



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

30 YEARS

Implementing California's Universal Financial Aid Application Policy

Technical Appendices

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Appendix A. Application Data

Appendix A provides FAFSA & CADAA application data aggregated by month that is cited throughout report. Data is retrieved from the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) “Total Applications by High School” dashboard.

Application Date	2022	2023	2024
Oct 3	7781	11510	
Nov 3	73093	91405	
Dec 3	115513	142521	
Jan 3	136910	168689	4499
Feb 3	167369	208857	79669
Mar 3	259772	301693	147021
April 3	275595	310429	208904
May 3	282696	318977	262154
June 3	290095	329271	282606
July 3	298620	336793	293640
Aug 3	307933	344270	303864
Sep 3	318670	352646	316410

SOURCE: California Student Aid Commission.

NOTES: Total FAFSA and CADAA applications submitted for recent California high school graduates who are incoming freshmen. 2024 refers to applications filled out in 2023–24 academic year. Application counts for the 3rd of each month are used to align with the UC/CSU financial aid deadline counts used in other charts/tables in report. Financial aid applications for 2024 opened until January, hence the gaps. Data retrieved September 11, 2024.

Appendix B. Interview Protocols

Districts were chosen across the state using the [CSAC Race to Submit](#) leaderboards. We were able to track which schools and districts had the highest levels of FAFSA/CADAA completion in the state, as well as those who had shown the biggest improvements from 2022 to 2023. We identified and contacted the top ten districts and schools from each group to obtain permission for interviews and site visits. This allowed us to obtain a geographically diverse set of 18 schools and districts which also varied in size and urbanicity. We used the same interview protocol for each interview, but left room for follow-up questions. We would ask to speak with school or district officials who were involved with the universal FAFSA policy implementation. We talked with principals, superintendents, counselors, college readiness coordinators, and teachers, but most of the interviewees told us that it was a group effort across their sites. The interviews were generally recorded via Zoom and later we took notes on the interviews. There were also often simultaneous notes taken. All recordings were then deleted. We do not identify any districts or schools, except we do take special note of Val Verde Unified which was the first district in the state to require FAFSA/CADAA completion as a graduation requirement prior to the universal FAFSA policy.

Interview Protocol

1. Tell us about your position(s) at the [district/school] and your involvement with FAFSA/CADAA completion.
2. Tell us about the strategies your [district/school] used to increase FAFSA/CADAA submissions this year, and how do those differ from what you did last year?
3. How did the opt-out process work, and did you notice any patterns about who was opting out or why?
4. What challenges did you face in getting students to fill out the FAFSA/CADAA?
5. What kind of support did your [district/school] receive from the state, county, or peer schools and districts?
6. What kind of support would your [district/school] need to increase FAFSA/CADAA participation?
7. What are your concerns/observations about the 2024 FAFSA rollout?

Appendix C. Sample Opt-Out Form

Appendix C provides a sample opt-out form that was provided to the authors by a school district in southern California. This form is similar to the one used by a majority of the districts that we interviewed for this report.

Submitting a *Financial Aid Application Opt-Out Form* does not prohibit a pupil from completing and submitting a financial aid application at any time in the future.

Pupil Name (First, Last)	
Date of Birth (Month, Day, Year)	
Statewide Student Identifier (SSID)	
Reason for Opting Out	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Attending College Reason: <input type="checkbox"/> Joining the Military <input type="checkbox"/> Does not qualify for FAFSA/CADAA Reason: <input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Option 1 – Pupil Authorization (emancipated minor or age 18 or older): By signing this form, I have read the information on the reverse, I understand what the FAFSA and CADAA are, and I choose not to submit the completed financial aid application.

Pupil Signature Printed Name Date

Option 2 – Parent, Educational Rights Holder or Guardian Authorization: The pupil named on this form is under the age of 18. I am a parent, educational rights holder or legal guardian of the above-named pupil, and by signing this form I have read the information on the reverse, I understand what the FAFSA and CADAA are, and I choose for my pupil not to submit the completed financial aid application.

Parent, Educational Rights Holder or Guardian Signature Printed Name Date

Option 3 – Counselor Authorization: My signature below certifies that reasonable efforts to ensure the pupil completed the FAFSA/CADAA application have been made, but I have determined the pupil is unable to complete requirements of Education Code Section 51225.7.

Pupil Signature Printed Name Date

Appendix D. District Demographics

Appendix D provides information on the demographics of districts that were engaged through interviews and site visits. The data includes FAFSA/CADAA completion rates, region type, enrollment count, share of socio-economically disadvantaged students, share of Free and Reduced Priced Meals (FRPM), share of English Learners, and race/ethnicity data. The table shows the range and diversity of districts that were interviewed.

District	Region Type	Enrollment Count	FAFSA/CADAA Completion Rate	% Socioeconomic Disadvantage	% FRPM	% English Learner	% Latino	% African American
A	Suburban	19,216	92	88.8	87.3	22.7	79.5	11.1
B	Rural	548	91	90.7	80.1	25.5	93.2	0.5
C	City	548,338	85	89.0	81.1	21.3	74.5	7.3
D	Town	13,087	80	87.1	67.1	15.2	69.3	1.3
E	Suburban	22,261	79	80.7	67.9	14.7	88.8	3.0
F	Suburban	15,262	77	81.7	53.5	26.9	42.3	0.6
G	Rural	89	77	Insufficient data	58.4	0	12.4	Insufficient data
H	City	72,455	77	89.3	85.9	19.5	69.1	7.8
I	City	50,889	77	56.8	63.1	14.5	53.9	5.7
J	City	44,102	74	89.2	59.4	40.4	95.9	0.2
K	Suburban	23,566	73	73.9	52.7	8.0	65.2	7.4
L	City	8,583	72	38.5	37.3	7.2	34.8	2.5
M	City	67,573	71	73.9	53.8	15.5	58.8	12.6
N	Suburban	10,245	69	47.4	26.0	10.4	17.2	6.8
O	Suburban	10,793	65	86.5	65.6	25.2	64.9	15.7
P	Suburban	22,094	63	67.0	60.8	12.6	41.4	6.1
Q	Rural	604	61	98.1	83.4	21.9	42.4	0.7
R	Suburban	10,210	34	68.9	64.6	7.7	59.8	7.4

SOURCE: California Department of Education (CDE) and California Student Aid Commission (CSAC).

NOTES: FAFSA/CADAA completion rates are from CSAC 2023 Race to Submit Dashboard. 5-year cohort data in CALPADS was used to retrieve the share of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. 2021-22 CDE data was used to retrieve enrollment count, share of FRPM, and race/ethnicity rates. This data was used to select which districts to interview based on their varying demographics and financial aid completion rates.



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