

Federal Student Aid
Communications Messaging Survey Background

Purpose of the Research, Need for the Collection, and Planned Use of the Data

The U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid (FSA) is evaluating our past enterprise communications strategy efforts and is developing recommendations for improving and adjusting the strategy to support FSA's new strategic goals and priorities and to ensure a customer-centric approach to our communications. This information collection will support the current strategy evaluation by providing a research-based assessment of which messages best resonate with our various target audiences, including high school students, parents, nontraditional students, current college students, borrowers and professionals. This data will be used to validate the effectiveness of current messaging, inform the development of new branding, and enable Federal Student Aid to develop a tested, targeted campaign that meets customers' needs and expectations.

Target Respondents

We will field this study among students, parents, current federal student aid borrowers, high school guidance counselors, college access professionals, and financial aid administrators from the general United States population. One survey will be distributed for all segments. The goal is to have 2,600 total respondents broken down as follows:

- 600 High School Juniors and Seniors
- 600 Parents of High School Juniors and Seniors
- 600 Current or Potential Nontraditional/Adult Students (individuals age 25 and older who did not pursue postsecondary education directly after high school)
- 300 College Students (individuals age 18 – 24 who went to college directly after high school)
- 200 Borrowers (individuals who have completed a postsecondary education program, who used federal student aid loans to pay for college and are currently paying back these loans)
- 100 High School Guidance Counselors
- 100 College Financial Aid Administrators
- 100 College Access Professionals

Collection Procedures

The information collection will be an online, quantitative survey. This is a one-time study and will not be repeated. Pending OMB approval, the survey is scheduled to be fielded for two weeks around April 15-XX, 2011.

The survey will be distributed to students, parents, and borrowers. The survey will be targeted to professionals (guidance counselors, financial aid administrators, and college access professionals) through e-mail using FSA distribution lists (e.g., IFAP subscription list) and through professional organization listservs (e.g., American School Counselor Association listserv).