

# Helping Families Navigate the Challenges and Delays of the New FAFSA

A MEFA Institute Webinar

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## Agenda

- Recent FSA Updates/Resources
- What We Are Hearing from Colleges and Universities
- Resources
- Open Discussion

## FAFSA Simplification Act brings:

- Simpler application
- More straightforward Pell eligibility criteria
- Federal Methodology changes
- Student Aid Index (SAI) replaces EFC

## Recent FSA Updates

- Colleges, state agencies, and scholarship organizations will begin receiving ISIRs starting in the first half of March. The information transmitted to schools will be based on the SAI tables updated for inflation.
- ISIRs will be batched by student, not by institution.
- Online forms will be processed first, followed by paper (PDF) forms.
- Students will receive an email informing them that their FAFSA has been fully processed and their FAFSA information has been sent to the schools and state listed on their form.

## FAFSA Corrections

- Students will be able to make corrections to their FAFSA as soon as their application is processed (starting in the first half of March).
- Student may make corrections in their FAFSA Submission Summary online, on paper, or by contacting FSAIC.
- Regardless of original application method, students can access their FAFSA Submission Summary and submit corrections online if they create a [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) account.
  - Give colleges at least 2 weeks after the FSS is received before expecting a financial aid offer
- Schools will be able to submit corrections after processed ISIRs are received.

## Pro Tips for the 2024-25 FAFSA Form

- Tips for a smoother journey through the FAFSA and to avoid pitfalls
- Targeted to FAFSA applicants and their contributors
- Tip topics address:
  - Creating StudentAid.gov accounts (FSA ID) before inviting contributors to participate
  - Gathering documents and contributor information in advance
  - Understanding tricky definitions or questions on the form
  - Guidance for reviewing, submitting, and correcting the form

Access the resource at [\*\*StudentAid.gov/fafsatips\*\*](https://studentaid.gov/fafsatips)



## Contributors without SSN

- FSA is still working on correcting the issues preventing contributors without an SNN from completing the FAFSA
- No timeline for the fix
- FSA will announce prominently when fixed
- All FAFSA known issues: [2024–25 FAFSA Issue Alerts](#)

## Common Errors

### Date of Legal Residency

Enter the month and year when you became a legal resident in the state you reported as your state of legal residence. **If you were born in this state, enter the month and year you were born.**

Enter or select the month in the “Month” field. Use the “mm” format if typing. For example, August should be entered as “08.”

Enter the year in the “Year” field in “yyyy” format. For example, enter “2015” instead of “15.”

Your state of legal residence will use this information to determine if you meet its criteria for state financial aid.

Was this page helpful?\*



Submit

1 Personal Circumstances 2 Demographics 3 Financials 4 Colleges 5 Signature

### Your Dependency Status



#### Dependent Student

Based on your answers, you are a dependent student. This means you must provide parent information on your FAFSA® form. This information helps determine how much federal student aid you're eligible to receive.

### Apply for a Direct Unsubsidized Loan Only

Are the student's parents unwilling to provide their information, but the student doesn't have an unusual circumstance that prevents them from contacting or obtaining their parents' information?

*If you select “Yes,” a financial aid administrator at the student's school will determine their eligibility for a Direct Unsubsidized Loan only.*

Yes

No

Previous

Continue





## School Deadlines

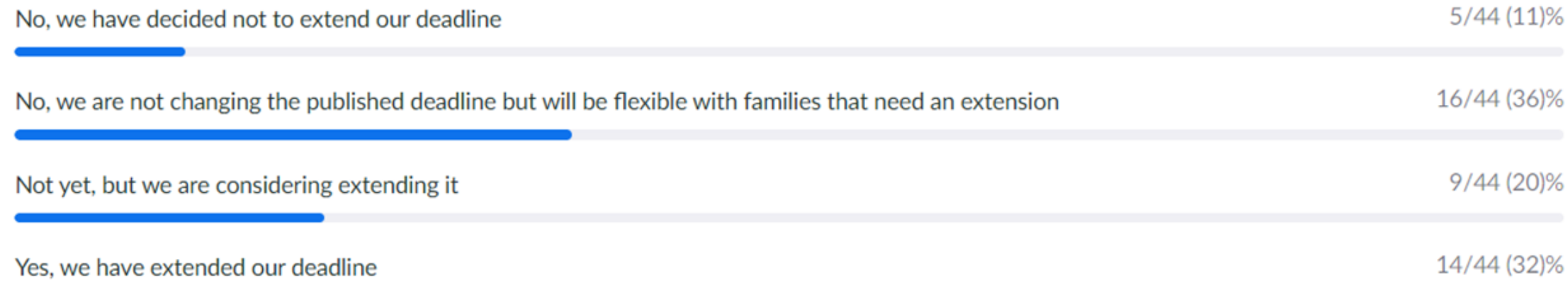
- Some schools are extending financial aid and enrollment deadlines because of the delays
- Most schools who have not extended deadlines have expressed they will be flexible with students unable to meet deadlines due to FAFSA delays
- Advise families to take screenshots of any errors they encounter to share with colleges

# School Deadlines

## Informal results of recent Zoom webinar poll with MA colleges and universities

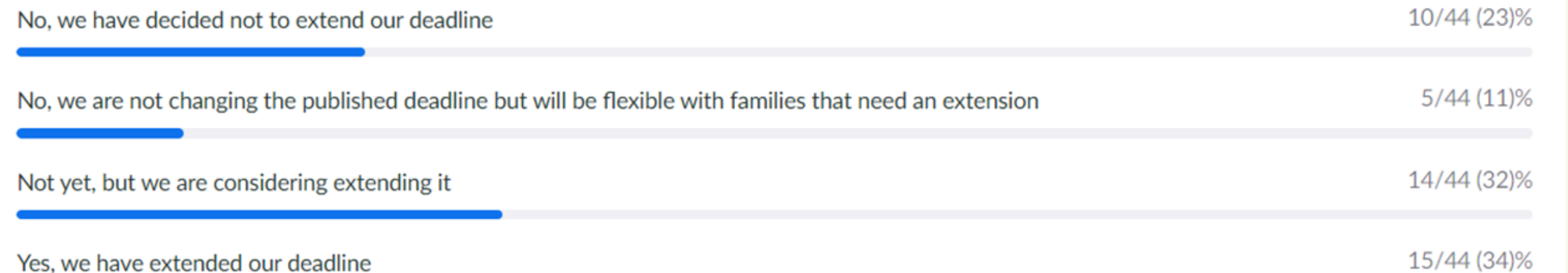
### 1. Is your school extending your financial aid deadline? (Single Choice)

44/57 (77)% answered



### 2. Is your school extending your enrollment deposit deadline? (Single Choice)

44/57 (77)% answered





## Scholarship Deadlines

- Scholarship organizations may not be as familiar with the delays and problems happening with the FAFSA
- If you have connections to scholarship committees, please urge them to extend deadlines to help families

## MEFA Resources

- FAFSA Day events: [fafsaday.org](https://fafsaday.org)
- FAFSA family & counselor webinars: [mefa.org/videos](https://mefa.org/videos)
- Select the *Financial Aid* category for families
- Select the *MEFA Institute* category for counselors
- MEFA Institute webinars include *Understanding MA State Financial Aid* and *Counseling Students with Unique Circumstances in the Financial Aid Process*
- *Who Needs an FSA ID?* graphic: [mefa.org/who-needs-an-fsa-id](https://mefa.org/who-needs-an-fsa-id)

**Steps to Complete Your FAFSA®** FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

**Gather necessary information and documentation.**

STUDENTS	PARENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social Security number</li><li>• Date of birth</li><li>• Email address</li><li>• Permanent Resident Card, if not a U.S. Citizen</li><li>• 2022 federal tax return (if the student filed)</li><li>• Value of any cash, savings account, and checking account</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social Security number for each parent on the FAFSA (if the parent(s) has one)</li><li>• Date of birth for each parent on the FAFSA</li><li>• Email address</li><li>• Month and year parents were married, divorced, separated, or widowed</li><li>• 2022 federal tax return (if filed)</li><li>• Other financial information if applicable: federal benefits received, earned income credit, foreign income, and child support received</li><li>• Value of any cash, savings account, and checking account</li><li>• Net worth of any investments, businesses, and farms</li></ul>

**Create your FSA ID at least 3-5 days before starting the FAFSA.**

- Go to [studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account](https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account).
- Every student needs an FSA ID and every parent listed on the FAFSA needs an FSA ID.
- For assistance, review MEFA's guide, *Who Needs an FSA ID?*, at [mefa.org/who-needs-an-fsa-id](https://mefa.org/who-needs-an-fsa-id) and MEFA's webinar, *How to Create Your FSA ID*, at [mefa.org/videos/how-to-create-your-fsa-id](https://mefa.org/videos/how-to-create-your-fsa-id).

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**Student: Start the FAFSA.**

- Go to [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov).
- Select *Start New Form* under the 2024-25 FAFSA.
- Use the student's FSA ID to log in.

**Student: Invite contributor(s), if needed.**

- A contributor is any parent providing information on the FAFSA.
- Provide each contributor's name, date of birth, Social Security number, and email address, exactly as it appears on their FSA ID.

**Student: Answer the FAFSA questions and sign the student section.**

**Parent(s): Receive an email invitation to complete the FAFSA.**

- Click on *Log In* and enter the parent FSA ID.
- Once logged in, click *Get Started* on your invitation to the FAFSA.

**Parent(s): Answer the FAFSA questions and sign and submit the parent section.**

**What happens after you submit the FAFSA?**

- The FAFSA will be submitted for processing once all contributors have completed their sections.
- Once Federal Student Aid processes your FAFSA, which is scheduled to begin in March:
  - The student will receive a FAFSA Submission Summary (FSS), which includes an eligibility overview, a summary of all FAFSA answers, and next steps.
  - Colleges and the student's state of residence will receive the data electronically.
  - Families will be able to make corrections to the data.
- Colleges may request additional documentation or information from families through a process called verification.

This information is as of 2/15/24. Check [mefa.org](https://mefa.org) for regular updates.

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## Upcoming Webinar for Families Next Week!

### Navigating the Challenges and Delays of the New FAFSA

**Wednesday, February 21, 2024 4:00pm - 5:00pm**

The new 2024-25 FAFSA is open, but some families have experienced difficulty navigating the application process. In this webinar for students and families, we will review known issues, technical bugs, and workarounds (when available) of the new FAFSA. We will also discuss the impact of the delayed FAFSA launch on financial aid deadlines and the release of financial aid offers, as well as the process of updating and correcting FAFSA data.

[https://mefa-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_dIqJLCYkRhew2Ek7NCGFbw#/registration](https://mefa-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_dIqJLCYkRhew2Ek7NCGFbw#/registration)

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Thank You

**QUESTIONS?**

Call (800)-449-MEFA (6332)  
or email [collegeplanning@mefa.org](mailto:collegeplanning@mefa.org)

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