21st Century Scholars Auto Enrollment and FAFSA Update

Student Advocates Conference

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Indiana Commission for Higher Education

STUDENT ADVOCATES CONFERENCE

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS

INDIANA COMMISSION for HIGHER EDUCATION

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS - BACKGROUND

- The program was established in 1990 to increase Hoosier students' aspirations for and access to higher education.
- Income-eligible students enroll in 7th or 8th grade.
- Scholars who fulfill the Scholar Pledge earn up to four years of paid tuition at an Indiana college.
- More than 50,000 students have earned a degree through 21st Century Scholars.

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS - BACKGROUND

- Pays up to four years full tuition at Indiana public colleges.
- Pays partial tuition at approved Indiana private or proprietary colleges.
  - Private: Pays average cost of 4-year public colleges
  - Proprietary: Pays equivalent cost of Ivy Tech Community College

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS - REQUIREMENTS

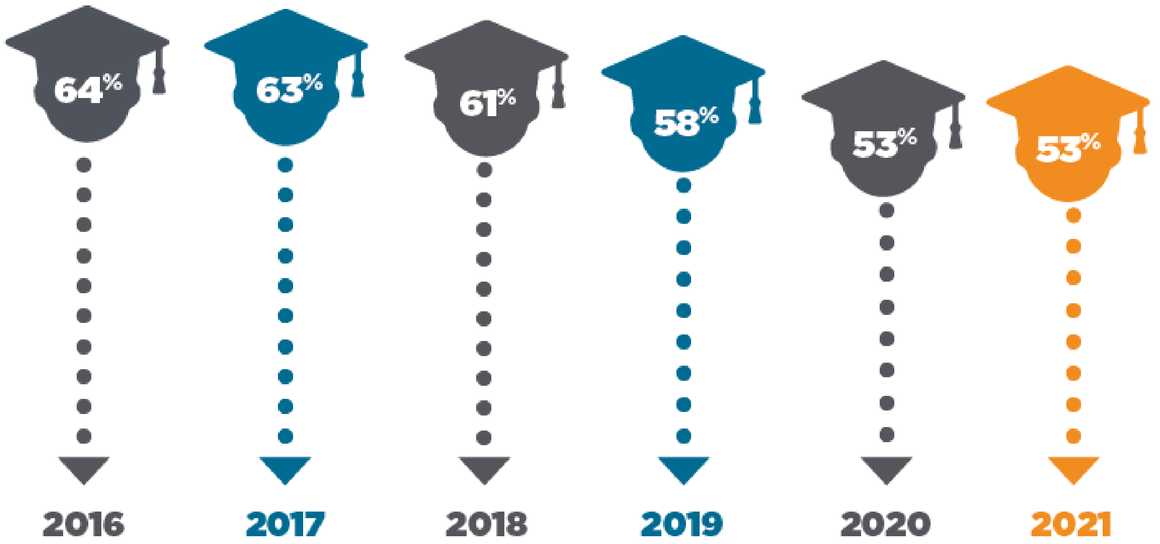
- Be an US citizen or eligible non-citizen and Indiana resident.
- Be automatically enrolled or apply in 7th or 8th grade.
- Agree to the Scholar Pledge (create a ScholarTrack account).
- Graduate with a 2.5 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale.

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS - REQUIREMENTS

- Complete the Scholar Success Program in ScholarTrack.
- Graduate with at least a Core 40 high school diploma.
- File the FAFSA by April 15 as a high school senior and each year while attending college.
- Enroll as a full-time student at an eligible institution within one year of high school graduation.

HIGH SCHOOLERS GOING STRAIGHT TO COLLEGE

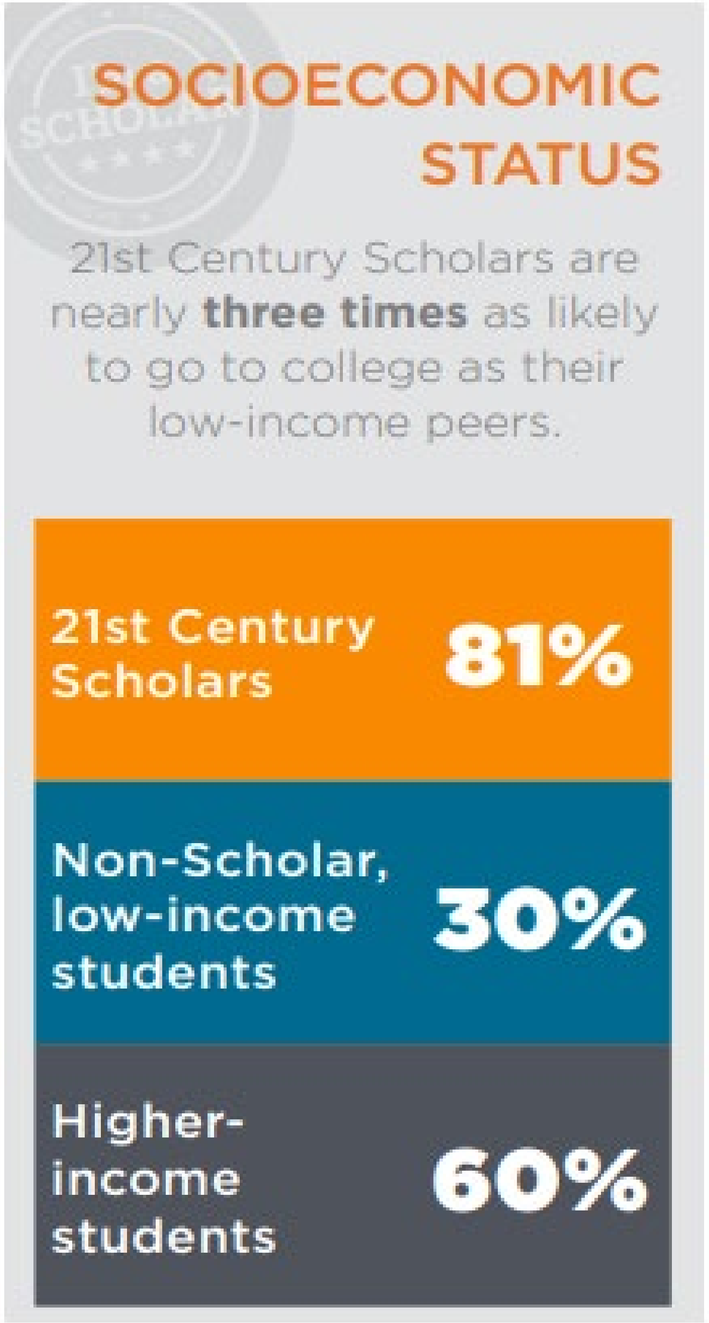
Indiana's college-going rate has declined yearly since 2015, but 2021 was the first year the rate held steady at 53 percent.



Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2023

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS

- However, **21st Century Scholars** are almost 30 percentage points more likely to go to college than the state average.
- Scholars are 20 percentage points more likely to go to college than their high-income peers.



21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS – ECONOMIC METRICS

ECONOMIC METRICS BY EDUCATION LEVEL

8-7-23

EDUCATION LEVEL	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2023)	INDIANA LABOR PARTICIPATION RATE (2023)	WAGES – MEDIAN INCOME (U.S.) (2021)	WAGES - MEDIAN INCOME (U.S.) (2021) (AGES 25-34)
LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	6.6%	44.6%	$31,300	$32,500
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	2.9%	56.4%	$40,450	$39,700
SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE	2.2%	67.1%	$46,300	$42,605
BACHELOR'S DEGREE + UP	2.0%	73.3%	$72,900	$65,000

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS – AUTO ENROLLMENT

- HEA 1449 -2023 required the Commission, in partnership with Indiana Department of Education, to identify and enroll income-eligible students into the 21st Century Scholars program.
- The Commission must notify families of their eligibility and parents/guardians may **opt their student out** of the program.
- Fewer than half of financially eligible students enrolled in the program in the past.

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS - AUTOENROLLMENT

- The Commission auto-enrolled financially eligible students in cohorts 2027 and 2028 over the summer. We are currently auto-enrolling cohort 2029.
- For the **2027 cohort**, the number of students who “self-enrolled” was **19,000**.
- After automatic enrollment, over **40,000** students were enrolled.

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS - AUTOENROLLMENT

- Student who are auto-enrolled will show as “Approved Pending Student Pledge.”
- Let us know if you find students who are eligible, but not auto-enrolled (no **hypotheticals**).
- Notification letters to cohort 2027 and 2028 students and families will be sent in the coming weeks.
- Students who are not automatically may enroll via ScholarTrack after October 1 each year.

21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS – NUMBERS

College Matters Cohort Schools

- Cohort 2024 Enrolled Scholars – approx. 15,000 scholars
- Cohort 2027 Enrolled Scholars – approx. 46,000 scholars
  - Approx. 20,000 – Approved
  - Approx. 26,000 – Approved Pending Pledge

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Students must be 13 or older to create a ScholarTrack account.
- Scholars should accept their pledge by the end of their freshman year.
  - Upgrade their account by adding SSN.
  - Update their ScholarTrack email to a non-school email.
- Ensure your schools and students have save listed/unblocked emails from **@che.in.gov** and **@subscriptions.in.gov**.

STUDENT ADVOCATES CONFERENCE

FAFSA UPDATE

INDIANA COMMISSION for HIGHER EDUCATION

FAFSA UPDATE – OVERVIEW

- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) determines eligibility for:
  - Federal Funds;
  - State Financial Aid; and
  - Some Institutions and Merit Aid
- Historically, the FAFSA opens on October 1.
- The 24-25 FAFSA has been delayed until December 31.
- Indiana’s priority deadline will still be April 15.

FAFSA UPDATE – STUDENT AID INDEX

- The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is a number used to determine eligibility for financial aid based on information from the FAFSA.
- The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is changing to the Student Aid Index (SAI).
- The lowest EFC value was 0, but the lowest SAI is now -1500

FAFSA UPDATE – NUMBER IN COLLEGE

- The EFC was reduced when multiple students in the same family attended college.
- The SAI will not be reduced when the number in college increases.
- This will have minimal impact due to the more generous need calculation.
- Students impacted may seek a professional judgement from their institution.

FAFSA UPDATE – ASSETS

- Families are now required to include small business or family farms as an asset on the FAFSA.
- There are three exceptions:
  - Maximum Pell Recipient
  - AGI of less than $60,000
  - The student or parent receives certain means tested benefits
- There is legislation addressing this topic moving through Congress.

FAFSA UPDATE – FAFSA SUBMISSION SUMMARY

- Students currently receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) when the FAFSA is filed.
- This document is a summary of the information submitted on the FAFSA.
- The name of SAR is changing to the FAFSA Submission Summary.

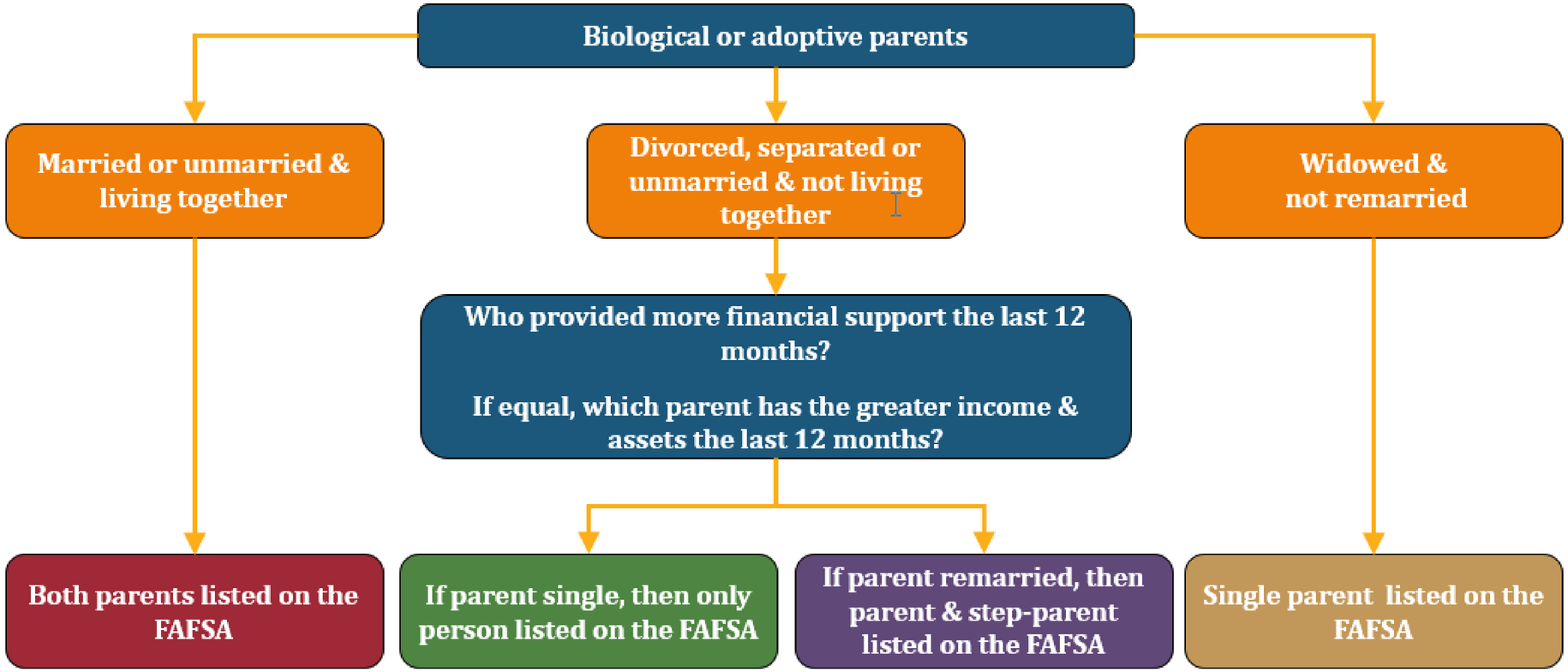
FAFSA UPDATE – FADDX

- Historically, FAFSA filers had the option to pull their tax information into the FAFSA via Data Retrieval Tool.
- This is changing from the IRS DRT to the Future Act Direct Data Exchange (FADDX).
- The U.S. Department of Education will receive tax information directly from the IRS with consent from the FAFSA filer.
- No consent means no aid.

FAFSA UPDATES – CONTRIBUTORS

- Each person is considered a “contributor.”
  - Student (applicant), parent, other parent, or student spouse.
- Individuals log in with FSA ID and identify their role.
- NOTE: While a student or parent can enter information for the other person, it is NOT encouraged due to consent requirement.

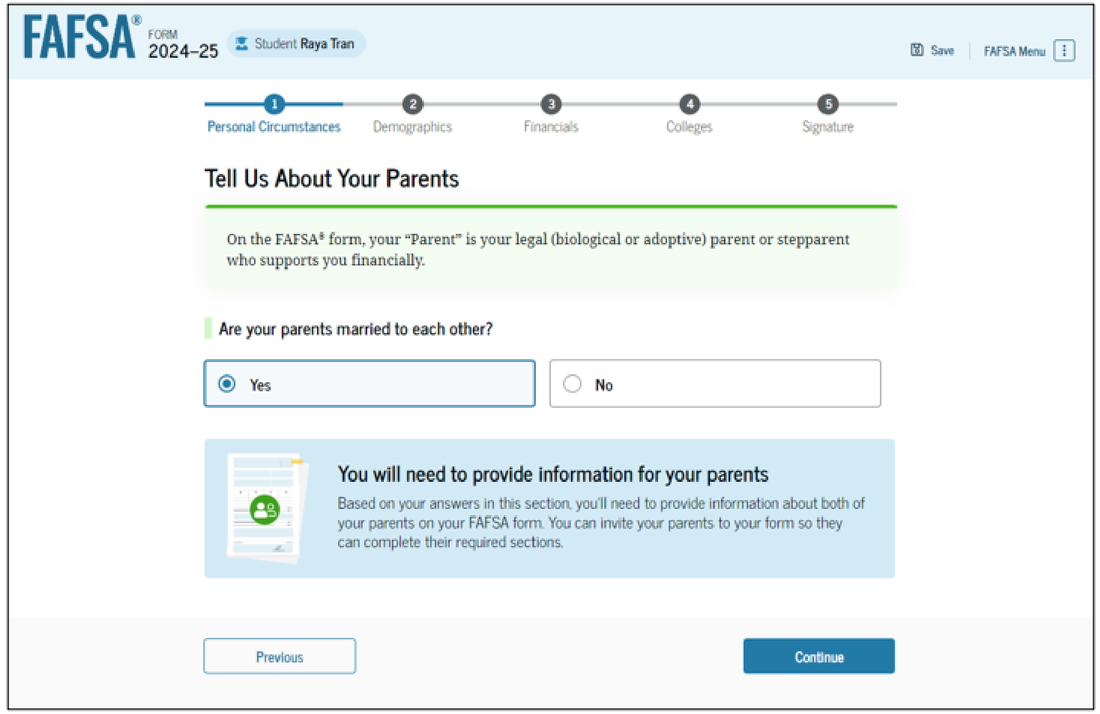
FASFA UPDATE – PARENT



Graphic from ISFAA 2023 Counselor Workshops

FAFSA UPDATE - PARENT WIZARD

- Offers a series of filtering questions that determine which parent(s) must be included on a dependent student's FAFSA form as contributors.



FAFSA UPDATE – MARITAL STATUS

- Married filing joint 2022 tax return with current spouse.
  - 1 contributor section, 1 consent, & combined tax info transferred via FADDX
- Married filing separate 2022 tax returns.
  - 2 contributor sections, 2 consents & separate tax info transferred via FADDX
- Single filing a 2022 tax return with a “single” type tax filing status.
  - 1 contributor section, 1 consent, & tax info transferred via FADDX

FAFSA UPDATE – FSA ID

- **All contributors** must have an FSA ID to access the 2024-25 FAFSA form online.
- Identity match required for each contributor to verify FSA ID.
- A verified email address will be required to establish an account.
- Users can apply without entering an SSN or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
  - Must complete a knowledge-based identity verification process

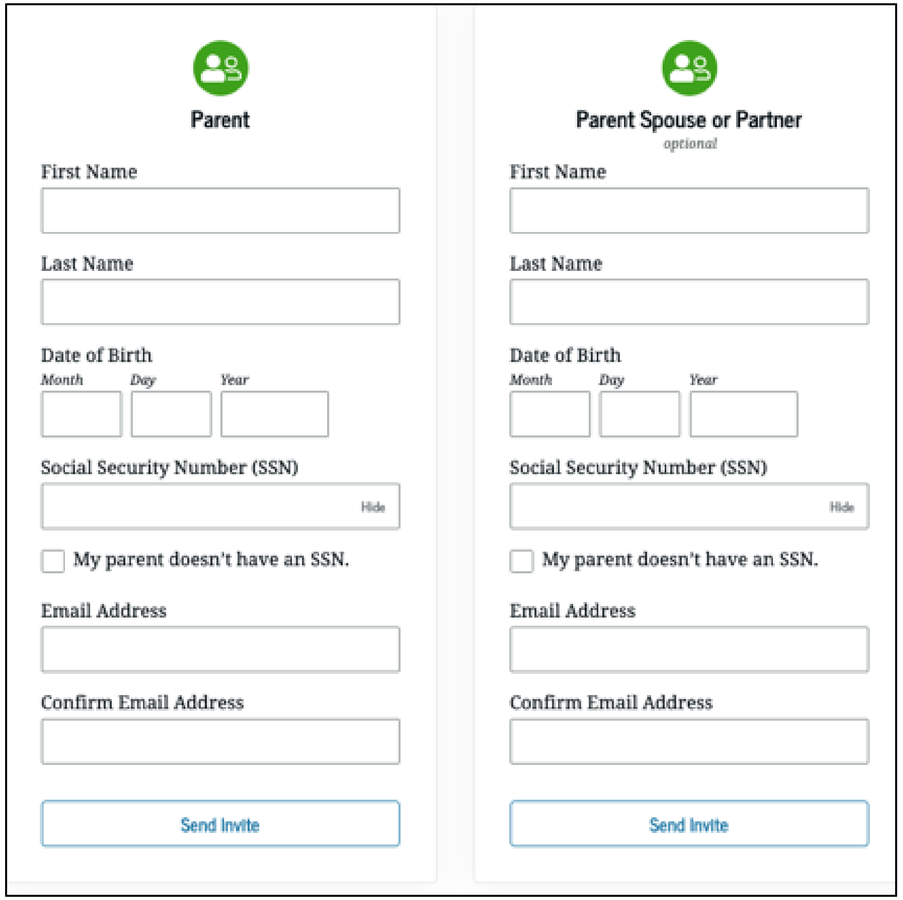
FAFSA UPDATES – FSA ID

- Create account at: *studentaid.gov*
  - Individuals with Social Security Numbers (SSN) are confirmed by the Social Security Administration.
  - For those without SSN – will launch with the 2024-25 FAFSA

- FSA ID must be set up and confirmed before FAFSA filing.
  - This process could take between 3-7 days
  - It is not recommended to create an FSA ID and file the FAFSA on the same day.

FAFSA UPDATE – INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT SSN

- Students will check the “My parent doesn’t have an SSN” box on the “Invite Parent(s) to This FAFSA Form®” webpage.
- Individual will be asked up to four knowledge-based questions provided by TransUnion, the consumer credit reporting agency.
  - Questions may be items such as a previous address, phone number, former employers, loan amount, etc.
  - If the person correctly answers the questions, their FSA ID will be verified immediately, and they can move directly to complete the FAFSA online.



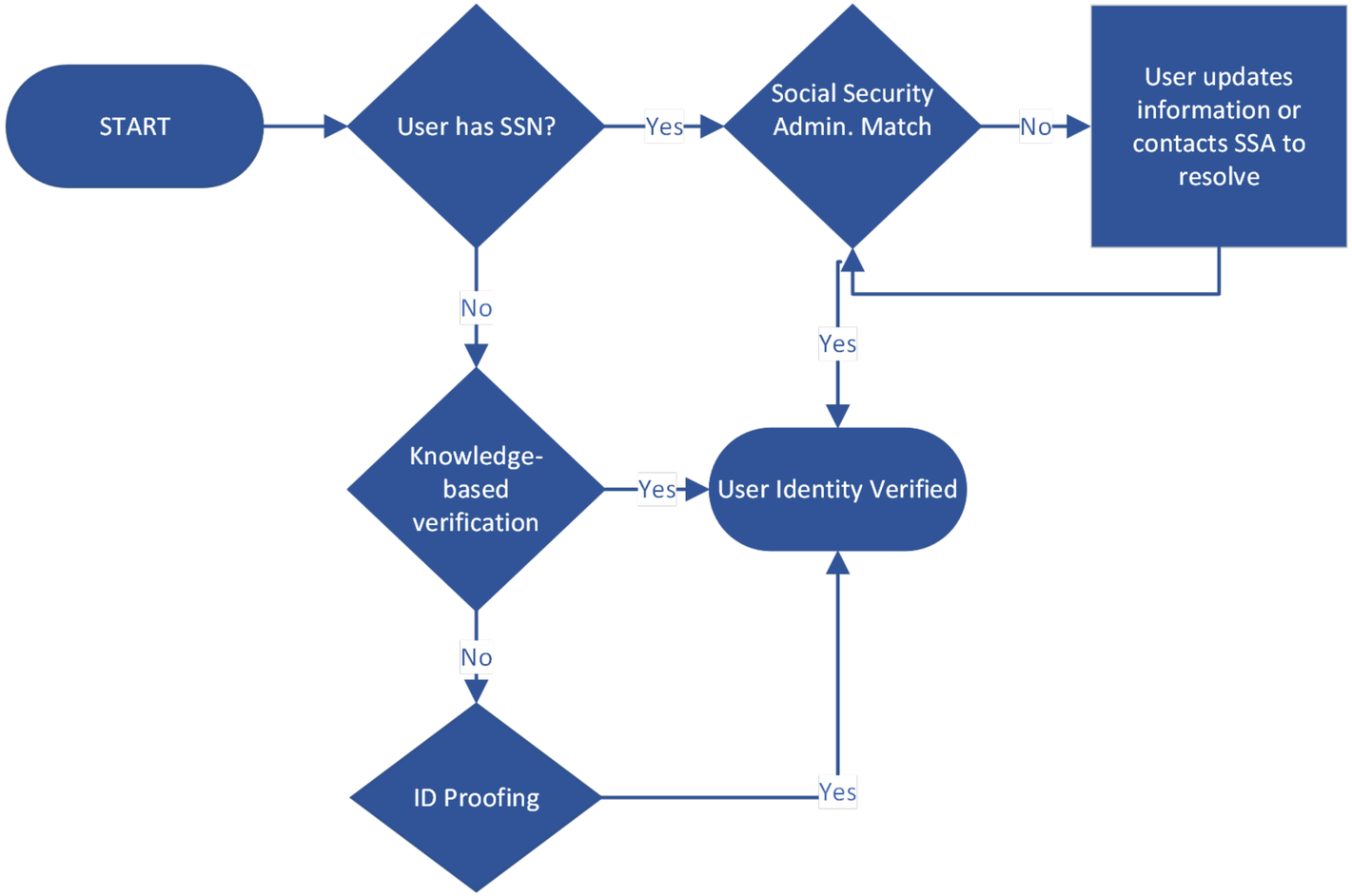
FAFSA UPDATE – INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT SSN

- Individuals who do not provide correct answers on the first attempt will receive an email with instructions for an alternative method to complete their identify verification.
  - Attestation form
  - Directed to FSA Information Center to initiate identity verification process
- Case number sent via email and further instructions for submitting the attestation form and a copy of the items listed below via email.
  - Submit **one** of the following forms of **current** ID:
    - Driver's license **or**
    - State or city identification card **or**
    - Foreign passport
  - **OR** submit a utility bill **and** one of the following:
    - Municipal identification card **or**
    - Community ID **or**
    - Consular identification card

FAFSA UPDATE – 24-25 PROTOTYPE

- The FAFSA prototype offers an advance opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the 2024–25 FAFSA form user experience ahead of its release.
- The FAFSA prototype is **not** an early release of the FAFSA demonstration site. Instead, the prototype can be used as a tool to better understand the experience 2024–25 applicants may have.
- To access the 2024–25 FAFSA prototype, follow the steps below:
  - Visit https://fsapartners.ed.gov/fafsa-prototype/2425
  - Enter the access code: prototype2425

FAFSA UPDATE –VERIFICATION FLOW



FAFSA UPDATES – OTHER UPDATES

- Can list up to 20 college/universities.
- Incomplete FAFSA only stays in the system for 45 days.
- Last contributor to provide information will have the opportunity to submit the FAFSA.

FAFSA UPDATE – SEA 167-2023

- This act makes the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) the default option for high school seniors.
- Broad opt-out provisions are included for parents/guardians and emancipated students.
- Additionally, a school can waive the requirement for a student after April 15 so long as at least two communications about filing the FAFSA have been sent to the parent/guardian.

FAFSA UPDATE – SEA 167-2023

- Indiana will join 6 other states with FAFSA-related legislation.
  - Alabama jumped from 34th to 9th in seniors filing the FAFSA following the implementation of their legislation.
  - Indiana was 40th in the nation for the class of 2022.
- The opt-out form can be found on the Commission's website.
- Schools will submit the students who opt out with the Graduation Details Report in ScholarTrack.

FAFSA UPDATE – BEST PRACTICES

- Encourage all contributors to get their FSA IDs in advance of FAFSA completion nights/events.
- Early awareness – Pell Look-up Tables
- Start identifying potential special or unusual circumstances.
- Encourage scholarship applications early.

FAFSA UPDATE - COLLEGE GOAL SUNDAY

- February 25, 2024
- 2pm - 4pm (local time)
- collegegoalsunday.org
- Multiple locations across Indiana

FAFSA UPDATE – FIND HELP

- Federal Student Aid
  - studentaid.gov/resources#fafsa
  - financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/announcement-detail.jsp?id=better-fafsa-better-future
- National College Attainment Network
  - www.ncan.org/page/better-FAFSA-training-toolkit
- INvestEd
  - www.investedindiana.org

FAFSA UPDATE – FAFSA COMPLETION REPORT

- FAFSA Completion Project Data Share Agreement
- Senior FAFSA Status will populate on or after February 1st
- FAFSA Completion Dashboard
- Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed Dashboard (Indiana GPS)
- College Readiness Dashboard

CONTACT US

- Contact your Outreach Coordinator at **LearnMoreIndiana.org**
- Emails
  - **schools@che.in.gov**
  - **scholars@che.in.gov**