



INDIANA 2024-2025

FAFSA COMPLETION CAMPAIGN



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HIGHER EDUCATION



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THE PROBLEM VERSUS INDIANA'S STATUS

Due to a delayed rollout of the new 2024-2025 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and processing issues at the federal level, the number of students completing the 2024-2025 FAFSA declined nationally from previous years. Per the [NCAN FAFSA Tracker](#), as of June 28, 2024:

- Indiana ranked 17th (out of 50 states) for submissions, with **48.7%** of high school seniors having submitted, down 0.6% from 2023. This ranked Indiana 1st in the country for closing the gap in submissions compared to last year.
- Indiana ranked 20th (out of 50 states) for completions, with **45.4%** of high school seniors having completed, down 0.9% from 2023. This ranked Indiana 1st in the country for closing the gap in completions compared to last year.

For students from low-income households and students from under-represented populations, the percentage of completions is even lower nationally. However, Indiana has closed the completions gap for low-income and high-minority high schools. Per the NCAN FAFSA tracker, as of June 28, 2024:

- **40.2%** of seniors in low-income high schools completed, a 1% change from 2023.
- **40.6%** of seniors in high-minority high schools completed, a 1% change from 2023.

WHY IS THE FAFSA IMPORTANT TO HOOSIERS?

Indiana's FAFSA completion rate is an early indicator of the college-going rate for high school seniors. Additionally, completing the FAFSA is the primary way for students to access Indiana's \$400+ million in [state financial aid](#), and billions of dollars in federal aid. The FAFSA helps increase overall college access and affordability. Furthermore, [SEA 167-2023](#) required high school seniors to file the FAFSA, with an opt-out provision, beginning with the graduating class of 2024.

CALL TO ACTION

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education (Commission) set an audacious goal to place in the top 10 states for FAFSA completions for the high school graduating class of 2024. The Commission also set a 60% FAFSA filing goal for the high school graduation class of 2024, along with a goal to increase overall FAFSA filing overall by 5% (including high school seniors, college student renewals, and adults).

- Per the [NCAN FAFSA Tracker](#), as of April 19, 2025, following Indiana's April 15 priority filing deadline, Indiana ranked as a top 10 state in both FAFSA submissions and completions.
- Per the Excel FAFSA Year-to-Date Report in [ScholarTrack](#), as of June 10, 2024, Indiana officially had more 2024-2025 FAFSAs filed than 2023-2024 FAFSAs filed at the same time last year.

The Commission undertook a statewide communications and outreach campaign to encourage Hoosier students – both high school seniors and those currently in college – to file the FAFSA. Each strategy is outlined below, with an indication of whether the strategy has been a long-term one for Indiana versus a new strategy to specifically address the lower submission rates for the 2024-2025 FAFSA.



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FAFSA COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

College Goal Sunday

On February 25, 2024, the [Indiana Student Financial Aid Association](#), in partnership with [INvestEd](#) and the Commission, hosted the 35th [College Goal Sunday](#), the state's largest FAFSA filing event. While this has been an historical event, this year the event had a record 40 locations around the state. Since the FAFSA began opening in October and using prior prior year tax information, there have typically been two events – one in November and one in February. Since the 2024-2025 FAFSA did not open until December 2024, there was only one College Goal Sunday event during the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle. Support for College Goal Sunday is provided by [Lilly Endowment Inc.](#)

CTE Newsletter

For the first time, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) team promoted FAFSA filing in the [April newsletter](#), which is shared with CTE districts, administrators, instructors, and school counselors across the state. The CTE team also promoted FAFSA filing during the [April CTE Directors Webinar](#).

Grassroots Marketing

In March 2024, the Commission reached out to over 215 stakeholders and partners across the five sectors of the Partnership Pentagon – education, business, non-profits (community- and faith-based organizations), government, and philanthropy – to provide clear communications to be sent to the communities they serve. This included an email to [Aim](#) to share the grassroots messaging with member mayors. Outreach also included sending sample social media posts, graphics, and content for newsletters to all four caucuses within the Indiana General Assembly, and content for the Indiana Department of Education's newsletter. Stakeholders and partners were encouraged to share specific communications via email, newsletters, websites, and social media with employees and those they serve. The communications were forwarded to CounselorTalk to reach high school counselors who were encouraged to share them with high school seniors and their parents/guardians. This was a new strategy for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle.

Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed (GPS) Dashboard

On September 1, 2021, the Indiana Department of Education released a plan to develop the [Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed \(GPS\) Dashboard](#). The FAFSA completion rate was determined to be an indicator that would be included in the dashboard. The Commission provides the Indiana Department of Education with FAFSA completion data for each school. In addition to the Commission's [FAFSA Completion Dashboard](#), the [Indiana GPS Dashboard](#) allows the public to see aggregate FAFSA completion data at the school level.

Indiana Pre-Admissions: Your Path to College

The Commission launched [Indiana Pre-Admission: Your Path to College](#) in August 2023 for the high school graduating class of 2024. The initiative matches students from participating high schools to participating campuses based on end-of-junior-year academic data like GPA and SAT scores. Students received a [letter](#) in August 2023 introducing them to the initiative. In September students received a [letter](#) that outlined the campuses they had been pre-admitted to and directions for next steps. Parents and guardians received copies of the letters. On the back of each letter were instructions to help students and parents prepare to file the FAFSA. Since there was going to be a delay in the 2024-2025 FAFSA opening, the instructions focused on [FSA ID](#) creation



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and gathering documentation to be prepared to file the FAFSA when it opened in December, similar to what is shared on the [Learn More Indiana FAFSA page](#). The letters included QR codes that referred students to the [pre-admissions page](#) on Learn More Indiana, which also shared FAFSA resources as well as digital versions of the letters translated into Spanish, Burmese, and Hakha Chin. This was a new strategy for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle.

FAFSA Completion Dashboard

The Commission typically publishes and maintains a [FAFSA Completion Dashboard](#) that shares school- and county-level data from October 1 through June 30 of the annual FAFSA cycle. Due to the delay in the launch of the 2024-2025 FAFSA and significant delays in states receiving Institutional Student Information Records (ISIRs), the dashboard was not released during the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle. If Federal Student Aid opens the 2025-2026 cycle on time in October 2024, the dashboard will be released for the 2025-2026 at that time and updated through June 30, 2025.

FAFSA Completion Data Share Agreements

Per HEA 1245-2019, the Commission allows schools and school districts to sign FAFSA Completion Data Share Agreements to gain access to FAFSA information in [ScholarTrack](#). School users can see a Y (Yes), N (No), or Wrong Year Field status for students on their school rosters once ISIRs have been ingested into ScholarTrack. New for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle, the Commission allowed school users to see whether students had FAFSA corrections to complete. Schools use this information to conduct outreach to students and families regarding FAFSA submission and completion.

FAFSA Completion Emails

The Commission utilizes eight regional [Outreach Coordinators](#) to directly communicate with high school seniors about the FAFSA via their personal Commission emails. Outreach Coordinators email the students in their regions if emails are available for the students in [ScholarTrack](#).

The Commission's Marketing and Communications team also sent over 20 emails to current high school and college students about the 2024-2025 FAFSA. The emails contain information about filing the FAFSA, reminders to file, contact information to receive assistance, and notifications to those who filed the wrong FAFSA. Once the ability to make corrections was opened by Federal Student Aid, emails were also sent to students who had corrections to make with contact information to receive assistance. While completion and correction-focused emails have been historical strategies, the timeline and cadence were different for the 2024-2025 cycle due to the delayed launch and ongoing technical issues that had to be addressed by Federal Student Aid.

Reminder emails were also sent to high school seniors who received pre-admissions decisions to remind them to file the FAFSA and submit application information to the institution they wished to attend. This was a new strategy for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle.

The Commission's K-12 Outreach team regularly supports K-12 counselors through CounselorTalk by sharing updates and answering questions. The team also answers questions through a dedicated schools@che.in.gov email address. This has been a historical strategy for the Commission.



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FAFSA Completion Events

The Commission's [Outreach Coordinators](#) and [INvestEd](#) regularly host FAFSA filing events in K-12 schools. While this has been a historical strategy, because of the delayed launch of the 2024-2025 FAFSA, the Outreach Coordinators and INvestEd partners focused on FSA ID creation from August through December, then FAFSA submission from January through April 15. Outreach regarding FAFSA corrections began in March, and events continued through the end of the school year. In total, the Outreach Coordinators hosted or supported 71 school-, campus-, and community-based events. INvestEd hosted additional events at 282 schools. The Commission also promoted campus-hosted events via the [Learn More Indiana](#) website and social media.

INvestEd received [FAFSA Student Support Strategy](#) funding to continue outreach in summer 2024 for the class of 2024 to increase FAFSA submissions and completions. This is a temporary strategy for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle funded by the U.S. Department of Education to address low FAFSA completion rates. INvestEd is continuing to host summer events and implementing an outreach campaign targeting the counties with the lowest FAFSA filing rates and college-going rates. Ivy Tech Community College also hosted more than 100 additional events in summer 2024.

FAFSA Completion Letters

The Commission mailed letters to all current high school seniors and current Indiana college students with remaining state aid eligibility. 134,629 letters were sent by April 8, 2024. Letters were sent to all students, regardless of if they filed the FAFSA or not. The letters encouraged students to check their filing status on their [StudentAid.gov](#) accounts. Letters included a trackable QR code to direct students to the [Learn More Indiana FAFSA page](#). This was a new strategy for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle.

FAFSA Completion Social Media Campaign

The Commission's [Learn More Indiana](#) brand posted weekly #destinationFAFSA posts on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Those posts were shared by the Commission's social media pages. While a social media campaign has been an historical strategy for the Commission, the #destinationFAFSA theme was new for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle. In fact, this was the first year the Commission's social media efforts had a specific theme. One top-performing post received over 3,700 impressions, 210 engagements, and reached nearly 4,000 individuals.

Additionally, the Learn More Indiana social media pages share posts from the [Federal Student Aid social media accounts](#). This has been an historical strategy for the Commission.

FAFSA Live Event on Facebook

The Commission co-hosted two Facebook Live events in Spanish with representatives from the [Indiana Latino Institute](#). The events allowed students and families to ask questions about the FAFSA and receive assistance in real time. While Facebook Live events have been an historical strategy for the Commission, the Spanish-speaking event was new for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle. The first event on February 20 received 6,100 views and 143 comments. The second event on March 27 received 9,400 views and 87 comments. The third event on April 10 received 4,200 views and 53 comments.

The Commission also co-hosted a Facebook Live event in English with a representative from [INvestEd](#) on April 9. This event has been a historical strategy for the Commission. The event received 1,400 views and 50 comments.



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FAFSA Waivers

The implementation of [SEA 167-2023](#) for the class of 2024 requires several opt-out provisions that were executed by [waivers](#). The Graduation Details process in [ScholarTrack](#) was updated so that when schools submitted students' GPAs and diploma types, they could also submit FAFSA waivers or mass waive students who neither filed the FAFSA nor submitted a waiver by the April 15 priority deadline. The Commission's [Outreach Coordinators](#) and summer interns assisted school counselors with submitting the graduation details, including the FAFSA waivers.

FAFSA Week of Action

A representative of the Commission participated in a [FAFSA Week of Action webinar](#) hosted by [Benefits Data Trust](#). This allowed the Commission to share FAFSA completion strategies with others across the nation as states collectively worked together to increase FAFSA filing across the country following the delayed release of the 2024-2025 FAFSA.

Media Interviews

Through June 30, various Commission staff completed 16 media interviews with national, state, and local media outlets to promote FSA ID creation and FAFSA completion.

Press Releases

The Commission published press releases regarding a statewide FAFSA completion goal on [January 18](#) and the state's priority deadline on [March 26](#). On [May 2](#) the Commission published a press release to celebrate Indiana being a top 10 state for FAFSA submissions and completions as of the state's April 15 priority deadline. The Commission first officially released a statewide FAFSA goal during the 2023-2024 FAFSA cycle but has long promoted the priority filing deadline via press release.

Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation *College Matters*

Thanks to the [College Matters](#) grantmaking initiative from the [Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation](#), the Commission and [INvestEd](#) collaborated with the [Indiana Latino Institute](#), [Indianapolis Urban League](#), [Center for Leadership Development](#), and [Indiana Black Expo](#) to host community- and school-based FAFSA events in Marion County. The Commission also hosted convenings for the school-based grant recipients on November 29, January 23, and April 9. A convening for the community-based grant recipients was held on March 26. This was a new strategy for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle.

State of Indiana Employee Newsletters

The Commission partnered with the [State Personnel Department](#) to promote FAFSA filing in the [Around the Circle](#) newsletter weekly from January 31 through the April 15 priority deadline. The February 21 newsletter also advertised [College Goal Sunday](#). This was a new strategy for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle.

The Commission also partnered with the State Personnel Department to promote FAFSA filing in [The Torch](#) newsletter for the February, March, and April 2024 editions. This was a new strategy for the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle.