

Department of Education office of Federal Student Aid Communications Messaging Survey

Introduction

Optimization Group is conducting research on behalf of Federal Student Aid (FSA), an office of the U.S. Department of Education. FSA would like your feedback regarding their communications messaging for outreach. The evaluation should take about 20 minutes to complete. Your responses will remain anonymous and will only be reported in aggregate form. Thank you in advance for your time. Your input is very important.

Section 1 Higher Education Description Preference

How would you describe the education that one pursues after finishing high school?

- 1 Postsecondary Education
- 2 Higher Education
- 3 College
- 4 Postsecondary Education and Training
- 5 Post-high school education
- 6 Education after high school

Section 2 Communications Messaging Testing

In the following section you will be asked to evaluate a number of ideas related to services available from the office of Federal Student Aid.

You will see several statements presented as one concept or idea. Some statements will be presented several times, but in a different combination. While some screens may seem repetitive, each screen is actually new and different.

Please read each screen as a new idea, then rate it on a 1 to 9 scale.

Please Note: For the purposes of this study, both the terms "higher education" and "college" are defined as four-year colleges or universities, two-year community or junior colleges, or trade or vocational schools.

NOTE TO OMB

Note to OMB: FSA is testing 35 messaging statements with respondents. Participants will see three statements at a time and will be asked to rate each set of statements as a single concept. The messages will rotate and vary by individual respondent and each individual may see all, or only some, of the statements provided below. All respondents will see the same base questions. This testing approach will enable us to determine which messaging statements (current and new) resonate strongest across our target audiences.

For example, a respondent would see:

To compete in today's job market, a higher education is a must. The office of Federal Student Aid helps students to achieve their career goals by providing funding for their education.

Financial assistance for higher education is within reach - over \$150 billion in federal student aid is available.

The office of Federal Student Aid provides information and assistance to students seeking funding for their higher education.

And then be asked the following two base questions.

Base Q1: Based on this concept how likely would you be to learn more about federal student aid or to recommend federal student aid to others?

1= Not at all likely 9= Very likely

Base Q2: How much does this concept enhance your feelings towards federal student aid?

1= Not at all 9= Very much

END OF NOTE TO OMB

Base Q1: Based on this concept how likely would you be to learn more about federal student aid or to recommend federal student aid to others?

1= Not at all likely 9= Very likely

Base Q2: How much does this concept enhance your feelings towards federal student aid?

1= Not at all 9= Very much

Messaging Statements to be Tested:

- To compete in today's job market, a higher education is a must. The office of Federal Student Aid helps students achieve their career goals by providing funding for their education.
- To pay for a higher education, start with federal student aid and go further in life.
- Maximize opportunities and earning power by pursuing a higher education; apply for federal student aid.
- College is more than just about getting an education - it connects cultures, builds professional networks, and provides a lifetime of experiences. Obtain funding for higher education by applying for federal student aid.
- The office of Federal Student Aid can help pay for higher education, allowing students to achieve their life's ambitions and dreams.
- Financial assistance for higher education is within reach - over \$150 billion in federal student aid is available.
- Every student has the opportunity to receive some type of financial aid for their education regardless of their age or family income.
- If money is a barrier to college, federal student aid can help students pay for higher education through grants, loans, and work study programs.
- Federal student aid is available to students pursuing all types of higher education: trade school, community college, or university programs.
- Everyone deserves the future they see for themselves. The office of Federal Student Aid provides opportunities for students to fund their education.

- The FAFSA application can take less than 30 minutes to complete and gives students access to financial aid to help pay for college.
- Applying for federal student aid is as simple as completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- The new online FAFSA is easier than ever. The application can now import tax information and skip questions not relevant to the person completing the form.
- When filling out the FAFSA application, the office of Federal Student Aid provides instant access to professionals through online "click-to-chat" and a 1-800 number.
- The office of Federal Student Aid is a one-stop shop for grants, loans, and work-study programs.
- The office of Federal Student Aid provides information and assistance to students seeking funding for their higher education.
- The office of Federal Student Aid helps students through the entire financial aid process by providing information on types of funding, filling out the FAFSA, and paying back loans.
- Making the decision about going to college is difficult enough. The office of Federal Student Aid makes it easy for students and their families to learn more about funding a college education.
- The office of Federal Student Aid is the largest provider of student aid in the United States, providing more than \$150 billion in financial aid to 14 million students each year.
- The employees at the office of Federal Student Aid dedicate their careers to putting students through college. From working with universities to simplifying the FAFSA form, these professionals share their expertise to help students and their families address the challenges of funding a higher education.
- Federal student aid solves one piece of the college puzzle because applicants can receive funding for their educational needs.
- Because the office of Federal Student Aid is backed by the United States government, there's comfort in knowing students will have access to loans, grants, and work study programs regardless of the fluctuations on Wall Street.

- Unlike private student loans, the office of Federal Student Aid offers borrowers loans with low fixed interest rates, income-based repayment plans, and options for loan forgiveness and postponing payments.
- Federal student loans make it possible for students to invest in their own future.
- Get questions answered about funding for higher education through the office of Federal Student Aid.
- The office of Federal Student Aid helps strengthen America by providing funding for educational opportunities.
- The United States is 11th in the world for producing college graduates. To help the country move toward the top, the office of Federal Student Aid provides funding for students' higher education.
- The office of Federal Student Aid funds America's promising minds through grants, loans, and work study to help pay for higher education.
- Our founding fathers saw America as a place for people from all backgrounds to thrive and grow. Today, the office of Federal Student Aid continues that promise by providing funding for those who desire a higher education.
- Nearly 8 out of 10 new jobs created in the next decade will require a college certificate or degree. The office of Federal Student Aid helps students pay for higher education, keeping American workers competitive in the global marketplace.
- Federal student aid is provided by the United States Department of Education - the government authority on education.
- Unlike companies who charge students to fill out the application, applying for federal student aid is free through the official source, the office of Federal Student Aid.
- As the official source for higher education funding, the office of Federal Student Aid can help educate students about available aid and loan repayment options.
- Because the office of Federal Student Aid is part of the United States government, students and their families never have to worry that they're dealing with an unknown or questionable source for higher education funding.
- As part of the United States government, the office of Federal Student Aid is the authority on higher education funding.

Thank You Page

Thank you for your participation! FSA values your input.

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