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U.S. Code (</uscode/text/>) › Title 20 (</uscode/text/20/>) › Chapter 28 (</uscode/text/20/chapter-28/>) › Subchapter IV (</uscode/text/20/chapter-28/subchapter-IV/>) › Part F (</uscode/text/20/chapter-28/subchapter-IV/part-F/>) › § 1090

20 U.S. Code § 1090 - Forms and regulations

Current through Pub. L. 113-234 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ234/html/PLAW-113publ234.htm>). (See Public Laws for the current Congress (<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?n=PublicLaws>).

US Code (/uscode/text/20/1090?qt-us_code_temp_noupdates=0#qt-us_code_temp_noupdates)

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Authorities (CFR) (/uscode/text/20/1090?qt-us_code_temp_noupdate [prev \(/uscode/text/20/1089/\)](/uscode/text/20/1089/) | [next \(/uscode/text/20/1091/\)](/uscode/text/20/1091/))

(a) Common financial aid form development and processing

(1) In general

The Secretary, in cooperation with representatives of agencies and organizations involved in student financial assistance, 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 under parts A through D of this subchapter and part C (</uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C/>) of subchapter I (</uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/>) of chapter 34 (</uscode/text/42/chapter-34/>) of title 42 (</uscode/text/42/>) (other than under subpart 4 of part A of this subchapter). The forms shall be made available to applicants in both paper and electronic formats and shall be referred to as the "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" or the "FAFSA". The Secretary shall work to make the FAFSA consumer-friendly and to make questions on the FAFSA easy for students and families to read and understand, and shall ensure that the FAFSA is available in formats accessible to individuals with disabilities.

(2) Paper format

(A) In general

The Secretary shall develop, make available, and process—

(i) a paper version of EZ FAFSA, as described in subparagraph (B); and

(ii) a paper version of the other forms described in this subsection, in accordance with subparagraph (C), for any applicant who does not meet the requirements of or does not wish to use the process described in subparagraph (B).

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(B) EZ FAFSA

(i) In general The Secretary shall develop and use, after appropriate field testing, a simplified paper form, to be known as the EZ FAFSA, to be used for applicants meeting the requirements of subsection (b) or (c) of section 1087ss ([/uscode/text/20/1087ss](#)) of this title.

(ii) Reduced data requirements The EZ FAFSA shall permit an applicant to submit, for financial assistance purposes, only the data elements required to make a determination of whether the applicant meets the requirements under subsection (b) or (c) of section 1087ss ([/uscode/text/20/1087ss](#)) of this title.

(iii) State data The Secretary shall include on the EZ FAFSA such data items as may be necessary to award State financial assistance, as provided under paragraph (5), except that the Secretary shall not include a State's data if that State does not permit the State's resident applicants to use the EZ FAFSA for State assistance.

(iv) Free availability and processing The provisions of paragraph (6) shall apply to the EZ FAFSA, and the data collected by means of the EZ FAFSA shall be available to institutions of higher education, guaranty agencies, and States in accordance with paragraph (10).

(C) Promoting the use of electronic FAFSA

(i) In general The Secretary shall make all efforts to encourage all applicants to utilize the electronic version of the forms described in paragraph (3).

(ii) Maintenance of the FAFSA in a printable electronic file The Secretary shall maintain a version of the paper forms described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) in a printable electronic file that is easily portable, accessible, and downloadable to students on the same website used to provide students with the electronic version of the forms described in paragraph (3).

(iii) Requests for printed copy The Secretary shall provide a printed copy of the full paper version of FAFSA upon request.

(iv) Reporting requirement The Secretary shall maintain data, and periodically report to Congress, on the impact of the digital divide on students completing applications for aid under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)). The Secretary shall report on the steps taken to eliminate the digital divide and reduce production of the paper form described in subparagraph (A). The Secretary's report shall specifically address the impact of the digital divide on the following student populations:

- (I) Independent students.
- (II) Traditionally underrepresented students.
- (III) Dependent students.

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(3) Electronic format**(A) In general**

The Secretary shall produce, distribute, and process forms in electronic format to meet the requirements of paragraph (1). The Secretary shall develop an electronic version of the forms for applicants who do not meet the requirements of subsection (b) or (c) of section 1087ss ([/uscode/text/20/1087ss](#)) of this title.

(B) Simplified applications: FAFSA on the web

(i) In general The Secretary shall develop and use a simplified electronic version of the form to be used by applicants meeting the requirements under subsection (b) or (c) of section 1087ss ([/uscode/text/20/1087ss](#)) of this title.

(ii) Reduced data requirements The simplified electronic version of the forms shall permit an applicant to submit, for financial assistance purposes, only the data elements required to make a determination of whether the applicant meets the requirements under subsection (b) or (c) of section 1087ss ([/uscode/text/20/1087ss](#)) of this title.

(iii) Use of forms Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the use of the forms developed by the Secretary pursuant to this paragraph by an eligible institution, eligible lender, guaranty agency, State grant agency, private computer software provider, a consortium thereof, or such other entities as the Secretary may designate.

(C) State data

The Secretary shall include on the electronic version of the forms such items as may be necessary to determine eligibility for State financial assistance, as provided under paragraph (5), except that the Secretary shall not require an applicant to enter data pursuant to this subparagraph that are required by any State other than the applicant's State of residence.

(D) Availability and processing

The data collected by means of the simplified electronic version of the forms shall be available to institutions of higher education, guaranty agencies, and States in accordance with paragraph (10).

(E) Privacy

The Secretary shall ensure that data collection under this paragraph complies with section 552a ([/uscode/text/5/552a](#)) of title 5 ([/uscode/text/5](#)) and that any entity using the electronic version of the forms developed by the Secretary pursuant to this paragraph shall maintain reasonable and appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the information, and to protect against security threats, or unauthorized uses or disclosures of the information provided on the electronic version of the forms. Data collected by such electronic version of the forms shall be used only for the application, award, and administration of aid awarded under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I](#)) of chapter 34

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(/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42), State aid, or aid awarded by eligible institutions or such entities as the Secretary may designate. No data collected by such electronic version of the forms shall be used for making final aid awards under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42) until such data have been processed by the Secretary or a contractor or designee of the Secretary, except as may be permitted under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42).

(F) Signature

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42), the Secretary may continue to permit an electronic version of the form under this paragraph to be submitted without a signature, if a signature is subsequently submitted by the applicant or if the applicant uses a personal identification number provided by the Secretary under subparagraph (G).

(G) Personal identification numbers authorized

The Secretary may continue to assign to an applicant a personal identification number—

(i) to enable the applicant to use such number as a signature for purposes of completing an electronic version of a form developed under this paragraph; and

(ii) for any purpose determined by the Secretary to enable the Secretary to carry out this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42).

(H) Personal identification number improvement

The Secretary shall continue to work with the Commissioner of Social Security to minimize the time required for an applicant to obtain a personal identification number when applying for aid under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42) through an electronic version of a form developed under this paragraph.

(4) Streamlining

(A) Streamlined reapplication process

(i) In general The Secretary shall continue to streamline reapplication forms and processes for an applicant who applies for financial assistance under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I

(/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42) in the next succeeding academic year subsequent to an academic year for which such applicant applied for financial assistance under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42).

(ii) Updating of data elements The Secretary shall determine, in cooperation with States, institutions of higher education, agencies, and organizations involved in student financial assistance, the data elements that may be transferred from the previous academic year's application and those data elements that shall be updated.

(iii) Reduced data authorized Nothing in this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42) shall be construed as limiting the authority of the Secretary to reduce the number of data elements required of reapplicants.

(iv) Zero family contribution Applicants determined to have a zero family contribution pursuant to section 1087ss (/uscode/text/20/1087ss) (c) (/uscode/text/20/usc_sec_20_00001087--ss000-#c) of this title shall not be required to provide any financial data in a reapplication form, except data that are necessary to determine eligibility under such section.

(B) Reduction of data elements

(i) Reduction encouraged Of the number of data elements on the FAFSA used for the 2009–2010 award year, the Secretary, in cooperation with representatives of agencies and organizations involved in student financial assistance and consistent with efforts under subsection (c), shall continue to reduce the number of such data elements required to be entered by all applicants, with the goal of reducing such number by 50 percent.

(ii) Report The Secretary shall submit a report on the process of this reduction to each of the authorizing committees by June 30, 2011.

(5) State requirements

(A) In general

Except as provided in paragraphs (2)(B)(iii), (3)(B), and (4)(A)(ii), the Secretary shall include on the forms developed under this subsection, such State-specific data items as the Secretary determines are necessary to meet State requirements for need-based State aid. Such items shall be selected in consultation with State agencies in order to assist in the awarding of State financial assistance in accordance with the terms of this subsection. The number of such data items shall not be less than the number included on the form for the 2008–2009 award year unless a State notifies the Secretary that the State no longer requires those data items for the distribution of State need-based aid.

(B) Annual review

The Secretary shall conduct an annual review to determine—

- (I) which data items each State requires to award need-based State aid; and
- (II) if the State will permit an applicant to file a form described in paragraph (2)(B) or (3)(B).

(C) Federal register notice

Beginning with the forms developed under paragraphs (2)(B) and (3)(B) for the award year 2010–2011, the Secretary shall publish on an annual basis a notice in the Federal Register requiring State agencies to inform the Secretary—

- (I) if the State agency is unable to permit applicants to utilize the simplified forms described in paragraphs (2)(B) and (3)(B); and
- (II) of the State-specific nonfinancial data that the State agency requires for delivery of State need-based financial aid.

(D) Use of simplified forms encouraged

The Secretary shall encourage States to take such steps as are necessary to encourage the use of simplified forms under this subsection, including those forms described in paragraphs (2)(B) and (3)(B), for applicants who meet the requirements of subsection (b) or (c) of section 1087ss (/uscode/text/20/1087ss) of this title.

(E) Consequences if State does not accept simplified forms

If a State does not permit an applicant to file a form described in paragraph (2)(B) or (3)(B) for purposes of determining eligibility for State need-based financial aid, the Secretary may determine that State-specific questions for such State will not be included on a form described in paragraph (2)(B) or (3)(B). If the Secretary makes such determination, the Secretary shall advise the State of the Secretary's determination.

(F) Lack of State response to request for information

If a State does not respond to the Secretary's request for information under subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall—

- (I) permit residents of that State to complete simplified forms under paragraphs (2)(B) and (3)(B); and
- (II) not require any resident of such State to complete any data items previously required by that State under this section.

(G) Restriction

The Secretary shall, to the extent practicable, not require applicants to complete any financial or nonfinancial data items that are not required—

- (I) by the applicant's State; or
- (II) by the Secretary.

(6) Charges to students and parents for use of forms prohibited

The need and eligibility of a student for financial assistance under parts A through D of this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)) (other than under subpart 4 of part A of this subchapter) may be determined only by using a form developed by the Secretary under this subsection. Such forms shall be produced, distributed, and processed by the Secretary, and no parent or student shall be charged a fee by the Secretary, a contractor, a third-party servicer or private software provider, or any other public or private entity for the collection, processing, or delivery of financial aid through the use of such forms. No data collected on a form for which a fee is charged shall be used to complete the form prescribed under this section, except that a Federal or State income tax form prepared by a paid income tax preparer or preparer service for the primary purpose of filing a Federal or State income tax return may be used to complete the form prescribed under this section.

(7) Restrictions on use of PIN

No person, commercial entity, or other entity may request, obtain, or utilize an applicant's personal identification number assigned under paragraph (3)(G) for purposes of submitting a form developed under this subsection on an applicant's behalf.

(8) Application processing cycle

The Secretary shall enable students to submit forms developed under this subsection and initiate the processing of such forms under this subsection, as early as practicable prior to January 1 of the student's planned year of enrollment.

(9) Early estimates

The Secretary shall continue to—

(A) permit applicants to enter data in such forms as described in this subsection in the years prior to enrollment in order to obtain a non-binding estimate of the applicant's family contribution (as defined in section 1087mm ([/uscode/text/20/1087mm](#)) of this title);

(B) permit applicants to update information submitted on forms described in this subsection, without needing to re-enter previously submitted information;

(C) develop a means to inform applicants, in the years prior to enrollment, of student aid options for individuals in similar financial situations;

(D) develop a means to provide a clear and conspicuous notice that the applicant's expected family contribution is subject to change and may not reflect the final expected family contribution used to determine Federal student financial aid award amounts under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)); and

(E) consult with representatives of States, institutions of higher education, and other individuals with experience or expertise in student financial assistance application processes in making updates to forms used to provide early estimates under this paragraph.

(10) Distribution of data

Institutions of higher education, guaranty agencies, and States shall receive, without charge, the data collected by the Secretary using a form developed under this subsection for the purposes of processing loan applications and determining need and eligibility for institutional and State financial aid awards. Entities designated by institutions of higher education, guaranty agencies, or States to receive such data shall be subject to all the requirements of this section, unless such requirements are waived by the Secretary.

(11) Third party servicers and private software providers

To the extent practicable and in a timely manner, the Secretary shall provide, to private organizations and consortia that develop software used by institutions of higher education for the administration of funds under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)), all the necessary specifications that the organizations and consortia must meet for the software the organizations and consortia develop, produce, and distribute (including any diskette, modem, or network communications) to be so used. The specifications shall contain record layouts for required data. The Secretary shall develop in advance of each processing cycle an annual schedule for providing such specifications. The Secretary, to the extent practicable, shall use multiple means of providing such specifications, including conferences and other meetings, outreach, and technical support mechanisms (such as training and printed reference materials). The Secretary shall, from time to time, solicit from such organizations and consortia means of improving the support provided by the Secretary.

(12) Parent's social security number and birth date

The Secretary is authorized to include space on the forms developed under this subsection for the social security number and birth date of parents of dependent students seeking financial assistance under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)).

(b) Information to committees of Congress

Copies of all rules, regulations, guidelines, instructions, and application forms published or promulgated pursuant to this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)) shall be provided to the authorizing committees at least 45 days prior to their effective date.

(c) Toll-free information

The Secretary shall contract for, or establish, and publicize a toll-free telephone service to provide timely and accurate information to the general public. The information provided shall include specific instructions on completing the application form for assistance under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)). Such service shall also include a service accessible by telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDD's) and shall, in addition to the services provided for in the previous sentence, refer such students to the national clearinghouse on postsecondary education or other appropriate provider of technical assistance and information on postsecondary educational services for individuals with disabilities, including the National Technical Assistance Center under section 1140q ([/uscode/text/20/1140q](#)) of this title. The Secretary shall continue to implement, to the extent practicable, a toll-free telephone based system to permit applicants who meet the requirements of subsection (b) or (c) of section 1087ss ([/uscode/text/20/1087ss](#)) of this title to submit an application over such system.

(d) Assistance in preparation of financial aid application

(1) Preparation authorized

Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter, an applicant may use a preparer for consultative or preparation services for the completion of a form developed under subsection (a) if the preparer satisfies the requirements of this subsection.

(2) Preparer identification required

If an applicant uses a preparer for consultative or preparation services for the completion of a form developed under subsection (a), and for which a fee is charged, the preparer shall—

(A) include, at the time the form is submitted to the Department, the name, address or employer's address, social security number or employer identification number, and organizational affiliation of the preparer on the applicant's form; and

(B) be subject to the same penalties as an applicant for purposely giving false or misleading information in the application.

(3) Additional requirements

A preparer that provides consultative or preparation services pursuant to this subsection shall—

(A) clearly inform each individual upon initial contact, including contact through the Internet or by telephone, that the FAFSA and EZ FAFSA are free forms that may be completed without professional assistance via paper or electronic version of the forms that are provided by the Secretary;

(B) include in any advertising clear and conspicuous information that the FAFSA and EZ FAFSA are free forms that may be completed without professional assistance via paper or electronic version of the forms that are provided by the Secretary;

(C) if advertising or providing any information on a website, or if providing services through a website, include on the website a link to

the website that provides the electronic version of the forms developed under subsection (a); and

(D) not produce, use, or disseminate any other form for the purpose of applying for Federal student financial aid other than the form developed by the Secretary under subsection (a).

(4) Special rule

Nothing in this chapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42) shall be construed to limit preparers of the forms required under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42) that meet the requirements of this subsection from collecting source information from a student or parent, including Internal Revenue Service tax forms, in providing consultative and preparation services in completing the forms.

(e) Early application and estimated award demonstration program

(1) Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the demonstration program under this subsection is to measure the benefits, in terms of student aspirations and plans to attend an institution of higher education, and any adverse effects, in terms of program costs, integrity, distribution, and delivery of aid under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42), of implementing an early application system for all dependent students that allows dependent students to apply for financial aid using information from two years prior to the year of enrollment. Additional objectives associated with implementation of the demonstration program are the following:

(A) To measure the feasibility of enabling dependent students to apply for Federal, State, and institutional financial aid in their junior year of secondary school, using information from two years prior to the year of enrollment, by completing any of the forms under this subsection.

(B) To identify whether receiving final financial aid award estimates not later than the fall of the senior year of secondary school provides students with additional time to compete for the limited resources available for State and institutional financial aid and positively impacts the college aspirations and plans of these students.

(C) To measure the impact of using income information from the years prior to enrollment on—

(I) eligibility for financial aid under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42) and for other State and institutional aid; and

(ii) the cost of financial aid programs under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42).

(D) To effectively evaluate the benefits and adverse effects of the demonstration program on program costs, integrity, distribution, and delivery of financial aid.

(2) Program authorized

Not later than two years after August 14, 2008, the Secretary shall implement an early application demonstration program enabling dependent students who wish to participate in the program—

(A) to complete an application under this subsection during the academic year that is two years prior to the year such students plan to enroll in an institution of higher education; and

(B) based on the application described in subparagraph (A), to obtain, not later than one year prior to the year of the students' planned enrollment, information on eligibility for Federal Pell Grants, Federal student loans under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42), and State and institutional financial aid for the student's first year of enrollment in the institution of higher education.

(3) Early application and estimated award

For all dependent students selected for participation in the demonstration program who submit a completed FAFSA, or, as appropriate, an EZ FAFSA, two years prior to the year such students plan to enroll in an institution of higher education, the Secretary shall, not later than one year prior to the year of such planned enrollment—

(A) provide each student who completes an early application with an estimated determination of such student's—

(i) expected family contribution for the first year of the student's enrollment in an institution of higher education; and

(ii) Federal Pell Grant award for the first such year, based on the Federal Pell Grant amount, determined under section 1070a (/uscode/text/20/1070a) (b)(2)(A) (/uscode/text/20/usc_sec_20_00001070---a000-#b_2_A) of this title, for which a student is eligible at the time of application; and

(B) remind the students of the need to update the students' information during the calendar year of enrollment using the expedited reapplication process provided for in subsection (a)(4)(A).

(4) Participants

The Secretary shall include as participants in the demonstration program—

(A) States selected through the application process described in paragraph (5);

(B) institutions of higher education within the selected States that are interested in participating in the demonstration program, and that can make estimates or commitments of institutional student financial aid, as appropriate, to students the year before the students' planned enrollment date; and

(C) secondary schools within the selected States that are interested in participating in the demonstration program, and that can commit resources to—

- (i)** advertising the availability of the program;
- (ii)** identifying students who might be interested in participating in the program;
- (iii)** encouraging such students to apply; and
- (iv)** participating in the evaluation of the program.

(5) Applications

Each State that is interested in participating in the demonstration program shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such form, and containing such information as the Secretary shall require. The application shall include—

(A) information on the amount of the State's need-based student financial assistance available, and the eligibility criteria for receiving such assistance;

(B) a commitment to make, not later than the year before the dependent students participating in the demonstration program plan to enroll in an institution of higher education, an estimate of the award of State financial aid to such dependent students;

(C) a plan for recruiting institutions of higher education and secondary schools with different demographic characteristics to participate in the program;

(D) a plan for selecting institutions of higher education and secondary schools to participate in the program that—

(i) demonstrate a commitment to encouraging students to submit a FAFSA, or, as appropriate, an EZ FAFSA, two years before the students' planned date of enrollment in an institution of higher education;

(ii) serve different populations of students;

(iii) in the case of institutions of higher education—

(I) to the extent possible, are of varying types and sectors; and

(II) commit to making, not later than the year prior to the year that dependent students participating in the demonstration program plan to enroll in the institution—

(aa) estimated institutional awards to participating dependent students; and

(bb) estimated grants or other financial aid available under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34

(/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42) (including supplemental grants under subpart 3 of part A of this subchapter), for all participating dependent students, along with information on State awards, as provided to the institution by the State;

(E) a commitment to participate in the evaluation conducted by the Secretary; and

(F) such other information as the Secretary may require.

(6) Special provisions

(A) Discretion of student financial aid administrators

A financial aid administrator at an institution of higher education participating in a demonstration program under this subsection may use the discretion provided under section 1087tt (/uscode/text/20/1087tt) of this title as necessary for students participating in the demonstration program.

(B) Waivers

The Secretary is authorized to waive, for an institution of higher education participating in the demonstration program, any requirements under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42), or regulations prescribed under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42), that will make the demonstration program unworkable, except that the Secretary shall not waive any provisions with respect to the maximum award amounts for grants and loans under this subchapter and part C (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C) of subchapter I (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1) of chapter 34 (/uscode/text/42/chapter-34) of title 42 (/uscode/text/42).

(7) Outreach

The Secretary shall make appropriate efforts to notify States of the demonstration program under this subsection. Upon determination of participating States, the Secretary shall continue to make efforts to notify institutions of higher education and dependent students within participating States of the opportunity to participate in the demonstration program and of the participation requirements.

(8) Evaluation

The Secretary shall conduct a rigorous evaluation of the demonstration program to measure the program's benefits and adverse effects, as the benefits and effects relate to the purpose and objectives of the program described in paragraph (1). In conducting the evaluation, the Secretary shall—

(A) determine whether receiving financial aid estimates one year prior to the year in which the student plans to enroll in an institution of

higher education, has a positive impact on the higher education aspirations and plans of such student;

(B) measure the extent to which using a student's income information from the year that is two years prior to the student's planned enrollment date had an impact on the ability of States and institutions of higher education to make financial aid awards and commitments;

(C) determine what operational changes are required to implement the program on a larger scale;

(D) identify any changes to Federal law that are necessary to implement the program on a permanent basis;

(E) identify the benefits and adverse effects of providing early estimates on program costs, program operations, program integrity, award amounts, distribution, and delivery of aid; and

(F) examine the extent to which estimated awards differ from actual awards made to students participating in the program.

(9) Consultation

The Secretary shall consult, as appropriate, with the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance established under section 1098 ([/uscode/text/20/1098](#)) of this title on the design, implementation, and evaluation of the demonstration program.

(f) Reduction of income and asset information to determine eligibility for student financial aid

(1) Continuation of current FAFSA simplification efforts

The Secretary shall continue to examine—

(A) how the Internal Revenue Service can provide to the Secretary income and other data needed to compute an expected family contribution for taxpayers and dependents of taxpayers, and when in the application cycle the data can be made available;

(B) whether data provided by the Internal Revenue Service can be used to—

(i) prepopulate the electronic version of the FAFSA with student and parent taxpayer data; or

(ii) generate an expected family contribution without additional action on the part of the student and taxpayer; and

(C) whether the data elements collected on the FAFSA that are needed to determine eligibility for student aid, or to administer the Federal student financial aid programs under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)), but are not needed to compute an expected family contribution, such as information regarding the student's citizenship or permanent residency status, registration for selective service, or driver's license number, can be reduced without adverse effects.

(2) Report on FAFSA simplification efforts to date

Not later than 90 days after August 14, 2008, the Secretary shall provide a written report to the authorizing committees on the work the Department has done with the Secretary of the Treasury regarding—

(A) how the expected family contribution of a student can be calculated using substantially less income and asset information than was used on March 31, 2008;

(B) the extent to which the reduced income and asset information will result in a redistribution of Federal grants and subsidized loans under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-I](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)), State aid, or institutional aid, or in a change in the composition of the group of recipients of such aid, and the amount of such redistribution;

(C) how the alternative approaches for calculating the expected family contribution will—

(i) rely mainly, in the case of students and parents who file income tax returns, on information available on the 1040, 1040EZ, and 1040A; and

(ii) include formulas for adjusting income or asset information to produce similar results to the existing approach with less data;

(D) how the Internal Revenue Service can provide to the Secretary of Education income and other data needed to compute an expected family contribution for taxpayers and dependents of taxpayers, and when in the application cycle the data can be made available;

(E) whether data provided by the Internal Revenue Service can be used to—

(i) prepopulate the electronic version of the FAFSA with student and parent taxpayer data; or

(ii) generate an expected family contribution without additional action on the part of the student and taxpayer;

(F) the extent to which the use of income data from two years prior to a student's planned enrollment date will change the expected family contribution computed in accordance with part E, and potential adjustments to the need analysis formula that will minimize the change; and

(G) the extent to which the data elements collected on the FAFSA on March 31, 2008, that are needed to determine eligibility for student aid or to administer the Federal student financial aid programs, but are not needed to compute an expected family contribution, such as information regarding the student's citizenship or permanent residency status, registration for selective service, or driver's license number, can be reduced without adverse effects.

(3) Study

(A) Formation of study group

Not later than 90 days after August 14, 2008, the Comptroller General shall convene a study group the membership of which shall include the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of the Treasury, the

Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Director of the Congressional Budget Office, representatives of institutions of higher education with expertise in Federal and State financial aid assistance, State chief executive officers of higher education with a demonstrated commitment to simplifying the FAFSA, and such other individuals as the Comptroller General and the Secretary of Education may designate.

(B) Study required

The Comptroller General, in consultation with the study group convened under subparagraph (A) shall—

- (i) review and build on the work of the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of the Treasury, and individuals with expertise in analysis of financial need, to assess alternative approaches for calculating the expected family contribution under the statutory need analysis formula in effect on the day before August 14, 2008, and under a new calculation that will use substantially less income and asset information than was used for the 2008–2009 FAFSA;
- (ii) conduct an additional analysis if necessary, and
- (iii) make recommendations to the authorizing committees.

(C) Objectives of study

The objectives of the study required under subparagraph (B) are—

- (i) to determine methods to shorten the FAFSA and make the FAFSA easier and less time-consuming to complete, thereby increasing higher education access for low-income students;
- (ii) to identify changes to the statutory need analysis formula that will be necessary to reduce the amount of financial information students and families need to provide to receive a determination of eligibility for student financial aid without causing significant redistribution of Federal grants and subsidized loans under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)); and
- (iii) to review State and institutional needs and uses for data collected on the FAFSA, and to determine the best means of addressing such needs in the case of modification of the FAFSA as described in clause (i), or modification of the need analysis formula as described in clause (ii).

(D) Required subjects of study

The study required under subparagraph (B) shall examine—

- (i) with respect to simplification of the financial aid application process using the statutory requirements for need analysis—
 - (I) additional steps that can be taken to simplify the financial aid application process for students who (or, in the case of dependent students, whose parents) are not required to file a Federal income tax return for the prior taxable year;

(II) information on State use of information provided on the FAFSA, including—

(aa) whether a State uses, as of the time of the study, or can use, a student's expected family contribution based on data from two years prior to the student's planned enrollment date;

(bb) the extent to which States and institutions will accept the data provided by the Internal Revenue Service to prepopulate the electronic version of the FAFSA to determine the distribution of State and institutional student financial aid funds;

(cc) what data are used by States, as of the time of the study, to determine eligibility for State student financial aid, and whether the data are used for merit- or need-based aid;

(dd) whether State data are required by State law, State regulations, or policy directives; and

(ee) the extent to which any State-specific information requirements can be met by completion of a State application linked to the electronic version of the FAFSA; and

(III) information on institutional needs, including the extent to which institutions of higher education are already using supplemental forms to collect additional data from students and their families to determine eligibility for institutional funds; and

(II) ways to reduce the amount of financial information students and families need to provide to receive a determination of eligibility for student financial aid, taking into account—

(I) the amount of redistribution of Federal grants and subsidized loans under this subchapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title 42 ([/uscode/text/42](#)) caused by such a reduction, and the benefits to be gained by having an application process that will be easier for students and their families;

(II) students and families who do not file income tax returns;

(III) the extent to which the full array of income and asset information collected on the FAFSA, as of the time of the study, plays an important role in the awarding of need-based State financial aid, and whether the State can use an expected family contribution generated by the FAFSA, instead of income and asset information or a calculation with reduced data elements, to support determinations of eligibility for such State aid programs and, if not, what additional information will be needed or what changes to the FAFSA will be required; and

(IV) information on institutional needs, including the extent to which institutions of higher education are already using supplemental forms to collect additional data from students and their families to determine eligibility for institutional funds; and

(V) changes to this chapter and part C ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1/part-C](#)) of subchapter I ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34/subchapter-1](#)) of chapter 34 ([/uscode/text/42/chapter-34](#)) of title

42 (/uscode/text/42) or other laws that will be required to implement a modified need analysis system.

(4) Consultation

The Secretary shall consult with the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance established under section 1098 (/uscode/text/20/1098) of this title as appropriate in carrying out this subsection.

(5) Reports

(A) Reports on study

The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the authorizing committees—

(i) not later than one year after August 14, 2008, an interim report on the progress of the study required under paragraph (3) that includes any preliminary recommendations by the study group established under such paragraph; and

(ii) not later than two years after August 14, 2008, a final report on the results of the study required under paragraph (3) that includes recommendations by the study group established under such paragraph.

(B) Reports on FAFSA simplification efforts

The Secretary shall report to the authorizing committees, from time to time, on the progress of the simplification efforts under this subsection.

(g) Addressing the digital divide

The Secretary shall utilize savings accrued by moving more applicants to the electronic version of the forms described in subsection (a)(3) to improve access to the electronic version of the forms described in such subsection for applicants meeting the requirements of subsection (b) or (c) of section 1087ss (/uscode/text/20/1087ss) of this title.

(h) Adjustments

The Secretary shall disclose, on the form notifying a student of the student's expected family contribution, that the student may, on a case-by-case basis, qualify for an adjustment under section 1087tt (/uscode/text/20/1087tt) of this title to the cost of attendance or the values of the data items required to calculate the expected contribution for the student or parent. Such disclosure shall specify—

(1) the special circumstances under which a student or family member may qualify for such adjustment; and

(2) additional information regarding the steps a student or family member may take in order to seek an adjustment under section 1087tt (/uscode/text/20/1087tt) of this title.

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