



CALIFORNIA
STUDENT AID
COMMISSION

Better FAFSA, Better CADAA Bulletin

September 12, 2023

Welcome to the first edition of the California Student Aid Commission's Better FAFSA, Better CA Dream Act Application Bulletin with information, updates, and resources for the upcoming 2024-25 financial aid cycle.

From our Executive Director:

As we start the 2023-24 academic year, the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) continues to prepare for the opening of the 2024-25 federal and state financial aid applications. After many years of waiting for the simplification of the FAFSA, we are excited that we are in the final stages before FAFSA and CA Dream Act Applications launch in December 2023.

To help manage the change during the months leading up to the opening of the 2024-25 financial aid cycle, CSAC will provide periodic information through this Bulletin to highlight significant changes and spotlight critical enhancements in each edition. The Bulletin is designed to provide curated information that makes it easy for you to navigate new developments in the rollout of the Better FAFSA, Better CA Dream Act Application. These newsletters will supplement our Operations Memos and Special Alerts.

What Do We Know?

The redesign of the application, known as the "Better FAFSA" will make the form much easier to complete by removing several questions, importing tax information from the IRS, and enhancing the user experience. Not only will we have a "Better FAFSA", but enhancements to the California Dream Act

Application (CADAA) also known as “Better CA Dream Act Application” will open up at the same time.

We know there are changes that simplify the application but may also raise some questions from those who have previously applied for financial aid. As with any substantial change, there will be a transition period to become familiar with the new format, sequence of questions, and new terminology. We are all in this new transition together and CSAC is here to support you and the families you work with to make it easier for students to get financial aid. This huge step in simplifying these financial aid applications will make a positive difference in helping more students get to the finish line and receive federal and state aid.

Key Application Dates to Keep in Mind:

- This year the Better FAFSA, Better CA Dream Act Application opening is delayed from the traditional **October 1 to December 2023**. The exact date will be communicated once it has been determined, but more than likely it will be the latter part of December.
- The March 2nd priority deadline has been extended to **April 2, 2024**, due to the delayed application opening.

September Action Item:

All students, parents, and legal guardians contributing to the FAFSA will be required to have or register for a [Federal Student Aid \(FSA\) ID](#). Encourage students and their contributors to create an FSA ID as early as possible in October to be ready for the December opening of the FAFSA and CADAA.

Keep in mind:

- New FAFSA filers will need to create an FSA ID account.
- Renewal FAFSA filers can continue to use their existing FSA ID.
 - Be sure students login to ensure FSA IDs still work before the FAFSA opens in December.

In the Spotlight:

FSA provided a live Better FAFSA Demonstration on August 17, 2023. After much anticipation and only having read about the changes previously, it was

exciting to see the actual Better FAFSA in action and on screen. The demo walked through the student applicant and parent contributor sections from the perspective of a typical dependent student with married parents. For those students who don't fall into this category, there will be ongoing training opportunities to help you help students and their families navigate how to address unique circumstances in completing the FAFSA or the CA Dream Act Application. Viewing the demo prior to the opening of the application would be extremely helpful to have familiarity with the new format, layout, and flow.

[Watch the Better FAFSA Demo](#)

[View the 2024-25 FAFSA Preview PowerPoint presentation](#)

Upcoming Training: Annual Statewide Financial Aid Workshops:

September 8, 2023	Antelope Valley College (Lancaster)
September 11, 2023	Virtual Workshop (Zoom)
September 13, 2023	Orange County Department of Education (Costa Mesa)

[Look for a workshop near you!](#)

Please join fellow K-12, higher education colleagues, and other groups that assist students with completing financial aid applications to learn more about the Better FAFSA and Better CA Dream Act Application at the 4th Annual California College Affordability Summit on November 7 & 8 at the Riverside County Office of Education. For more details and to register please visit the [California College Affordability Summit](#).

Resources:

[2024-25 FSA FAFSA Roadmap](#)

[FSA Financial Aid Toolkit for Counselors](#)

[FAFSA Simplification Training Resources](#)

[NCAN Better FAFSA Resources](#)

Stay tuned: a Better FAFSA, Better CA Dream Act Application website update is coming soon.