



September 19, 2023

Greetings,

In his inaugural address, Governor Mike DeWine said, "Education is the key to equality and opportunity."

One key to unlock an affordable education is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA allows students to qualify for federal Pell grants (worth up to nearly \$30,000 over four years), the Ohio College Opportunity Grant, and many other forms of state and federal financial aid.

While about 50% of Ohio students who complete the FAFSA qualify for Pell grants, Ohio students who don't complete one leave more than \$108 million in unclaimed financial aid "on the table" each year.

### Updated FAFSA Coming in December

The U.S. Department of Education is preparing an updated FAFSA; however, it will not open on October 1 this year. Instead, Federal Student Aid indicates the new FAFSA will launch sometime in December.

On behalf of the State of Ohio, we are asking you to:

1. **Help students create a federal student aid account (FSA ID)** This is required for the FAFSA. Doing so will speed up the process for parents and students later. Parents and students should visit the following website to learn more: <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>.
2. **Visit our new Ohio FAFSA Dashboard** at <https://dashboard.ohiofafsa.org/>. This state website allows you to compare FAFSA performance with peer districts, explore five-year trends, and see the most improved districts in your typology. Please explore the dashboard and set a FAFSA completion goal for your district this year. The dashboard updates monthly.
3. **Encourage school counselors and families to visit [ItsForYou.org](https://itsforyou.org)**. This State of Ohio website makes the case for maximizing student opportunity for federal aid. For school counselors and other FAFSA building leaders, it includes a promotional toolkit, graphics and more.
4. **Confirm your district is signed up for the FAFSA data service**. Ohio districts are required by law to sign up for this service. This secure, authenticated portal allows schools to view FAFSA completions and rejection codes. Visit <https://ohiofafsa.org/> to check your status.

With your leadership, we can work together to ensure that more students complete the FAFSA, creating more opportunities for Ohioans to pursue their dreams and reach their full potential.

Sincerely,

Randy Gardner  
Chancellor  
Ohio Department of Higher Education

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