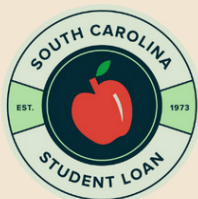


DISCUSSING BETTER

FAFSA

WITH YOUR STUDENTS

A PARTNERSHIP BY



DISCUSSING BETTER FAFSA WITH YOUR STUDENTS

Better FAFSA, the FSA’s new version of the existing FAFSA process, is expected to be released in December 2023. [South Carolina Student Loan](#), the [South Carolina Commission for Higher Education](#), [South Carolina Tuition Grants](#), and [SCASFAA](#) (the South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators) have partnered to ensure that you have all the information that you need to provide resources and support to your students.

Included below you’ll find text messages and emails you can send directly to your students, as well as answers to frequently asked questions about the FAFSA. There are also informative social media posts that can be shared through your school’s social platforms, and an information graphic that condenses the most important information about the FAFSA changes into a visually appealing, easily sharable format. We all have one goal: to ensure that higher education remains accessible to all in South Carolina. Ensuring awareness of the coming Better FAFSA changes is key to achieving that goal!

Recommended Communication Calendar

A recommended timeline for sending texts and emails to students is:

SEND DATE	COMMUNICATION(S) TO SEND
Oct. 15	Text Message 1
Nov. 1	Text Message 2 Email 1
Nov. 15	Text Message 3
Day of FAFSA Release	Text Message 4 Email

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Text Messages

The following texts can be sent directly to students or sent en mass if your school's technological capabilities allow. If sent directly to students, you can add personalization such as emojis and use additional characters to communicate more detailed information as needed. The text messages below adhere to character limits for mass text platforms such as Twilio.

Message 1: Explain to your students the importance of the FAFSA.

If you don't do the FAFSA, you may be missing out on many sources of financial aid. Make sure you're ready when it's released in December. Let me know if you have questions!

Message 2: Let your students know what they can do to prepare for the new FAFSA.

Do you and your parents have your FSA IDs? You'll need them to complete the FAFSA. Check here to see if you have an ID already: <https://rb.gy/pj04x>

Message 3: Remind your students about dates relating to the release of the new FAFSA form.

The FAFSA comes out in December. SC awards funds as requests come in so fill it out ASAP to get as much money as you can. Get more info: <https://rb.gy/ngecm>

Message 4: Alert students that FAFSA has been released.

FAFSA is out now! SC awards funds as requests come in, so fill it out ASAP to get as much money as you can! Get more info: <https://rb.gy/ngecm>

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Emails

Please note that these emails are formatted to be copied and pasted into a blank template and sent en masse. If possible, we recommend that “Hi” be replaced with the student’s name or however you normally address students through email.

Email 1: Introduce the New FAFSA to Students

The purpose of this email is to inform students on what the FAFSA is, why it’s important, when it releases, and what has changed.

Subject Line: Applying for Financial Aid: FAFSA

Hi,

You or your parents may already have experience with the FAFSA, especially if you have an older sibling in college, but the FAFSA has changed this year. It has been made simpler, but it will also come out two months later in the year, meaning you have less time to complete it.

If you’re considering attending college next year, I highly recommend that you complete the FAFSA. Even if you’re truly uncertain about your college plans, it is better to complete the FAFSA and not need it.

What do you need to do right now?

Make sure you have an [FSA ID](#) and create one if you don’t. The same goes for your parent/guardian. Everyone involved in the FAFSA process will need an FSA ID to eSign the documents, and the FSA ID verification can take up to 7 days. To check whether you have an FSA ID or to create your FSA ID, visit <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>.

What is the FAFSA?

The FAFSA is a federal form that must be filled out in order to qualify for any need-based financial aid for college. This includes money provided by the federal government, state government, and even frequently the college itself.

When should you complete the FAFSA?

Please try to complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after it is released. South Carolina allocates money as forms come in, so the later you get your form submitted, the less money South Carolina has available to award you. Your college may have their own deadline, but submitting early helps avoid that issue.

How is the FAFSA different this year?

This year the FAFSA requires consent for all students and their contributors vs. the option to manually enter tax information. Students can add up to 20 colleges/universities to their FAFSA, and are able to utilize the Parent Wizard. The FAFSA will be available in the 11 most common languages spoken by English-learning students and parents.

Don’t forget, I’m also here to help if you have questions or need any assistance.

[Signature block from school guidance counselor]

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Email 2: Announce When the New FAFSA Form is Released

The purpose of this email is to inform students that the new FAFSA form has been released, encourage students to complete it, and remind students of the information provided in the first email.

Subject Line: It's Time to Complete the FAFSA!

Hi,

[The FAFSA has been released](#) and you need to complete it ASAP if you have any intention of attending college. The FAFSA is the federal form that must be filled out in order to qualify for any need-based financial aid for college.

As a reminder, the FAFSA has seen some changes. These are intended to make the process easier, but there's still a learning curve.

What information do I need to fill out the FAFSA?

You and your parent(s) will each need the following information:

- Your FSA ID
- Your SSN or Alien Registration Number
- Bank statements and records of investments if applicable
- Records of untaxed income if applicable
- The names of the colleges or universities you want FAFSA to send your information to (up to 20).

How is it simpler?

- The FAFSA will pull information directly from the IRS rather than requiring you to track down old tax forms and manually enter the information.
- You'll only be able to see the questions you're responsible for answering.
- You can enter information for more colleges at the start if you're still undecided on where you're attending school.

When should I complete the FAFSA?

Right now, or as soon as you can. The FAFSA is available at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. Select "Start Here" and follow the prompts to complete your form.

If you still have questions or need any assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

[Signature block from school guidance counselor]

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FAQs

This section of frequently asked questions and answers can help guide conversations with your students. Post these materials on your website, school intranets and in other student-accessible locations to help guide their understanding of the new FAFSA process.

Definitions

1. Who is a Contributor?

A contributor is anyone involved in the Federal Student Aid process. This can be the student, the student's spouse, the student's parent, the student's step-parent, etc.

FSA ID Questions

2. Who in my family needs an FSA ID?

The student will always need an FSA ID. Who else needs an FSA ID varies based on your specific situation:

- If your parents are married and filed their taxes jointly, one parent will need an FSA ID.
- If your parents are married and filed their taxes separately, both parents will need an FSA ID.

If your situation doesn't fall into either of those categories, you'll utilize the Better FAFSA built-in parent wizard to determine who needs an FSA ID.

3. Where do I go to set up my FSA ID?

Everyone who doesn't already have an existing FSA ID – students, parents, and other contributors – will need to visit <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch> to create their ID.

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4. What are the guidelines for creating an FSA ID?

While FSA does provide the option to use a mobile phone number, we recommend that you use an email address. Each contributor will need to use a separate email address. Do not use a school or work email address. You need to guarantee that you'll have access to this email address throughout your entire higher ed journey, so it's important that you use one you cannot lose access to.

Remember, each contributor's FSA ID is tied to their own social security number or alien registration number, and each individual will have their own log-in.

5. What if I (or my parents/contributors) already have an FSA ID?

You will use the established FSA ID that matches your identity.

About the 2024-2025 FAFSA

6. When will the 2024-25 FAFSA become available?

The FSA has announced that the form will be available in December 2023, but no specific date has been released. We will update this as soon as that is shared.

7. Which tax year will I need to use to complete the 2024-25 FAFSA?

You will use your 2022 federal tax return to complete the 2024-25 FAFSA.

8. What if my family's financial situation has changed since 2022?

Please contact your financial aid office to inform them of the change. You may be required to submit additional documentation.

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General FAFSA Questions

9. If I need FAFSA assistance, who do I contact?

You can use the web chat feature on [Federal Student Aid's website](#) or call FSA at 1-800-4-FEDAID.

10. What happens after I successfully complete my FAFSA?

The information is shared with all colleges selected by the student on the FAFSA so they can determine eligibility for financial aid. You should monitor your college or personal email addresses for additional information from the college.

Social Media

The following resources can be used to announce the changes to FAFSA on social media and in other digital channels where your students may be present:

Infographic

This infographic can be used as-is on your website or social media channels to provide a quick-glance overview of what students need to know about the FAFSA.

[Link to Infographic](#)

Follow our social media pages to stay up to date with Better FAFSA news:

SC Student Loan

FB: @scstudentloancorporation

IG: @southcarolinastudentloan

X: @scstudentloan

South Carolina Tuition Grants

FB, IG, and X: @sctuitiongrants

South Carolina Association of Financial Aid Administrators (SCASFAA)

FB: @scasfaa

Commission on Higher Education

FB, IG, and X: @sccango

DISCUSSING BETTER FAFSA WITH YOUR STUDENTS

Thank you!

All of us have a shared mission to make higher education in South Carolina accessible for the state's students. Thank you for your integral role in ensuring that high school students across South Carolina are provided the guidance and support they need to make informed decisions about their educational future.

These texts, emails, FAQs and social media posts have been created to communicate the coming FAFSA changes and to ensure students' preparedness for the FAFSA's release. If you have any questions, please reach out to any of our points of contact:

- [South Carolina Student Loan](mailto:dcapers@scstudentloan.org): Destra Capers – dcapers@scstudentloan.org
- [South Carolina Commission for Higher Education](mailto:ghampton@che.sc.gov): Gerrick Hampton – ghampton@che.sc.gov
- [South Carolina Tuition Grants](mailto:zachary@sctuitiongrants.org): Zachary Christian – zachary@sctuitiongrants.org
- [SCASFAA](mailto:Nicole.buton@tridenttech.edu): Nicole Burton – Nicole.buton@tridenttech.edu