

Dear Student,

The federal government released earlier this year a substantially revised Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the upcoming 2024-2025 academic year. The principles behind this revised FAFSA are admirable—simplification of the process, expanding access to more financial aid to needier families/students, fewer questions for students and families to complete on the FAFSA, to name but a few benefits. Unfortunately, the initial roll-out of the new FAFSA has experienced various challenges that hinder and delay access to the FAFSA and the data that is shared with colleges. It is possible you have seen reports of these issues in the media.

At this time, families are reporting intermittent challenges with completing the FAFSA. The good news is we will be receiving all reprocessed ISIRS by May 1st allowing us to begin the awarding of federal financial aid soon. There has also been a correction to the ability for students to make FAFSA corrections as of mid-April.

I wanted to share a few thoughts and recommendations with you as you prepare to apply for financial aid in the coming weeks. My recommendations are as follows: Continue visiting studentaid.gov to complete the FAFSA form, despite the challenges you might be experiencing. I'm confident that the problems for most of the challenges have been addressed with this form and many of the processes have been resolved. The only way you can determine if you are eligible for financial aid assistance in paying for college is by applying for aid.

Ask for assistance. There are many resources in the community to assist you as you look to complete the FAFSA. My staff, high school counselors, community groups, are all glad to help. Be patient, but persistent. Completing the FAFSA has posed challenges, but the process has gotten better. Don't give up applying for financial aid—it is one of the best, smartest things you can do to help make college accessible for you and your family. If you feel frustrated or confused by the process, please call, email or visit my office. Our staff is here to help.

Northampton Community College is committed to keeping current, returning and prospective students updated. Once your FAFSA is received by NCC, our goal is to provide you with all pertinent financial aid information, such as additional documents required to finalize your financial aid determination or financial aid award notifications, to your student Workday portal as soon as possible.

Here are some operational steps to keep in mind:

- If you plan to attend Northampton Community College in the Fall 2024 and/or Spring 2025 semesters, please complete a 2024-2025 FAFSA application.
- If you plan to attend in the summer 2024 semester, please complete both a 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 FAFSA application by going to <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. We ask that you complete two different FAFSA forms because summer school classes straddle two different financial aid cycles.
- If you would like to make an appointment for assistance completing a FAFSA application, register for a scheduled session by going to <https://info.northampton.edu/fafsa-completion>. For general financial aid questions, please call 610-861-5510.

Rosa Ferguson
Director, Financial Aid