

# **Statewide FAFSA Completion Report**

**2024-25**



September 2025

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## Executive Summary

Completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a critical milestone for Grade 12 students seeking to attend college or a trade school. For students who meet specific income requirements, it can unlock tens of thousands of dollars in public and private sources of financial aid, paving the way for them to attend school at a significantly reduced cost than otherwise possible. Because many prospective first-year college students typically complete the FAFSA during their senior year of high school, the Governor's Office and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) recognize the importance of raising awareness of and helping students complete the FAFSA to support their postsecondary pursuits.

In the 2024-25 school year, Connecticut continued its efforts to improve student outcomes, close opportunity gaps, and spark innovation in schools to promote FAFSA completion. Connecticut's statewide FAFSA completion rate in 2024-25 was 62.0 percent, including a FAFSA completion rate of 55.7 percent for students eligible for free- or reduced-priced meals. Improved completion rates have enabled students, particularly those from high-needs backgrounds, to access grants and other vital aid to defray the costs of attending a postsecondary institution.

## Introduction

In the 2020-21 school year, the Governor's Office and Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) launched the Connecticut FAFSA Challenge, a college and career readiness program that aimed to bolster completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) across Connecticut's highest-need high schools. Over the last five years, Connecticut has invested \$1.5 million in FAFSA completion, identifying it as essential to unlocking thousands of dollars in federal, state, institutional and private aid for students attending a postsecondary school. As such, the state took several steps to raise awareness of the application among district leaders, school staff, and families. These include:

- a public [FAFSA completion dashboard on EdSight](#) which shows completion rates at the district and school levels, and a secure report for authorized users that provides student-level completion status;
- passage of [Public Act \(PA\) 21-199](#), which requires districts to adopt a policy for increasing FAFSA completion;
- passage of [PA 22-116](#), which incentivizes districts to improve completion rates as a means to tap into greater funding for school mental health specialists; and

- passage of [Public Act 23-204](#), which requires the completion of the FAFSA or alternative institutional aid application as a high school graduation requirement.

Amidst these pieces of legislation, the Connecticut FAFSA Challenge represented a steady and powerful initiative to level the playing field for students who desire to attend a postsecondary institution but for whom financial and other barriers preclude them from doing so.

Connecticut has continued its FAFSA completion efforts with the same three goals:

1. **Improve Student Outcomes:** Support students in achieving their goals for college, career, and life success by addressing FAFSA completion as a core access milestone.
2. **Close Opportunity Gaps:** Promote access for all students by closing opportunity gaps for historically marginalized subgroups and school communities.
3. **Spark Innovation:** Support schools in pursuing creative ideas to promote FAFSA completion.

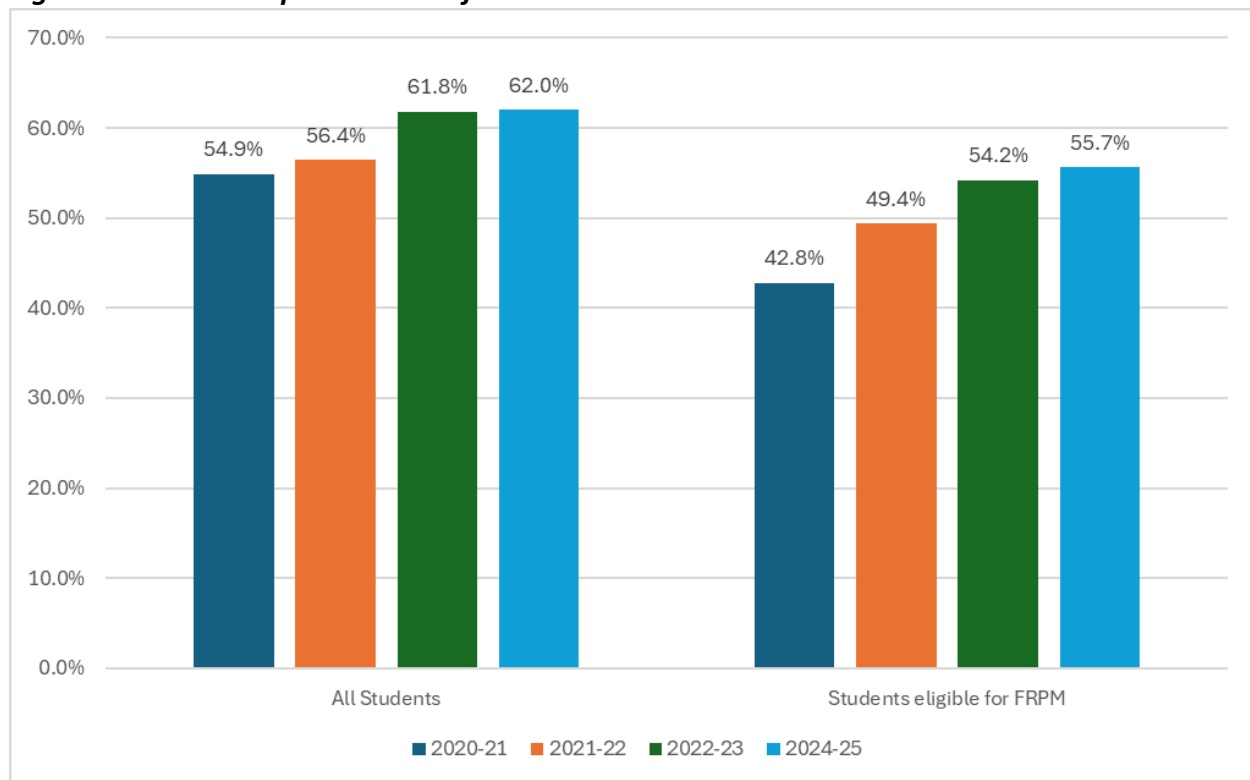
## Results

This section presents FAFSA completion rates for the 2024-25 school year at the state level and for several student groups. Connecticut's statewide FAFSA completion rate in 2024-25 was 62.0 percent (up from 54.9 percent in 2020-21), including a FAFSA completion rate of 55.7 percent for students eligible for free- or reduced-priced meals (FRPM; up from 42.8 percent in 2020-21). In addition, students of color had a completion rate of 58.5 percent in 2024-25. Figure 1 shows the increase in FAFSA completion rates statewide ("All Students") and for students eligible for FRPM from 2020-21 to 2024-25.<sup>1</sup> District- and school-level FAFSA completion rates are publicly available via the [FAFSA Completion Report on EdSight](#).

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<sup>1</sup> The 2023-24 results are excluded, since the new, simplified FAFSA was released nearly three months later than the typical October 1 release date.

**Figure 1: FAFSA Completion Rates for Connecticut Grade 12 Public School Students**



*Note: The 2023-24 results are excluded, since the new, simplified FAFSA was released nearly three months later than the typical October 1 release date.*

## Conclusion

The increase to Connecticut's FAFSA completion rate demonstrates the power that school counselors, administrators, and other educators have in preparing students for their college and career aspirations. The Governor's Office and the Connecticut State Department of Education will continue to work with educators, students, and families to link more deserving and interested students to various forms of financial aid and chip away at, if not eliminate, a major hurdle in their quest to pursue a higher education.