



Dear Zam Sian,

The federal government released earlier this year a substantially revised Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the upcoming 2024-2025 academic year. The principles behind this revised FAFSA are admirable—simplification of the process, expanding access to more financial aid to needier families/students, fewer questions for students and families to complete on the FAFSA, to name but a few benefits. Unfortunately, the initial roll-out of the new FAFSA is experiencing numerous problems that hinder and delay access to the FAFSA and the data that is shared with colleges. It is possible you have seen reports of these issues in the media.

At this time, families are reporting intermittent challenges with completing the FAFSA and colleges will not receive FAFSA data needed to create financial aid awards for students until mid-March at the earliest. This latest delay is caused by a mistake made by the federal government in how the financial aid process captures and reflects information as it relates to inflation. There are also problems with the process that allows families and individuals to make edits to the data if mistakes were made or other changes are necessary. These errors to the form and process will be corrected.

I wanted to share a few thoughts and recommendations with you as you prepare to apply for financial aid in the coming weeks and months. My recommendations are as follows:

Continue visiting FAFSA.gov to complete the form, despite the challenges you might be experiencing. I'm confident that the problems with this form and process will be resolved sooner rather than later. The only way you can determine if you are eligible for financial aid assistance in paying for college is by applying for aid.

Ask for assistance. There are many resources in the community to assist you as you look to complete the FAFSA. My staff, high school counselors, community groups, are all glad to help.

Be patient, but persistent. Completing the FAFSA poses challenges right now, but the process will get better soon. Don't give up applying for financial aid—it is one of the best, smartest things you can do to help make college accessible for you and your family. If you feel frustrated or confused by the process, please call, email or visit my office. Our staff is here to help.

Northampton Community College is committed to keeping current, returning and prospective students updated. Once your FAFSA is received by NCC, our goal is to provide you with all pertinent financial aid information, such as additional documents required to finalize your financial aid determination or financial aid award notifications, to your student Workday portal as soon as possible.

Here are some operational steps to keep in mind:

If you plan to attend Northampton Community College in the Fall 2024 and/or Spring 2025 semesters, please complete a 2024-2025 FAFSA application.

If you plan to attend in the summer 2024 semester, please complete both a 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 FAFSA application by going to <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. We ask that you complete two different FAFSA forms because summer school classes straddle two different financial aid cycles.

If you would like to make an appointment for assistance completing a FAFSA application, register for a scheduled session by going to <https://info.northampton.edu/fafsa-completion>.

For general financial aid questions, please call 610-861-5510.

Best Regards,

Rosa Ferguson  
Director, Financial Aid