

From James Farmer  
Subject **Apps Using Federal Financial Data**  
To Richard Culatta <richard.culatta@ed.gov>

Following the Datapalooza several of us were discussing how to implement the suggested apps using FAFSA data. The discussion focused on use cases which would drive broad implementation and use. We want to discuss the alternatives with ED staff to ensure development is consistent with ED's IT capabilities and plans.

We are now beginning to discuss alternatives with the National Scholarship Providers Association and expect to learn more about student use from the Young Invincibles because of their work on student completion of forms and use of information—the user experience.

### High School Counseling

The simplest use would be an app that would download the FSA data and format one or more PDF/A forms that could be sent by email from the app and seen, in sections, on the student's device. For example, a student could email a high school counselor a PDF from their smartphone as a way to provide useful data for counseling. Because of the volume of data and limited time of high school counselors, an extract and summary of FAFSA data may be the most useful. Working with high school counselors could provide the most useful data and format that is most effective.

### Private Scholarship Applications

The FAFSA data could also be used to fill much of the data required for the private scholarship SNAPP electronic application form used by many of the scholarship programs. This form asks for specific FAFSA data elements but also could use the name and address and other data available in the FAFSA. This may encourage more students to apply for the estimated \$2.1 billion of scholarships awarded by the members of the National Scholarship Providers Association members, and encourage other scholarship providers to support the common electronic application. The Dell Foundation sponsored the development of the electronic standard. Much broader participation is possible with some "awareness-building" effort.

The SNAPP application could be extended to automatically fill high school transcript data (PESC standard) in real-time from SIF-compliant student systems and college transcript data (PESC standard) in real-time from student systems installed in about half of U.S. colleges and universities.

### College Financial Aid

Because of the shortage of "seats" at many community colleges, student often enroll, without prior application, in a second college (about 34% in California) to obtain a needed course. Since this is unplanned and immediate, the financial aid administrator would not have financial aid data. The student could both enroll for the course and provide FAFSA data so the combined enrollment would be eligible for financial aid. Although current processes would support this being done in a week or so, some colleges will make temporary enrollment and disbursements on the basis of student-provided FAFSA data.

## Verification

An app can also be provided that would show a student the verification actions that should be taken (as described in the Application and Verification Guide and the SAR Comment Codes and Text publications). And a useful guide to counselors to know what actions must be taken before disbursement. It also provides a progress list that perhaps will motivate a student to provide more timely documentation. This process could begin as soon as the student has access to the processed FAFSA data (C-codes in the ISIR record).

## White House and Education Department Data

Another alternative for providing useful information to counselors is to download institutional data—College Scorecard, College Navigator and other NCES data—based on the college and universities listed on the FAFSA. These comparisons could also be formatted in a PDF that can be emailed to the counselor.

The primary reason for considering a number of alternative uses is to have at least one use that is important to the student and will initiate use of the data. The goal is to have sufficient uses that justify participation by colleges and universities, high schools, scholarship providers and, as source of data, the Department of Education.

I would like to have an initial contact to discuss whether this is feasible or not, and a roadmap of coordination to achieve tested applications.

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