

June 13, 2025

RE: OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 1845-0001

ICR REFERENCE NUMBER: 202501-1845-004

TITLE: 2026-2027 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

We appreciate the opportunity to share our comments in response to the Department of Education's notice for comments on the Updated Draft 2026–27 Federal Student Aid Application Materials.

uAspire is focused on removing financial barriers to college by providing high school and college students with one-on-one support and resources to navigate the complex financial aid process. We support thousands of students across the country to complete the FAFSA. Our suggestions are based on our experiences working with students on FAFSA completion.

For help text on "College Grants, Scholarships, or Americorps Benefits Reported to IRS as Income", we think the update that says the answer is typically zero to be very helpful. It would also be helpful to add that if they do have it, they will find it on Schedule 1, Line 8r (if it will always be there).

Grants/scholarships help text should provide some reference or support in determining if there are taxable scholarships - it could refer to schedule 1, line 8r or it is flagged to the left of the line 1 on the 1040. Pell Grant usually will not be taxed, but there are some instances where it is taxed. We would suggest phrasing this to make it more accurate, though still clear.

For child support received, it is a good idea to qualify who is included. It should make it clear it is for all dependents.

Free-reduced lunch - this should be removed. Students and families don't necessarily know the qualifications for FRL. If it can't be removed the help text should link to further guidance.

We suggest adding a 'prefer not to answer' option to the student sex question, just as there is that option for the students' race and/or ethnicity question.

We would move up the student citizenship question to the student identity information section, which will allow students to see if they are eligible to fill out the form early on, in case there is any confusion, and avoid them having to answer more questions than necessary in the event they are ineligible.

We are available to provide clarification about any of the above recommendations and be a resource to the Department. We appreciate your commitment to improving this process.

Sincerely,  
Anika Van Eaton  
Vice President, Policy