

**NCER-NPSAS Grant Study**  
**Financial Aid Nudges 2017: A National Experiment to**  
**Increase Retention of Financial Aid and College**  
**Persistence**

**Appendix A**  
**Intervention Communication Materials**

**OMB # 1850-New v.1**

Submitted by:  
National Center for Education Statistics  
U.S. Department of Education

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## Table of Contents

<b>Group 1 - Information and nudges only</b>	<b>2</b>	
Text Messages for Group 1A	2	Text Messages for Group 1B
7     Text Messages for Group 1C		12
<b>Group 2 - Information, nudges, and assistance</b>	<b>17</b>	
<b>NCER-NPSAS Grant Studies Website</b>	<b>21</b>	

### **Summary of Groups Receiving Text Messages**

**Group 1 - Information and nudges only.** Students will receive automated and predetermined texts. Automated replies will be sent in response to key words included in texted responses from students. Group 1 includes three variations.

- **Group 1A** - Provides a basic presentation of the information.
- **Group 1B** - Leverages positive social norms/pressure to encourage students to complete important tasks.
- **Group 1C** - Provides students with concrete planning prompts to encourage them to schedule specific days and times to complete important tasks.

**Group 2 - Information, nudges, and assistance.** Students will receive initial text content similar to that received by students in Group 1. A financial aid advisor will respond to any replies and provide the student the opportunity to engage in a dialogue on financial aid topics.

# GROUP 1A: BASIC - Introduction & Contact 1

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

## Introduction

(1/2) Hi [first\_name] this is Lara from College Possible. When you did the NPSAS survey, you signed up for text messages about college-related topics.

(2/2) I'll send a couple texts/month about renewing financial aid. To learn more about College Possible & these texts: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas/grant/>. Text **STOP** to stop texts.

STOP

All text messages stopped\*

\* Students can reply "STOP" at any point. If a student does not reply to a text message that requires a reply, then they will not receive the follow-up text message.

## (Contact 1 Occurs One Week After Introduction)

Hi, it's Lara again! I want to make sure you get financial aid to help pay for next year in college. Did you finish FAFSA in the fall? Reply **YES** or **NO**

YES

NO

That's great, congratulations! Reply **FAFSA** for reminders of what to keep an eye out for with financial aid in 2017.

Luckily there is still time to file. Visit [FAFSA.gov](http://fafsa.gov). Reply **FAFSA** for tips on completing this step.

FAFSA

FAFSA

(1/3) Check your email regularly to see if you get any emails about FAFSA. Contact the aid office if you are required to verify your income info. Text **NEXT**.

Now that you've started FAFSA, remember you'll need your FSA ID to digitally sign your application at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov). Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

NEXT

(2/3) You should receive a financial aid award letter some time in spring. This will show how much you'll get in grants, loans, and work-study. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(3/3) Meet with a counselor to discuss your award letter. They can help you understand what money is free, what comes in loans, and how much your family owes.

## GROUP 1A: BASIC – Contact 2

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks After Contact 1)

Hi, [first\_name]. [COLLEGE NAME] has lots of resources to help you succeed in college. Have you found helpful supports to turn to for any academic challenges? **YES/NO**

YES

Great! Reply **TIPS** for ideas on getting even more out of your network. This helps you stay on track to meet [COLLEGE\_ABBREV]'s minimum GPA of [SAP GPA] to renew aid.

TIPS

(1/3) Going to professors' office hours is a great way to get questions answered about course materials. Profs can also help you find internship/jobs. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(2/3) Most schools have tutoring centers where students can get 1:1 help with classes! Check your college's website or ask at the library. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(3/3) Creating study groups with peers in your classes or with friends is great for bouncing ideas off each other, especially when prepping for mid terms.

NO

That's OK, it's normal for it to take time to build a network on campus. Reply **TIPS** for ideas on how to build your college support network.

TIPS

## GROUP 1A: BASIC – Contact 3

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Occurs Approximately 3 Weeks After Contact Or 1 Week After Contact 2)

*If hadn't filed or didn't respond to first FAFSA message:*

We know FAFSA can be a challenge. But just like you've handled academic challenges, you can handle this! Have you started FAFSA yet? Reply **YES** or **NO**

YES

Way to go! You just took a major step to maximizing how much financial aid you'll receive for your next year in college! [GIF: <http://giphy.com/gifs/Y8QPqeaW0NFu>]



NO

Doing FAFSA early can earn you more money. Check out this graphic for a list of free FAFSA help online/where you live:



Non-Responder

In case you haven't started the FAFSA yet, we wanted to share with you a few steps you can take to get started.

(1/4) Remember you'll need your FSA ID to digitally sign your application at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov). Text **NEXT**

NEXT

(2/4) Check your email regularly to see if you get any emails about FAFSA. Contact the aid office if you are required to verify your income info. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(3/4) You should receive a financial aid award letter some time in spring. This will show how much you'll get in grants, loans, and work-study. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(4/4) Meet with a counselor to discuss your award letter. They can help you understand what money is free, what comes in loans, and how much your family owes.

*If had filed:*

Hi it's Lara. Did you receive email confirming you filed your FAFSA? You should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) from Federal Student Aid

YES

Way to go. Be sure to keep an eye on email in case there are additional steps you need to take to finalize your aid application.

NO

OK check for that email to be sure FAFSA has been accepted. If you don't have it, check in with your financial aid office.

## GROUP 1A: BASIC – Contact 4-7

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Each Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 4

*For students who attend institutions with supplemental forms to complete.*

(1/2) Hi! In addition to FAFSA, [College abbrev] requires additional financial aid forms: [ADDITIONAL FORMS]. Get these in too to maximize your aid.

(2/2) Contact your financial aid office if you have questions about what to submit to successfully renew your aid: [contact info]

### Contact 5

(1/2) Hi! To be eligible for federal financial aid you need to make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). At [College abbrev] this means earning a XX GPA and other requirements.

(2/2) Contact your financial aid office if you have questions about SAP: [contact info]

### Contact 6

*This should only go to students who are over 25 years of age and have incomes that put them below the EITC phaseouts lists in this table: We should estimate the amount for the person using their NPSAS info. These should be sent the first week of April, around tax time.*

Filing Status	Qualifying Children Claimed			
	Zero	One	Two	Three or more
Single, Head of Household or Surviving Spouse	\$14,820	\$39,131	\$44,454	\$47,747
Married Filing Jointly	\$20,330	\$44,651	\$49,974	\$53,267

(1/2) Hi! Based on info you shared in NPSAS you may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit of up to \_\_\_\_\_. If eligible you would receive this as part of a Federal Tax Refund when you file.

(2/2) See <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit/do-i-qualify-for-earned-income-tax-credit-etc>

### Contact 7

(1/2) Hi! Have you ever had to skip meals or cut the size of meals because there wasn't enough money for food? You may be eligible for monthly SNAP (food assistance) benefits from the federal government, particularly if you work, are on work study or have a dependent child. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>

(2/2) To learn more or to apply go to [state SNAP webpage]

## GROUP 1A: BASIC – Contact 8 and 9

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Each Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 8

(1/2) Hey, Lara here. A couple tips to help you do your best on your finals: Study in a quiet place when you are well rested.

(2/2) Test yourself by going through practice questions or exams. For more tips: [ONLINE RESOURCE AROUND EFFECTIVE STUDY HABITS]

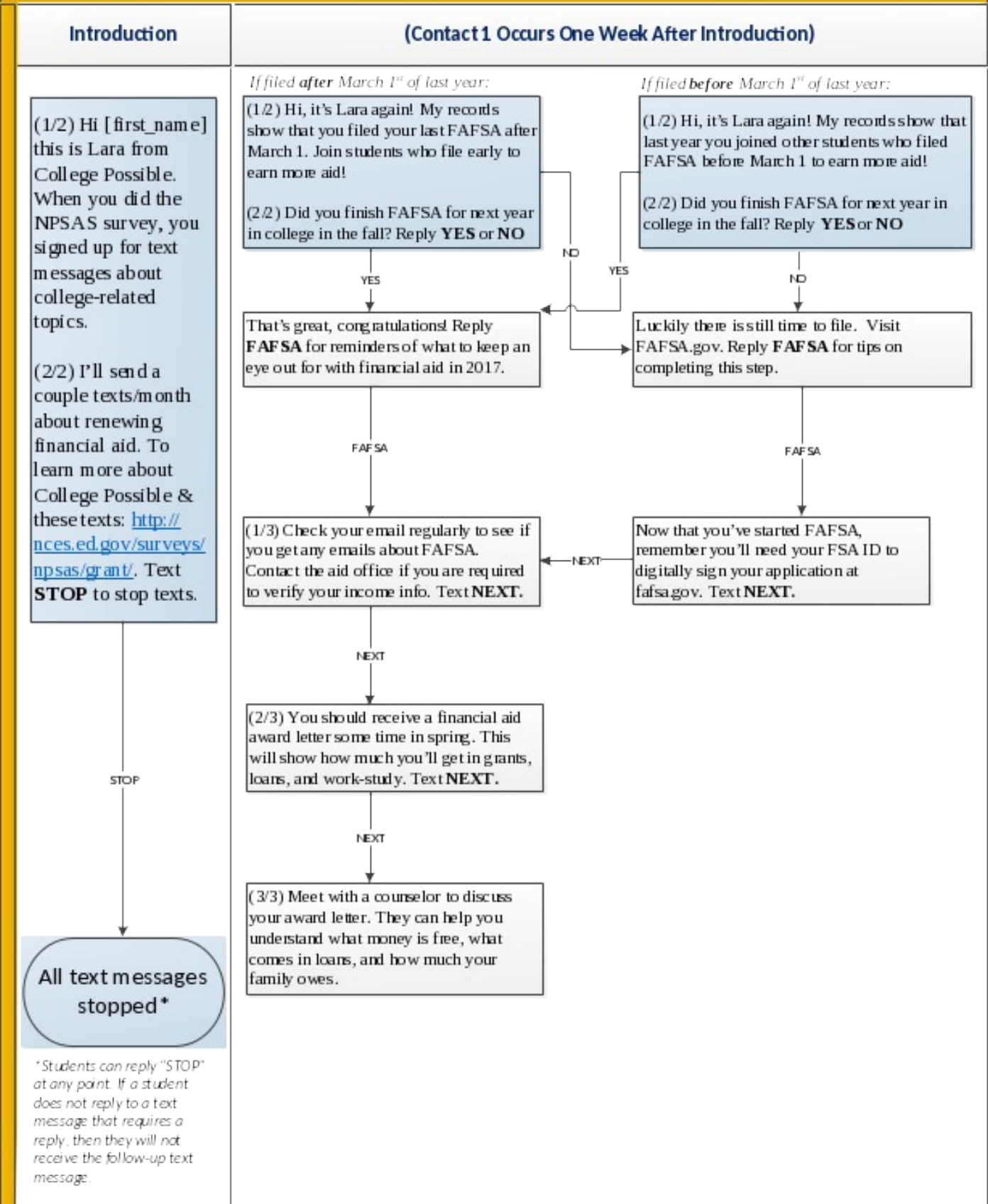
### Contact 9

(1/2) Hi, it's Lara. Now's a good time to think about summer internships that can help you earn money and learn more about possible careers.

(2/2) Contact [SCHOOL ABBREVIATION]'s career center for help finding internships. [ PROVIDE URL]

# GROUP 1B: SOCIAL PRESSURE - Introduction & Contact 1

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)





## GROUP 1B: SOCIAL PRESSURE - Contact 2

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks After Contact 1)

Hi, [first\_name]. Many of your peers rely on campus resources to help them succeed. Have you found helpful supports to turn to for any academic challenges? **YES/NO**

YES

Great! Reply **TIPS** for ideas on getting even more out of your network. This helps you stay on track to meet [COLLEGE\_ABBREV]'s minimum GPA of [SAP GPA] to renew aid.

TIPS

(1/3) Going to professors' office hours is a great way to get questions answered about course materials. Profs can also help you find internship/jobs. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(2/3) Most schools have tutoring centers where students can get 1:1 help with classes! Check your college's website or ask at the library. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(3/3) Creating study groups with peers in your classes or with friends is great for bouncing ideas off each other, especially when prepping for mid terms.

NO

That's OK, it takes time to build a campus network—talk to your friends about what they are doing! Reply **TIPS** for ideas on how to build your college network.

TIPS

TIPS

## GROUP 1B: Social Pressure – Contact 3

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Occurs Approximately 3 Weeks After Contact Or 1 Week After Contact 2)

*If hadn't filed or didn't respond to first FAFSA message:*

(1/2) Hi, it's Lara. Just checking in about FAFSA. About 70 percent of college students have completed their FAFSA by this time of year.

(2/2) Have you finished FAFSA yet? Reply **YES** or **NO**

YES

Way to go! You just took a major step to maximizing how much financial aid you'll receive for your next year in college! [GIF: <http://giphy.com/gifs/Y8QPqeaW4HONFu>]



NO

Doing FAFSA early can earn you more money. Check out this graphic for a list of free FAFSA help online/where you live:



Non-Responder

In case you haven't started the FAFSA yet, we wanted to share with you a few steps you can take to get started.

(1/4) Remember you'll need your FSA ID to digitally sign your application at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov). Text **NEXT**

NEXT

(2/4) Check your email regularly to see if you get any emails about FAFSA. Contact the aid office if you are required to verify your income info. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(3/4) You should receive a financial aid award letter some time in spring. This will show how much you'll get in grants, loans, and work-study. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(4/4) Meet with a counselor to discuss your award letter. They can help you understand what money is free, what comes in loans, and how much your family owes.

*If had filed:*

Hi it's Lara. Did you receive email confirming you filed your FAFSA? You should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) from Federal Student Aid. Reply **YES** or **NO**

YES

Way to go. Be sure to keep an eye on email in case there are additional steps you need to take to finalize your aid application.

NO

OK check for that email to be sure FAFSA has been accepted. If you don't have it, check in with your financial aid office.

## GROUP 1B: SOCIAL PRESSURE – Contact 4-7

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Each Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 4

*For students who attend institutions with supplemental forms to complete.*

(1/2) Hi! In addition to FAFSA, [College abbrev] requires additional financial aid forms: [ADDITIONAL FORMS]. Join other [College abbrev] students who are getting these forms in early to maximize their aid.

(2/2) Contact your financial aid office if you have questions about what to submit to successfully renew your aid: [contact info]

### Contact 5

(1/2) Hi! To be eligible for financial aid you need to make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). At [College abbrev] this means earning a GPA of XX and other requirements.

(2/2) Contact your financial aid office if you have questions about SAP: [contact info] Encourage a friend to do so too if they have questions.

### Contact 6

*This should only go to students who are over 25 years of age and have incomes that put them below the EITC phaseouts lists in this table: We should estimate the amount for the person using their NPSAS info. These should be sent the first week of April, around tax time.*

Filing Status	Qualifying Children Claimed			
	Zero	One	Two	Three or more
Single, Head of Household or Surviving Spouse	\$14,820	\$39,131	\$44,454	\$47,747
Married Filing Jointly	\$20,330	\$44,651	\$49,974	\$53,267

(1/2) Hi! Based on info you shared in NPSAS you may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit. Most people like you who qualify claim the credit.

(2/2) \_\_\_\_\_. If eligible you would receive this as part of a Federal Tax Refund when you file. See <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit/do-i-qualify-for-earned-income-tax-credit-eitc>

### Contact 7

(1/2) Hi! Have you ever had to skip meals or cut the size of meals because there wasn't enough money for food? Like millions of Americans, you may be eligible for monthly SNAP (food assistance) benefits from the federal government, particularly if you work, are on work study or have a dependent child. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>

(2/2) To learn more or to apply go to [state SNAP webpage]

## GROUP 1B: SOCIAL PRESSURE – Contact 8 and 9

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Each Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 8

(1/2) Hey, Lara here. We hear a lot from successful students that good study habits were key to their success. Here's what they suggest:

(2/2) Study in a quiet place when you are well rested. Test yourself by going through practice questions or exams. For more tips: [ONLINE RESOURCE AROUND EFFECTIVE STUDY HABITS]

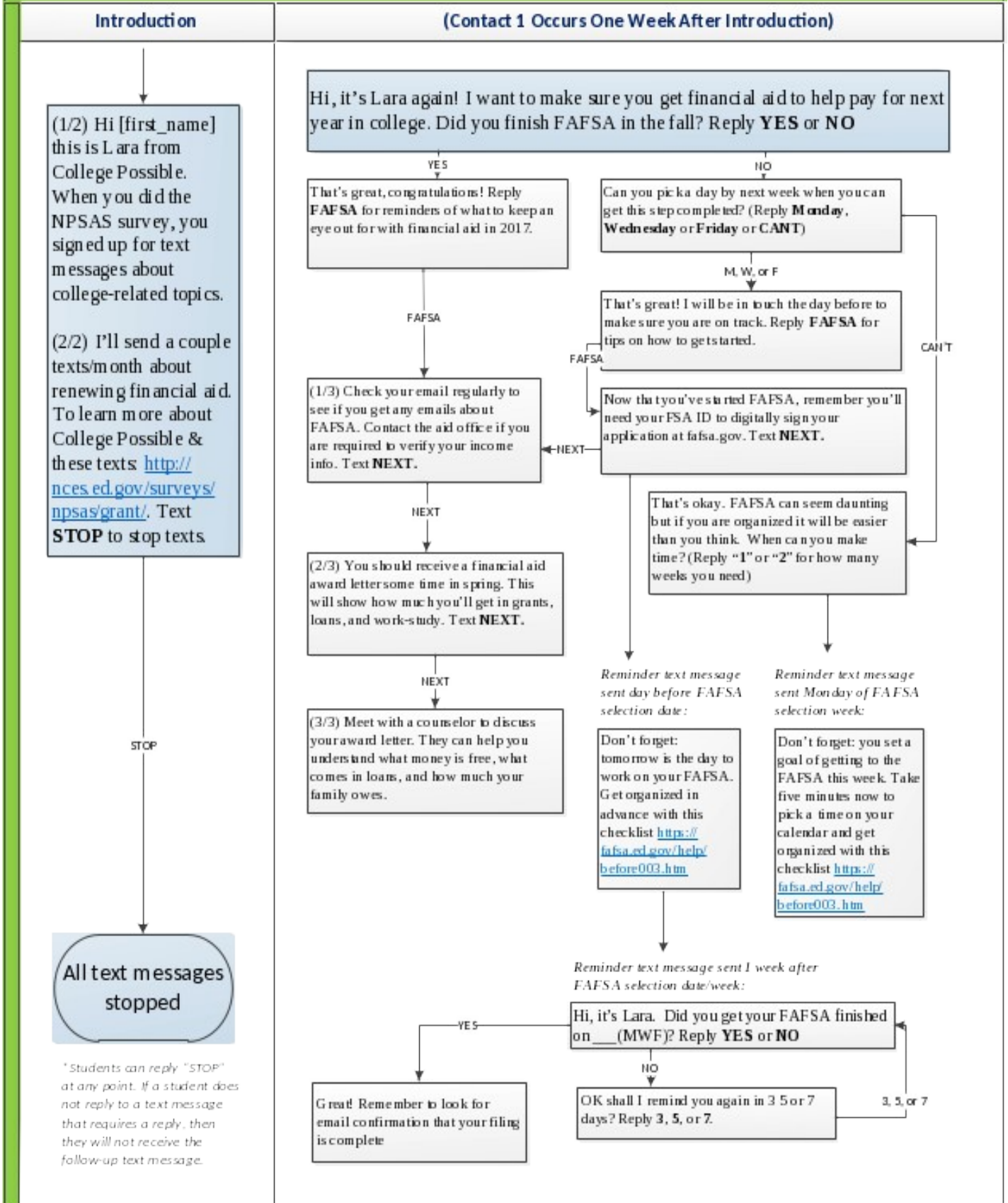
### Contact 9

(1/2) Hi, it's Lara. Many students your age are starting to look for summer jobs and internships. Internships can pay and can help you learn about possible careers.

(2/2) Contact [SCHOOL ABBREVIATION]'s career center for help finding internships. [PROVIDE URL]

# GROUP 1C: COMMITMENT DEVICE - Introduction & Contact 1

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)



## GROUP 1C: COMMITMENT DEVICE – Contact 2

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks After Contact 1)

Hi, [first\_name]. This term, set a goal of exploring a new campus resource to support your success. Have you found helpful supports to turn to for any academic challenges? YES/NO

YES

Great! Reply **TIPS** for ideas on getting even more out of your network. This helps you stay on track to meet [COLLEGE\_ABBREV]'s minimum GPA of [SAP GPA] to renew aid.

TIPS

(1/3) Going to professors' office hours is a great way to get questions answered about course materials. Profs can also help you find internship/jobs. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(2/3) Most schools have tutoring centers where students can get 1:1 help with classes! Check your college's website or ask at the library. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(3/3) Creating study groups with peers in your classes or with friends is great for bouncing ideas off each other, especially when prepping for mid terms.

NO

That's OK, it takes time to build a campus network. Reply **TIPS** for ideas on how to build your college support network & pick one thing to do in the next week.

TIPS

## GROUP 1C: Commitment Device – Contact 3

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Occurs Approximately 3 Weeks After Contact Or 1 Week After Contact 2)

*If hadn't filed or didn't respond to first FAFSA message:*

We know FAFSA can be a challenge. But just like you've handled academic challenges, you can handle this! Have you started FAFSA yet? Reply **YES** or **NO**

YES

Way to go! You just took a major step to maximizing how much financial aid you'll receive for your next year in college! [GIF: <http://giphy.com/gifs/Y8QPqaeawHONFu>]



NO

How about finishing FAFSA this week? Check out this graphic for a list of free FAFSA help online/ where you live and text us which day you'll do FAFSA:



Non-Responder

In case you haven't started the FAFSA yet, we wanted to share with you a few steps you can take to get started.

(1/4) Remember you'll need your FSA ID to digitally sign your application at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov). Text **NEXT**

NEXT

(2/4) Check your email regularly to see if you get any emails about FAFSA. Contact the aid office if you are required to verify your income info. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(3/4) You should receive a financial aid award letter some time in spring. This will show how much you'll get in grants, loans, and work-study. Text **NEXT**.

NEXT

(4/4) Meet with a counselor to discuss your award letter. They can help you understand what money is free, what comes in loans, and how much your family owes.

*If had filed:*

Hi it's Lara. Did you receive email confirming you filed your FAFSA? You should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) from Federal Student Aid. Reply **YES** or **NO**

YES

Way to go. Be sure to keep an eye on email in case there are additional steps you need to take to finalize your aid application.

NO

OK check for that email to be sure FAFSA has been accepted. If you don't have it, check in with your financial aid office.

## GROUP 1C: COMMITMENT DEVICE – Contacts 4-7

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Each Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 4

*For students who attend institutions with supplemental forms to complete.*

(1/2) Hi! In addition to FAFSA, [College abbrev] requires additional financial aid forms: [ADDITIONAL FORMS]. Get these in too to maximize your aid.

(2/2) Pick a time between classes to contact your financial aid office if you have questions about what to submit to successfully renew your aid: [contact info]

### Contact 5

(1/2) Hi! To be eligible for federal financial aid you need to make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). At [College abbrev] this means earning a GPA of XX and other requirements.

(2/2) Questions on SAP? Schedule an appointment today with your financial aid office [contact info]

### Contact 6

*This should only go to students who are over 25 years of age and have incomes that put them below the EITC phaseouts lists in this table: We should estimate the amount for the person using their NPSAS info. These should be sent the first week of April, around tax time.*

Filing Status	Qualifying Children Claimed			
	Zero	One	Two	Three or more
Single, Head of Household or Surviving Spouse	\$14,820	\$39,131	\$44,454	\$47,747
Married Filing Jointly	\$20,330	\$44,651	\$49,974	\$53,267

(1/2) Hi! Based on info you shared in NPSAS you may qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit of up to \_\_\_\_\_. If eligible you would receive this as part of a Federal Tax Refund when you file.

(2/2) Go to <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit/do-i-qualify-for-earned-income-tax-credit-eitc> To see if you qualify and make a plan to file today!

### Contact 7

(1/2) Hi! Have you ever had to skip meals or cut the size of meals because there wasn't enough money for food? You may be eligible for monthly SNAP (food assistance) benefits from the federal government, particularly if you work, are on work study or have a dependent child. Explore this option today by visiting <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>

(2/2) To learn more or to apply go to [state SNAP webpage]



## GROUP 1C: COMMITMENT DEVICE – Contacts 8 and 9

Information and Nudges Only Group (Responses Delivered by Texting Application)

(Each Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 8

(1/2) Hey, Lara here. A couple tips to help you do your best on your finals: Study in a quiet place when you are well rested. Test yourself on practice questions.

(2/2) Take time today to organize your study schedule. Study at least 2 – 3 hours/ day to do your best.

### Contact 9

(1/2) Hi, it's Lara! Now is a good time to think about summer internships that can help you earn money and learn more about possible careers.

(2/2) If you need help or ideas, you should make an appointment today with [SCHOOL ABBREVIATION]'s career center. [PROVIDE URL]

## GROUP 2 - Introduction and Contacts 1-2

Information, Nudges, and Assistance Group (Responses Sent By Financial Aid Advisor)

(Each Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Introduction

(1/2) Hi [first\_name] this is [advisor name] from College Possible. When you did the NPSAS survey, you signed up for text messages about college-related topics.

(2/2) I'll send a couple texts/month about renewing financial aid. You can text back with any questions. Learn more: <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas/grant/>. Text **STOP** to stop texts.

### Contact 1

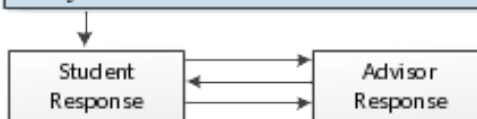
One week after the introduction text:

Hi, it's [advisor name] again! I want to make sure you get financial aid to help pay for next year in college. Did you finish FAFSA in the fall?



### Contact 2

Hi, [first\_name]. I wanted to check on how the semester is going academically. Do you feel on track with your courses so far?



STOP

All text messages stopped\*

\*Students can reply "STOP" at any point. If a student does not reply to a text message that requires a reply, then they will not receive the follow-up text message.

## GROUP 2 - Contact 3

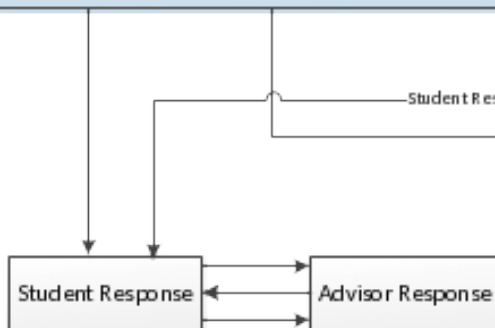
Information, Nudges, and Assistance Group (Responses Sent By Financial Aid Advisor)

(Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 3

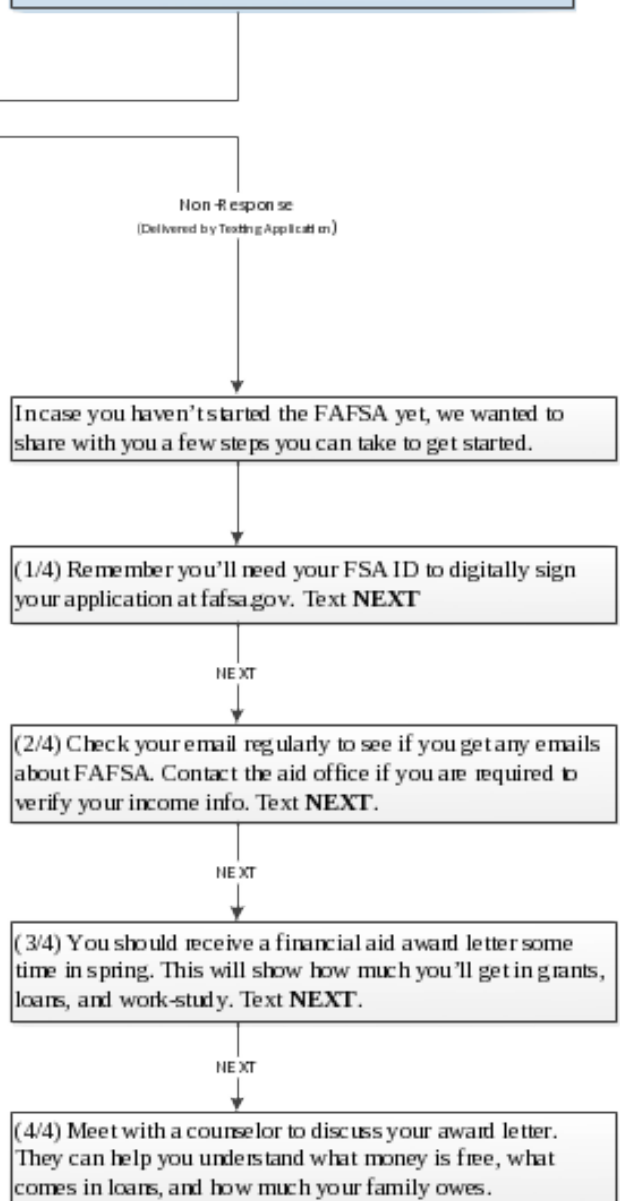
*If hadn't filed or didn't respond to FAFSA Message:*

Hey, It's [advisor]. I know FAFSA can be a challenge, but getting it done unlocks financial aid for next year. Have you started FAFSA yet?



*If had filed:*

Hey, It's [advisor]. Just checking—did you receive an email from Federal Student Aid confirming your FAFSA is all set?



## GROUP 2 – Contacts 4 and 5

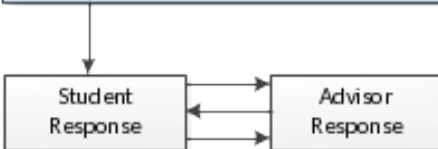
Information, Nudges, and Assistance Group (Responses Sent By Financial Aid Advisor)

(Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 4

*For students who attend institutions with supplemental forms to complete.*

Hi, it's [advisor]! [College abbrev] requires additional financial aid forms: [ADDITIONAL FORMS].  
Want to work together on finalizing your aid renewal?



### Contact 5

Hi, it's [advisor]! Just checking on how courses are going. Do you feel on track to meet [COLLEGE ABBREVS] academic progress requirements (including \_\_\_ GPA)?



## GROUP 2 – Contacts 6-9

Information, Nudges, and Assistance Group (Responses Sent By Financial Aid Advisor)

(Each Contact Occurs Approximately 2 Weeks Apart)

### Contact 6

This should only go to students who are over 25 years of age and have incomes that put them below the EITC phaseouts lists in this table: We should estimate the amount for the person using their NPSAS info. These should be sent the first week of April, around tax time.

Filing Status	Qualifying Children Claimed			
	Zero	One	Two	Three or more
Single, Head of Household or Surviving Spouse	\$14,820	\$39,131	\$44,454	\$47,747
Married Filing Jointly	\$20,330	\$44,651	\$49,974	\$53,267

Hey, it's [advisor]. Based on the info you provided to NPSAS, it looks like you might qualify for a tax break from the federal government. Want to discuss?



### Contact 7

(1/1) Hey, it's [advisor]. Have you ever had to skip meals or cut the size of meals because there wasn't enough money for food? You may be eligible for monthly SNAP (food assistance) benefits from the federal government if you work, are on work study, or have a dependent child. See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>

2/2 Want to discuss? Contact me or go to [state SNAP webpage]



### Contact 8

Hey, [advisor] here. I imagine you have finals coming up pretty soon. How are you feeling going into your exams and final papers?



### Contact 9

Hi there! Now is a good time to think about summer internships that can help you earn money and learn more about possible careers. Want to explore these together?



## NCER-NPSAS Grant Studies Website

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/npsas/grant/>

### NCER-NPSAS Grant Study: Financial Aid Nudges 2017: A National Experiment to Increase Retention of Financial Aid and College Persistence

#### Purpose

This NCER- NPSAS Grant Study – *Financial Aid Nudges 2017: A National Experiment to Increase Retention of Financial Aid and College Persistence* investigates whether an intervention that provides financial aid information, reminders, and advising to college students increases completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and compliance with the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements of the Pell grant program. This research is being conducted under a grant awarded through the NCER- NPSAS grant opportunity described above. The primary grantee is Sara Goldrick-Rab, Temple University (Grant Award #R305A160400), and the co-principal investigators are: Benjamin Castleman, University of Virginia; Lindsay Page, University of Pittsburgh; and Bruce Sacerdote, Dartmouth College. Data collection will be led by the contractor, RTI International (RTI), with College Possible and Signal Vine subcontracted for this study. A project description is available at: <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=1848>.

#### NCER-NPSAS Grant Opportunity

In 2010, the National Center for Education Research (NCER) and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), both within the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), began collaborating on an education grant opportunity related to the cross-sectional National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS). Under the NCER-NPSAS grant opportunity, researchers could submit applications to the Postsecondary and Adult Education topic within the Education Research Grants program (CFDA 84.305A), under either the *Exploration* or *Efficacy and Replication* research goal. Consistent with these two goals, NCER supports research projects using NPSAS to: 1) explore relationships between malleable factors (e.g. information on benefits of financial aid and FAFSA renewal) and postsecondary persistence and completion, as well as the mediators and moderators of those relationships; and 2) evaluate the efficacy of interventions aimed at improving persistence and completion of postsecondary education (e. g. financial aid and FAFSA renewal advice delivered via mail and email). Researchers approved for funding through this program can obtain indirect access to a subsample of the national NPSAS sample (after the study's student interviews are completed) in order to conduct unique research projects that adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Request for Applications (RFA) for the Education Research Grants Program, as well as guidelines set forth by NCES and the NPSAS program.

On July 1, 2016, two grants were awarded using a subsample of 2015-16 NPSAS sample members:

- *Financial Aid Nudges: A National Experiment to Increase Retention of Financial Aid and College Persistence*. A project description is posted here: <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=1848> , and

- *Could Connecting Students with Financial Aid Lead to Better College Outcomes? A Proposal to Test the Effectiveness of FAFSA Interventions Using the NPSAS Sample* (referred to as “Connecting Students with Financial Aid (CSFA) 2017”). A project description is posted here: <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=1853>).

## **Authority**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is authorized to conduct the NCER-NPSAS grant studies by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9543), and to collect students’ education records from educational agencies or institutions for the purposes of evaluating Federally supported education programs under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 34 CFR §§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35). Data collected from or about individual students are used only for statistical or research purposes and may not be disclosed or used, in identifiable form, for any other purpose except as required by law (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). These data are being collected for NCES by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina.

## **Confidentiality**

Since these NCER-NPSAS grant studies are conducted using a subset of NPSAS:16 sample members, all data collection must be done through NCES and the NPSAS:16 data collection contractor, RTI International. This ensures that the confidentiality of the study participants is protected. Specifically, the grantee will have no access to personally identifiable information and may not have direct contact with sample members. RTI International follows strict procedures to protect the privacy and confidentiality of study participants. All project staff members have signed confidentiality agreements and affidavits of nondisclosure. Any data released to the public will be in aggregate form (e.g., statistical tables, graphs). Information obtained may be used only for statistical or research purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose, except as required by law (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §

## **Paperwork Reduction Act**

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this voluntary information collection is 1850-XXXX. The time required to read and respond to text message prompts in the *Financial Aid Nudges 2017* study is approximately 7 minutes per contact. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this survey, or any comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this survey, please write directly to: The *Financial Aid Nudges 2017* Study, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Potomac Center Plaza, 550 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW, PCP-4007, Washington, DC 20202.

OMB Clearance No: 1850-New Expiration Date: ##/##/2020

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