

SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION  
2026-2027 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. What is the purpose for this information collection? Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Include a citation that authorizes the collection of information. Specify the review type of the collection (new, revision, extension, reinstatement with change, reinstatement without change). If revised, briefly specify the changes. If a rulemaking is involved, list the sections with a brief description of the information collection requirement, and/or changes to sections, if applicable.**

The Department of Education (Department) is requesting emergency processing for the revision of the information collection, 1845-0001. We are requesting emergency clearance of the FAFSA form for 180 days. The Department will initiate the full clearance process shortly after approval of the emergency. The important changes to the FAFSA form are described separately in the 2026-27 Summary of Enhancements document.

Section 483 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), mandates that the Secretary of Education “shall produce, distribute, and process free of charge common financial reporting forms as described in this subsection to be used for application and reapplication to determine the need and eligibility of a student for financial assistance...”

The determination of need and eligibility are for the following Title IV, HEA, federal student financial assistance programs: the Federal Pell Grant Program; the Campus-Based programs (Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) and Federal Work-Study (FWS)); the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program; the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant; the Children of Fallen Heroes Scholarship and the Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant.

Federal Student Aid (FSA), an office of the U.S. Department of Education (the Department), subsequently developed an application process to collect and process the data necessary to determine a student’s eligibility to receive Title IV, HEA program assistance. The application process involves an applicant’s submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). After submission and processing of the FAFSA form, an applicant receives a FAFSA Submission Summary, which is a summary of the processed data they submitted on the FAFSA form. The applicant reviews the summary, and, if necessary, will make corrections or updates to their submitted FAFSA data. Institutions of higher education listed by the applicant on the FAFSA form also receive a summary of processed data submitted on the FAFSA form, which is called the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR).

The specific questions that applicants are asked to answer in the application process are described separately in the Data Elements and Justification document. The document identifies the data elements associated with each FAFSA question and provides the justification for including each question on the FAFSA form. In addition to the calculation of financial need for the various Title IV programs, the FAFSA form also collects data that allows for a determination of an applicant’s eligibility for state and institutional financial aid programs. If these data elements were not collected, the Department and institutions of higher education would be unable to make a determination of financial need and subsequently would be unable to award any Title IV, HEA program assistance, as mandated by the HEA. Many states would also be greatly hindered in their calculation of state aid to applicants.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

The purpose of the application is to collect personal and financial data from current or prospective students in order to perform a need analysis as described in Part F of the HEA. The application is available in English and Spanish and the primary options for completing a FAFSA form include:

- 1) Electronic– Applicants can complete an electronic version of the FAFSA form which offers a customized experience, or
- 2) Paper – Applicants can complete and submit the PDF version of the FAFSA form. This version must be mailed to the Department for processing.

More specific application options are described in Question 12.

The information an applicant is required to provide on the FAFSA form varies based upon the need analysis formula that is being utilized. There are three need analysis formulas; the first is for dependent students (this formula also requires parental data), the second is for single independent students or married independent students without dependents other than a spouse, and the third formula is for independent students with dependents other than a spouse.

After the application is completed, the applicant submits the form to the Department and the data is processed by the Department's FAFSA Processing System (FPS). The need analysis results in a student aid index (SAI), which is an index used by postsecondary educational institutions and states when determining the types and amounts of both federal and non-federal financial aid students may receive. The SAI is calculated in accordance with the statutory formula in Part F of the HEA and is intended to indicate a student's ability (and for dependent applicants, their family's ability) to contribute toward the student's cost of attending a postsecondary educational institution. The following components are considered in the need analysis formula to determine the SAI:

- 1) The available income of (A) the independent student and (if married) the independent student's spouse, or (B) the dependent student and dependent student's parents; and
- 2) The available assets of (A) the independent student and (if married) the independent student's spouse, or (B) the dependent student and the dependent student's parents.

Once the FPS processes the applicant's data using the appropriate need analysis formula, the Department sends an ISIR electronically to the postsecondary institutions the applicant listed on the FAFSA form. All information reported on the FAFSA form is included on the school's ISIR, except for the student's sex, race/ethnicity, and list of colleges. An ISIR is also sent to the state grant agencies (based on the applicant's state of legal residence, as well as the states where the institutions the applicant listed on his or her FAFSA form are located). With the exception of the student's sex and race/ethnicity, the ISIR that states receive includes all information reported on the FAFSA form, including the list of colleges.

The Department notifies the applicant of the processing results via a FAFSA Submission Summary. Similar to the ISIR, the summary will contain the results of the processed application, including the student's SAI, a transcript of the information that the student originally reported on the FAFSA form, and other relevant information (e.g., the applicant's financial aid history from the Department's National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)). There are two versions of the summary that an applicant may receive; a paper summary, or an electronic summary.

- 1) The paper summary is a full synopsis that is mailed to applicants who did not provide an e-mail address.
- 2) The electronic summary is available in fafsa.gov to all applicants who log in with Federal Student Aid electronic credentials (FSA ID). Notifications for the electronic summary are sent to students who provided a valid e-mail address on their electronic or paper application. These notifications are sent by e-mail and include a hyperlink that takes the user to fafsa.gov.

Applicants are expected to review the information on their summary and, if necessary, correct errors in the reported information, verify the responses if so requested, and supply any missing information. Specifically, there are several ways that an applicant can correct, update, or provide additional information:

- 1) Fafsa.gov – Any applicant who has an FSA ID – regardless of how they originally applied – may correct any of the data they provided manually on the FAFSA form on fafsa.gov;
- 2) Paper FAFSA Submission Summary – Applicants who receive or request a paper summary can make hand-written corrections or additions directly on the paper summary and mail it back to the Department. Applicants for whom Federal Tax Information (FTI) was obtained from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will be unable to correct their FTI on a paper FAFSA Submission Summary. Corrections to the applicant’s Social Security Number (SSN) can be made using the paper summary. Although the paper summary can be used to make changes, the electronic summary cannot be used for corrections;
- 3) FAFSA Partner Portal - With the applicant’s permission, an institution can use the FAFSA Partner Portal to correct the FAFSA form; and
- 4) Electronic Other – With the applicant’s permission, corrections can be made via the postsecondary institution’s third-party servicer, a postsecondary institution’s mainframe computer, or a postsecondary institution’s proprietary software for the student;

An applicant who corrects and/or updates (as defined in 34 CFR 668.55) their FAFSA form resubmits the information to the Department. The Department, in turn, processes the changed information and sends the applicant an updated FAFSA Submission Summary. For most applicants the application process is now concluded, as the Department has processed the most accurate and complete information for use in the need analysis formula and the postsecondary institution is able to determine eligibility and award aid.

Regulations, however, establish a verification process (as defined in 34 CFR 668, Subpart E) that requires some applicants to provide documentation to the postsecondary institution to confirm the information reported on the FAFSA form. These procedures “...govern the verification by institutions of information submitted by applicants for student financial assistance under the subsidized student financial assistance programs.”

Applications are selected for verification either by the FPS or by the postsecondary institution. A postsecondary institution must verify all applications the FPS selects for verification. Prior to receiving any federal subsidized aid, students selected for verification must complete the verification process with the postsecondary institution, and the institution must submit any final changes to the FPS for processing.

In conclusion, the above narrative provides an overview of the application process that exists to determine an applicant’s eligibility for Title IV, HEA program assistance. Since Title IV, HEA funds should only be disbursed to eligible students and the amounts disbursed should reflect the actual need of the applicant and family, the awarding of aid by the financial aid office at the postsecondary institution does not occur until the applicant has completed the entire application process – initial submission, review, corrections and/or verification, if necessary. The entire application process allows the Department to capture the most complete and accurate information for use in the need analysis formula

and reduces the possibility that an applicant could receive Title IV, HEA funds they are not eligible to receive.

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision of adopting this means of collection. Please identify systems or websites used to electronically collect this information. Also describe any consideration given to using technology to reduce burden. If there is an increase or decrease in burden related to using technology (e.g. using an electronic form, system or website from paper), please explain in number 12.**

Over time, the Department has made several process improvements that have utilized technological advancements. The following describes some components of the application process that have incorporated such advancements.

### **Fafsa.gov**

483(a)(3) of the HEA mandates that, “The Secretary shall produce, distribute, and process forms in electronic format...” Subsequently, the Department developed the fafsa.gov website in 1998. Fafsa.gov has grown to be the primary entry point for tens of millions of students who apply for federal, state, and institutional financial aid. The Department endeavors to continually improve fafsa.gov to further simplify the application experience for students and families. The following describes the benefits of using fafsa.gov:

- Applications submitted through fafsa.gov are processed much faster than the PDF version of the FAFSA form
- Applicants who need to correct or provide missing information can do so easily by returning to fafsa.gov
- Fafsa.gov creates a customized, smart application experience based on an applicant’s personal data and previous answers
- In addition to computers, fafsa.gov is accessible from mobile and/or tablet devices, allowing customers to submit applications from the device of their choice
- Applicants who use fafsa.gov benefit from web edits that ensure all required fields are completed and all data conflicts are resolved prior to application submission, which makes for a reduced application rejection rate during processing
- Fafsa.gov is a safe and secure web site that uses standard commercial encryption protocols that determine the highest encryption level the browser will support
- In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, fafsa.gov is 508-compliant and accessible to visually impaired applicants.

### **Electronic Signature and FSA ID**

The FSA ID, which consists of a user-created username and password, can be used as an electronic signature for the FAFSA form. Since the submission of the FAFSA form requires signatures from all

contributors to the form, the FSA ID facilitates a simpler application experience by eliminating the need for a paper signature submission. The FSA ID can also be used to access and review processed FAFSA data, and to make corrections or updates.

### **Customer Service – Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC)**

In addition to the assistance handling inquiries about the financial aid process, the application, and the FSA ID, FSAIC offers technological features that have simplified the application experience for many applicants.

- Chat – live web chat capability with a customer service representative
- Email – email communications with a customer service representative
- Automated phone self-service – The interactive voice response unit (IVRU) menus offer self-service functionality for some of the most common customer inquiries including a FAFSA application status check and answers to frequently asked questions. These features are available to customer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and require no agent assistance.

### **Image and Data Capture (IDC)**

The Department has maintained the IDC document management system. The system scans images, captures data, and sends the data for processing to the FPS. The IDC utilizes optical character recognition (OCR) to electronically recognize and capture typed or hand-written data from the printed FAFSA PDF and paper FAFSA Submission Summary. Use of this technology results in the automation of data entry tasks, thus reducing the processing time for applicants.

#### **4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The FAFSA collection requirements do not contain any duplication of data elements. Because legislation requires that the FAFSA form be completed annually by applicants, returning applicants encounter similar questions in subsequent years.

Applicants and contributors filing electronically are required to log in to Studentaid.gov with their FSA ID. Data that is associated with their FSA ID is pre-populated into the FAFSA form.

The review and corrections segment of the application process does not duplicate the process of initial data collection. Reviewing and correcting the application is fundamental to the application experience because it creates an opportunity to obtain the most accurate applicant information.

#### **5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden. A small entity may be (1) a small business which is deemed to be one that is independently owned and operated and that is not dominant in its field of operation; (2) a small organization that is any not-for-profit enterprise that is independently owned and operated and is not dominant in its field; or (3) a small government jurisdiction, which is a government of a city, county, town, township, school district, or special district with a population of less than 50,000.**

The collection of eligibility information for the awarding of student aid does not impact small businesses.

**6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

If the application process was not completed and data elements not collected, the Department would be unable to make an accurate determination of financial need necessary to award any Title IV, HEA program assistance, as mandated. In addition, the HEA requires annual determination of the applicant's need for Title IV, HEA program assistance. If the data were collected less frequently, the Department would be in violation of the law.

As a part of the annual application process, the corrections component provides an opportunity for the applicant to make corrections. The corrections component is crucial for assuring that comprehensive, accurate data is used to calculate the applicant's SAI and overall financial aid eligibility. If the Department were unable to request verification or correction of submitted data, the SAI could be calculated using questionable or erroneous data. In addition, errors discovered as a result of multiple federal database matches (e.g., Social Security Administration (SSA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Veteran Affairs, etc.) could not be corrected. The result would be countless incomplete or inaccurate FAFSA forms and, potentially, millions of incorrect eligibility determinations resulting in the loss of taxpayer dollars by awarding Title IV, HEA program assistance based on erroneous applicant data.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**

- **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results than can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**

- **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or that unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

The application does not invoke special circumstances, as described.

- 8. As applicable, state that the Department has published the 60 and 30 Federal Register notices as required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB.**

**Include a citation for the 60-day comment period (e.g. Vol. 84 FR ##### and the date of publication). Summarize public comments received in response to the 60-day notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden. If only non-substantive comments are provided, please provide a statement to that effect and that it did not relate or warrant any changes to this information collection request. In your comments, please also indicate the number of public comments received.**

**For the 30-day notice, indicate that a notice will be published.**

**Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instruction and record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

**Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years – even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.**

The Department is requesting emergency clearance of this collection, 1845-0001. The Department will initiate the full clearance package upon approval of the emergency request. Changes to the form include removing the word “legal” from the state and date of legal residence questions and updating the help text for the asset questions to instruct users not to include a family business with 100 or fewer full-time employees, farms where the family resides, or a commercial fishing business and related expenses. We estimate that fewer than 2% of FAFSA filers report assets in the impacted area, therefore this will not change the burden calculation.

Additionally, students and parents participate in usability studies on existing functions of the application and/or proposed enhancements. A satisfaction survey is also available to applicants that complete the FAFSA form. The quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the survey is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis. Consideration of the views expressed by these groups is part of the annual

development process of the application. The survey is approved under information collection 1845-0045.

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees with meaningful justification.**

There are no payments or gifts for the completion and/or submission of the application.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If personally identifiable information (PII) is being collected, a Privacy Act statement should be included on the instrument. Please provide a citation for the Systems of Record Notice and the date a Privacy Impact Assessment was completed as indicated on the IC Data Form. A confidentiality statement with a legal citation that authorizes the pledge of confidentiality should be provided.<sup>1</sup> If the collection is subject to the Privacy Act, the Privacy Act statement is deemed sufficient with respect to confidentiality. If there is no expectation of confidentiality, simply state that the Department makes no pledge about the confidentiality of the data. If no PII will be collected, state that no assurance of confidentiality is provided to respondents. If the Paperwork Burden Statement is not included physically on a form, you may include it here. Please ensure that your response per respondent matches the estimate provided in number 12.**

The confidentiality of the data collected is discussed in the Routine Uses section of the System of Records Notice for the Aid Awareness and Application Processing (18-11-21), published in 87 FR 56026 (September 13, 2022) and as amended by 89 FR 46870 (May 30, 2024).

A section on Privacy, printed on page four of the FAFSA PDF and linked from the homepage of [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov), informs the applicant that the postsecondary educational institutions identified by the student will also have access to the data, and that the grant agencies in the applicant's state of legal residence will receive the data even if the student does not provide consent pursuant to section 483(a)(3)(iii) of the HEA. The Department of Education allows state grant agencies to disclose certain limited "FAFSA Filing Status Information" to certain entities (secondary schools, local education agencies (LEAs), and other designated entities), so those certain entities can help facilitate students' completion of the FAFSA form. The limited FAFSA completion information includes the date the FAFSA form was submitted, the date the FAFSA form was processed, whether the applicant was chosen for verification, and the completion status of the FAFSA form.

Privacy Act information is available on the paper FAFSA Submission Summary and accessible at all times from [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov). In addition, agencies such as law enforcement agencies, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Congress, and other entities have access to the data. No other individuals have access to this information

---

<sup>1</sup> Requests for this information are in accordance with the following ED and OMB policies: Privacy Act of 1974, OMB Circular A-108 – Privacy Act Implementation – Guidelines and Responsibilities, OMB Circular A-130 Appendix I – Federal Agency Responsibilities for Maintaining Records About Individuals, OMB M-03-22 – OMB Guidance for Implementing the Privacy Provisions of the E-Government Act of 2002, OMB M-06-15 – Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Information, OM:6-104 – Privacy Act of 1974 (Collection, Use and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information)



without the express written consent of the applicant or as authorized by the Secretary consistent with the provisions of Section 483(a)(3)(C).

- 11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. The justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

As required in Section 483(a)(2)(ii) of the HEA, the FAFSA form asks students to provide their sex and race/ethnicity. The Department of Education uses this information only for statistical purposes. On the page within the form where these questions are presented, messaging displays instructing students that answers to the questions will not affect their eligibility for federal student aid and will not be used in any aid calculations. Students are provided an opportunity to decline to answer the race/ethnicity question.

- 12. Provide estimates of the hour burden for this current information collection request. The statement should:**

- **Provide an explanation of how the burden was estimated, including identification of burden type: recordkeeping, reporting or third-party disclosure. Address changes in burden due to the use of technology (if applicable). Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.**
- **Please do not include increases in burden and respondents numerically in this table. Explain these changes in number 15.**
- **Indicate the number of respondents by affected public type (federal government, individuals or households, private sector – businesses or other for-profit, private sector – not-for-profit institutions, farms, state, local or tribal governments), frequency of response, annual hour burden. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable.**
- **If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burden in the table below.**
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents of the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. [Use this site](#) to research the appropriate wage rate. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in Item 14. If there is no cost to respondents, indicate by entering 0 in the chart below and/or provide a statement.**

**Provide a descriptive narrative here in addition to completing the table below with burden hour estimates.**

For the 2026-2027 FAFSA form, the Department continues to utilize the applicant burden model (ABM) which was approved by the OMB beginning with the 2016-2017 application cycle.

The estimates included are the result of the Department's efforts to determine the public's burden as it relates to the application process for federal student aid. The ABM measures applicant burden through an assessment of the activities each applicant conducts in conjunction with other applicant characteristics and in terms of burden, the average applicant's experience. Key determinants of the ABM include:

- The total number of applicants that may potentially apply for federal student aid;
- How the applicant chooses to complete and submit the FAFSA form (e.g., by paper or electronically);
- How the applicant chooses to submit any corrections and/or updates;
- The type of FAFSA Submission Summary document the applicant receives (electronic or paper);
- The average amount of time involved in preparing to complete the application.

The Department will use the projected enrollment number for degree granting institutions published by the National Center for Education Statistics in the [Digest of Education Statistics](#) (2023) as the total and potential application population that may apply for federal student aid.

**Table 1. Enrollment projections from NCES Projections of Education Statistics**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrollment Projections</b>
2025	19,567,692
2026	19,807,880

For the basis of the ABM, the Department is estimating 19,807,880 FAFSA form submissions for 2026-2027.

Once the applicant volume is projected, we determine the total estimated burden and cost by examining each FAFSA completion method. The completion method reflects how applicants choose to complete and submit the FAFSA form. Each completion method is assigned an individual burden estimate to reflect the average time an applicant will spend to prepare, complete and submit a FAFSA form and/or correction. The Department determined that recordkeeping would not be documented as a component of the burden estimate. Since the Department retains, for the applicant, summaries of the data submitted and a history of their changes, the need for an applicant to retain a set of records is optional.

The components that were included in the individual burden estimate include information from the federal processing system and user data from surveys and this allowed us to estimate the individual burden for each completion method. The individual burden estimate includes the following:

- 1) Preparation – Average time it takes to review instructions and gather the documents necessary to complete the FAFSA form (e.g., FAFSA PDF, student/spouse and/or parent's federal income tax returns, bank statements);

- 2) Completion – Average time it takes for data entry (paper or electronic), referencing instructions, or accessing on-line help or calling customer service; and
- 3) Submission – Average time it takes to review the Certification Statement, apply signatures, make copies of paper forms or print electronic outputs, and if necessary, obtain postage and mail.

As a result, Table 2 details the initial submission behavior (completion method) and provides the total burden for submission of the FAFSA form; along with associated costs by type of application. Information Collection instruments FAFSA (IC 1) includes aggregate projections of fafsa.gov submissions.

Table 3 details the corrections behavior by type of corrections submitted and allows us to calculate the burden associated with each correction method; associated costs by type of correction are also provided.

Table 4 shows the total number of FAFSA Submission Summaries distributed as a result of the initial submission of the FAFSA form and any corrections made. Table 4 also identifies the type of FAFSA Submission Summaries distributed and provides associated cost for each.

Lastly, Table 5 summarizes the overall total annual responses, overall total annual burden and overall total costs for the 2026-2027 Federal Student Aid application. Total annual responses for the 2026-2027 Federal Student Aid application are estimated to be 31,791,647. The total estimated burden for the 2026-2027 Federal Student Aid application is 20,412,753 hours, a decrease of 2,004,707 hours from the prior cycle year projection. The decrease is largely attributed to an adjustment in the agency estimate of burden. The average burden per applicant is down across both information collection instruments. Table 5 also summarizes the annual cost burden to complete the application process, which is \$64,554.97, an increase of \$842.24 from the prior projection. The increase in costs is mainly attributed to the increase in postage stamps from 63 to 73 cents. The annual cost burden is comprised of the individual postage cost of 73 cents that would be required of applicants who choose to submit a printed FAFSA PDF (Table 2) or correct a paper FAFSA Submission Summary (Table 3).

**Table 2. Initial submission of FAFSA® forms**

<b>Initial Submission of FAFSA (Part 1 of Application Process)</b>							
<b>Type of Application Filed</b>	<b>Type of FAFSA Applicant (Independent or Dependent)</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Applicants (Volume)</b>	<b>Estimated Individual Applicant Burden (Hours)</b>	<b>Estimated Individual Applicant Cost (Dollars)</b>	<b>Total Burden for All Applicants (Hours)</b>	<b>Total Cost for All Applicants (Dollars)</b>
<b>Student Entry- Electronic</b>							
FAFSA (IC 1)	<i>Overall Usage</i>		99.85%				
The electronic version of the FAFSA completed by applicants.	Dependent	48%	9,493,521	1.22	\$-	11,563,250	\$-
	Independent	52%	10,284,647	0.61	\$-	6,310,089	\$-
	<b>Subtotals</b>		<b>19,778,168</b>			<b>17,873,339</b>	<b>\$-</b>
<b>Paper Submissions</b>							
Printed FAFSA (IC 2)	<i>Overall Usage</i>		0.15%				
The printed version of the FAFSA provided for applicants who are unable to access the Internet or complete the electronic form.	Dependent	21%	6,239	1.47	\$0.73	9,160	\$4,554.47
	Independent	79%	23,472	0.86	\$0.73	20,269	\$17,134.56
	<b>Subtotals</b>		<b>29,712</b>			<b>29,429</b>	<b>\$21,689.03</b>
<b>Total Applicants</b>							<b>19,807,880</b>
<b>Burden for Applicants</b>							<b>17,902,768</b>
<b>Cost for Applicants</b>							<b>\$21,689.03</b>

**Table 3. Correcting submitted FAFSA® information**

<b>Correcting Submitted FAFSA Information (Part 3 of Application Process)</b>							
<b>Type of Correction</b>	<b>Type of FAFSA Respondent by Filing Option (Independent or Dependent)</b>		<b>Estimated Number of Corrections Received (Volume)</b>	<b>Estimated Individual Burden (Hours)</b>	<b>Estimated Individual Applicant Cost (Dollars)</b>	<b>Total Burden for All Respondents (Hours)</b>	<b>Total Cost for All Applicants (Dollars)</b>
<b>Fafsa.gov</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		40.76%				
Any applicant who has an FSA ID – regardless of how they originally applied – may correct using FOTW Corrections.	Dependent	55%	2,686,521	0.18	\$-	483,574	\$-
	Independent	45%	2,198,063	0.12	\$-	263,768	\$-
	<b>Subtotals</b>		<b>4,884,584</b>			<b>747,342</b>	
<b>Electronic Other - Corrections</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		15.33%				
With the applicant's	Dependent		1,837,112	0.05	\$-	91,856	\$-

permission, corrections can be made via: a school's third-party servicer, a school's mainframe computer, FAA Access or a school's proprietary software.	s & Independents						
<b>Paper FAFSA Submission Summary</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		0.49%				
Applicants can write corrections directly on the paper FAFSA Submission Summary and mail for processing.	Dependents & Independents		58,720	0.18	\$0.73	10,570	\$42,865.94
<b>FAA Access - Corrections</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		3.83%				
With the FAFSA filer's permission, an institution can use FAA Access to correct the FAFSA.	Dependents & Independents		458,978	0.05	\$-	22,949	\$-
<b>Internal Department Corrections</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		39.59%				
The Department will submit an applicant's record for system generated corrections. There is no burden to the applicants under this correction type.	Dependents & Independents		4,744,374	0.00	\$-	0	\$-
<b>Total Corrections</b>							11,983,767
<b>Burden for Applicants</b>							872,715
<b>Cost for Applicants</b>							\$42,865.94

**Table 4. Reviewing FAFSA® information – FAFSA Submission Summary distribution**

<b>Correcting Submitted FAFSA Information (Part 3 of Application Process)</b>							
<b>Type of Correction</b>	<b>Type of FAFSA Respondent by Filing Option (Independent or Dependent)</b>		<b>Estimated Number of Corrections Received (Volume)</b>	<b>Estimated Individual Burden (Hours)</b>	<b>Estimated Individual Applicant Cost (Dollars)</b>	<b>Total Burden for All Respondents (Hours)</b>	<b>Total Cost for All Applicants (Dollars)</b>
<b>Fafsa.gov</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		40.76%				
Any applicant who has an FSA ID – regardless of how they originally applied – may correct using FOTW Corrections.	Dependent	55%	2,686,521	0.18	\$-	483,574	\$-
	Independent	45%	2,198,063	0.12	\$-	263,768	\$-
	<b>Subtotals</b>		<b>4,884,584</b>			<b>747,342</b>	
<b>Electronic Other -</b>	<i>Overall</i>		15.33%				

<b>Corrections</b>	<i>Usage</i>						
With the applicant's permission, corrections can be made via: a school's third-party servicer, a school's mainframe computer, FAA Access or a school's proprietary software.	Dependent s & Independen ts		1,837,112	0.05	\$-	91,856	\$-
<b>Paper FAFSA Submission Summary</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		0.49%				
Applicants can write corrections directly on the paper FAFSA Submission Summary and mail for processing.	Dependent s & Independen ts		58,720	0.18	\$0.73	10,570	\$42,865.94
<b>FAA Access - Corrections</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		3.83%				
<b>With the FAFSA filer's permission, an institution can use FAA Access to correct the FAFSA.</b>	<b>Dependen ts &amp; Independen ts</b>		<b>458,978</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>22,949</b>	<b>\$-</b>
<b>Internal Department Corrections</b>	<i>Overall Usage</i>		39.59%				
The Department will submit an applicant's record for system generated corrections. There is no burden to the applicants under this correction type.	Dependent s & Independen ts		4,744,374	0.00	\$-	0	\$-
Total Corrections							11,983,767
Burden for Applicants							872,715
Cost for Applicants							\$42,865.94

**Table 5. Total burden and total costs for 2026-2027 FAFSA® form**

<b>Application Process Summary</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Burden (Hours)</b>	<b>Cost (Dollars)</b>
Initial Submission	19,807,880	17,902,768	\$21,689.03
Corrections	11,983,767	872,715	\$42,865.94
FAFSA Submission Summary Review	0	1,637,270	\$0.00
<b>Total Annual Responses</b>	<b>31,791,647</b>		
<b>Total Burden for All Applicants</b>		<b>20,412,753</b>	
<b>Total Cost for All Applicants</b>			<b>\$64,554.97</b>

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14.)**

- The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life); and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information. Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and acquiring and maintaining record storage facilities.
- If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.
- Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices. Also, these estimates should not include the hourly costs (i.e., the monetization of the hours) captured above in Item 12.

Total Annualized Capital/Startup Cost : N/A  
 Total Annual Costs (O&M) : N/A  
 Total Annualized Costs Requested : N/A

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.**

The projected cost to create the application, related applicant products or instructional materials for 2026-2027 is **\$70,296,719**. The projections also include the cost associated with the operations and maintenance of the Department's processing system mainframe software and systems and other costs like printing, mailing, and customer service.

**Table 6. Annual Costs**

<b>Projected Costs</b>	<b>2026 - 2027</b>
<b>Category 1 – AEDS &amp; DCC Operations and Maintenance Services:</b>	
<b>Front end:</b> This category is the primary delivery area performed under the DCC contract. It consists of system development and maintenance of Information Technology (IT) products and the primary operational programs: FAFSA web services, status reports, ongoing support of existing software and hardware, Business Process Optimization enablement (call center), management of volume peaks, design services, usability tests, and statistical analysis support.	<b>\$12,880,719</b>
<b>Back end:</b> This category is the primary delivery area performed under the Award Eligibility Determination (AED) contract. It consists of system development and operations and maintenance of Information Technology (IT) products and their primary operational programs: developing the back end processing for the next FAFSA cycle (FAFSA Processing System and FAFSA Partner Portal), O&M of up to three FAFSA cycles, imaging and processing paper applications and other paper products related to eligibility, managing the print and mailing of FAFSA Submission Summary documents and related FAFSA documents, operating the FPS Help Desk, and providing statistical analysis through End of Year reporting and the IRS Statistical Study	<b>\$57,416,000</b>
<b>Total Projected Annual Cost</b>	<b>\$70,296,719</b>



15. **Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments. Generally, adjustments in burden result from re-estimating burden and/or from economic phenomenon outside of an agency's control (e.g., correcting a burden estimate or an organic increase in the size of the reporting universe). Program changes result from a deliberate action that materially changes a collection of information and generally are result of new statute or an agency action (e.g., changing a form, revising regulations, redefining the respondent universe, etc.). Burden changes should be disaggregated by type of change (i.e., adjustment, program change due to new statute, and/or program change due to agency discretion), type of collection (new, revision, extension, reinstatement with change, reinstatement without change) and include totals for changes in burden hours, responses and costs (if applicable).**

**Provide a descriptive narrative for the reasons of any change in addition to completing the table with the burden hour change(s) here.**

The Department is projecting a burden decrease of 2,004,707 hours. The burden decrease is largely attributed to an adjustment in the agency 2025-26 estimate. The FAFSA simplification provisions and user feedback implemented in 2024-25 and 2025-26 application have ultimately delivered a more intuitive and interactive FAFSA preparation, completion and submission experience leading to a significant decrease in the original estimate to prepare, complete and submit a FAFSA form. We do not believe the requested changes associated with the One Big Beautiful Bill Act will impact this burden calculation.

Tables 7-10 summarize the difference in total annual burden change, the agency estimate adjustment, along with a side-by-side comparison of individual application burden.

**Table 7. Estimated Annual Applicant Burden and Cost**

	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>Total Annual Responses (Applications+ Corrections)</b>	<b>31,791,647</b>	<b>34,328,439</b>	<b>-2,536,792</b>	<b>-7.39%</b>
Total Applicant Burden	20,412,753	22,417,460	-2,004,707	<b>-8.94%</b>
Cost for All Applicants	\$64,554.97	\$63,712.73	\$842.24	<b>1.32%</b>

**Table 8. Estimated Annual Applicant Burden breakout**

<b>Associated Burden</b>	<b>Applicants</b>	<b>Corrections</b>	<b>SAR Review</b>	<b>Total Applicant Burden</b>
2026-27	17,902,768	872,715	1,637,270	20,412,753
2025-26	19,578,216	1,071,329	1,767,915	22,417,460

<b>Difference</b>	<b>-1,675,448</b>	<b>-198,614</b>	<b>-130,645</b>	<b>-2,004,707</b>
<b>Percent Change</b>	<b>-8.56%</b>	<b>-18.54%</b>	<b>-7.39%</b>	<b>-8.94%</b>

**Table 9. Program and Agency Adjustment**

	<b>Program Change Due to New Statute</b>	<b>Program Change Due to Agency Discretion</b>	<b>Change Due to Adjustment in Agency Estimate</b>
<b>Total Burden</b>			<b>-1,675,448</b>
<b>Total Responses</b>			
<b>Total Costs (if applicable)</b>			

**Table 10. Individual Application Burden Current vs Prior year**

<b>Collection Instrument</b>	<b>2026-27</b>	<b>2025-26</b>
<b>Initial Application</b>	Dependent average of 1.21 hours per application; Independent average of .61 hours per application	Dependent average of 1.53 hours per application; Independent average of .77 hours per application
<b>Paper</b>	Dependent average of 1.47 hours per application; Independent average of .86 hours per application	Dependent average of 1.83 hours per application; Independent average of 1.20 hours per application

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The results of the collected information will not be published for tabulation or publication.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The expiration date for OMB approval will not be included on the 2026-2027 FAFSA PDF and FAFSA Submission Summary for design reasons, although the OMB control number is displayed.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in the Certification of Paperwork Reduction Act.

Exceptions to the certification requirement are not requested for this information collection.