

## Federal Policy and Advocacy Update

*(Provided by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Information current as of October 4, 2024).*

### CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE

On September 26, 2024, H.R. 9747 Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 was signed into law. The bill provides continuing Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriations for federal agencies, provides additional funding for the U.S. Secret Service, and extends various expiring programs and authorities.

Specifically, the bill provides continuing FY2025 appropriations to federal agencies through the earlier of December 20, 2024, or the enactment of the applicable appropriations act. It is known as a continuing resolution (CR) and prevents a government shutdown that would otherwise occur if the FY2025 appropriations bills have not been enacted by October 1, 2024.

You can view the full continuing resolution [here](https://www.congress.gov/bills/118/house-bills/9747) (congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/9747).

### FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA) UPDATE

As of September 20, 2024, 52% of the high school class of 2024 has completed a FAFSA. There have been 2.1 million FAFSA forms completed nationally, which is 9 percent below the completion rate at this same time last year.

On Tuesday, September 3, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) released the 2025-26 FAFSA prototype. The prototype is a web-based design tool that allows users to navigate specific scenarios that many 2025–26 applicants will encounter on the live website. This prototype has limited functionality and may not represent the final FAFSA experience.

The U.S. Department of Education has begun [testing](https://ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-framework-2025%E2%80%9326-fafsa-testing-period-and-interest-form-first-beta-period) (ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-framework-2025%E2%80%9326-fafsa-testing-period-and-interest-form-first-beta-period) the 2025-2026 FAFSA starting Oct. 1, 2024. The Department [announced](https://ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-additional-participants-2025-26-fafsa) (ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-announces-additional-participants-2025-26-fafsa) on September 30<sup>th</sup> the next cohort of organizations selected to participate in the testing period for the 2025–26 FAFSA.

The first stage of testing, Beta 1, has begun as of October 1. Over the last couple of days, a small group of students recruited by six community-based organizations (CBOs) have submitted FAFSA forms, and the Department will begin processing Institutional Student Information Records (ISIRs) for these forms, sending them to institutions of higher education and state agencies. Beta 1 testing will continue through the first half of October. The next stages of testing are: Beta 2, beginning in mid-October; Beta 3, beginning in early November; and Beta 4, beginning in mid-November. In each stage, CBOs, government entities, high schools, and institutions of higher education will recruit a growing number of students to fill out the FAFSA form.

Education Secretary Miguel Cardona also sent a [letter](https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2024-09-23/secretary-education-miguel-cardona-letter-presidents-and-chancellors-improving-fafsa-experience-updates-actions-and-path-forward-2025-26-cycle) (fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2024-09-23/secretary-education-miguel-cardona-letter-presidents-and-chancellors-improving-fafsa-experience-updates-actions-and-path-forward-2025-26-cycle) to all college and university presidents with updates on the launch of the 2025-26 FAFSA.