nd
- Illinois academic year 2020-2021 (covid March 2020)
 - Was already a top 10 state
 - State rank moved from 10th to 4th
- Alabama academic year 2021-2022
 - Had the most to gain (ranked 34th) vaulted to 9th
- Texas academic year 2021-2022
 - Made a 25.9% jump in completions = over 49,000 students!
 - State rank moved from 23rd to 5th

Who's Next?

2023-2024 Academic Year

New Hampshire

Connecticut

2024-2025 Academic Year

Indiana

Nebraska*

Oklahoma

2027-2028 Academic Year

Kansas*

*RMASFAA Members

Nebraska's Universal FAFSA

- June 1, 2023, Governor Jim Pillen signed into law LB705 (49 pages)
- Introduced by:
 - Senator Dave Murman (District 38)
 - Senator Lynne Walz (District 15)
 - Senator John Fredrickson (District 20)
 - Senator Tony Vargas (District 7)*

*primary senator introducing universal fafsa

Nebraska Revised Statute 79-729

79-729.

High school students; graduation requirements; exceptions.

(1) The Legislature recognizes the importance of assuring that all persons who graduate from Nebraska high schools possess certain minimum levels of knowledge, skills, and understanding. Each high school student shall complete a minimum of two hundred high school credit hours prior to graduation. At least eighty percent of the minimum credit hours shall be core curriculum courses prescribed by the State Board of Education.

(2) For students attending a public school:

(a) Beginning in school year 2023-24, at least five of the minimum credit hours shall be a high school course in personal finance or financial literacy; and

(b) Beginning in school year 2027-28, at least five of the minimum credit hours shall include computer science and technology education as required under section 79-3304.

(3)(a) Beginning in school year 2024-25, each public high school student shall complete and submit to the United States Department of Education a Free Application for Federal Student Aid prior to graduating from such high school except as otherwise provided in this subsection.

(b) A public high school student shall not be required to comply with subdivision (3)(a) of this section if:

(i) A parent or legal guardian of or a person standing in loco parentis to such student signs and submits the appropriate form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to subdivision (3)(c) of this section indicating that such parent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis authorizes such student to decline to complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid;

(ii) The school principal or the school principal's designee signs and submits the appropriate form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to subdivision (3)(c) of this section authorizing such student to decline to complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid for good cause as determined by the school principal or the school principal's designee; or

(iii) A student who is nineteen years of age or older or is an emancipated minor signs and submits the appropriate form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to subdivision (3)(c) of this section stating that such student declines to complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

(c) The Commissioner of Education shall prescribe the forms to be used by each public high school for purposes of compliance with subdivision (3)(b) of this section. Such forms shall be made available:

(i) By each public high school to students, parents and legal guardians of students, and persons standing in loco parentis to students; and

(ii) In English, Spanish, and any other language spoken by a majority of the students enrolled in any English learner program at such public high school.

NE's Statute Highlights

- Nebraska's requirement begins in 2024-2025
- Only public high schools
- Specific to FAFSA (not a state form)
- Opt out circumstances
- NDE provides template for opt out forms
- High schools responsible for reporting
 - Both individual and aggregate data

NCAN's Policy Recommendations

- Require FAFSA completion through legislative policy
- Include robust opt-out system
- Provide (at minimum) one full FAFSA cycle from the bill passing
- Make the change administratively (if high school graduation requirements do not live in statute)
- Build & provide robust training and support
- Provide regular data sharing

Nebraska Outreach and Support

- Created a task force (involve a variety of constituents)
 - To support the implementation of LB705
 - Timeline (monthly meetings 2024)
- Nebraska Department of Education webinar (s)
 - February 15, 2024
- EducationQuest Symposium
 - April 16th in Lincoln
 - NDE planning to share more details



Nebraska FAFSA Task Force Member Roster

Regan Anson
Vice President, Communications
EducationQuest Foundation

Mike Baumgartner
Executive Director
Nebraska Coordinating Commission for
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Jan Benitez
Program Officer, College Access and Success
Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation

Traci Boeve
Director of Financial Aid; President
Hastings College; Nebraska Association of
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Initiatives
Nebraska Dept of Education

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Nebraska Coordinating Commission for
Postsecondary Education

Dr. Rony Ortega
South Sioux City School-Superintendent

Dr. Nicole Regan
Gering High School-Superintendent

Nebraska's FAFSA Completion Initiative

Nebraska's CCPE partnership with U.S. Dept of Ed

High schools and other entities:

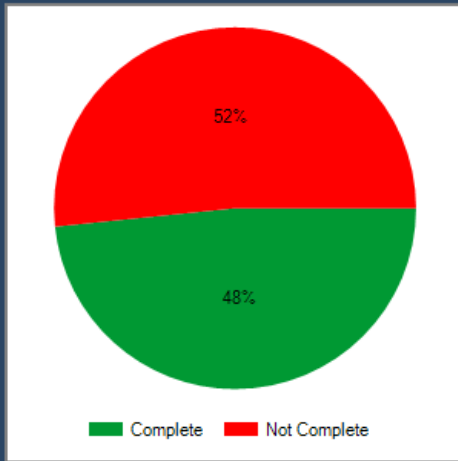
- Provide student-specific FAFSA completion assistance
- Encourage college acceptance and enrollment
- Help students find financial aid for college
- Use FAFSA completion as a key performance measure
- Increase their school's college-going rate

*received funding from the NE Legislature in 2015 for software

CCCPE Dashboards

Summary

Resources



2023-24 FAFSA Completion Project

Student Cohort: 28,605 | Submitted: 14,108 (49.3%) | Completed: 13,838 (48.4%)

Disclaimer: Data in this table are compiled from the U.S. Department of Education and other sources. Various matching techniques have been applied to maximize identification of eligible students. This information is dynamic and changes occur on a regular basis. As a result, representations may be slightly higher or lower than that shown in an earlier reporting period. School numbers are current 12th graders, while Non-Profit numbers may include current college students. Cohort numbers may change throughout the year due to students transferring in/out of the high school or non-profit organization. Please check the Contact page for information on how to reach us.

You may click on any headers to change the order from smallest to largest or largest to smallest.

Data updated 3/13/2024 12:33:57 PM

Paging: Yes Size: 10

Type a whole or partial value and tab/click out of the textbox. Data will refresh automatically.

District Name: School Name:

* is shown in place of cohort counts 5 or less

Export to Excel Export to CSV

District Name School Name # Cohort # Submitted % Submitted # Complete % Complete

Results (sort of)

- More FAFSA's are being filed
 - [FAFSA Tracker](#) (NCAN)
- Opens door that college is possible
- Requirement doesn't appear to have hurt graduation rate (opt out)
- Evidence is sparse if universal FAFSA is increasing college-going rate

"The policy is outpacing the empirical evidence at this point"
(Bill DeBaun senior director at NCAN)

Impact to Financial Aid Offices

Fall 2025 admissions class

YOU WILL HAVE MORE FAFSA'S

- Integration between FA software and Admissions SIS
- Do you currently report FAFSA data to the administration?
- Do you award any financial aid tied to # of FAFSA's completed or a %?
- Take back to your front lines-admissions counselors

Discussion/Questions