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Tennessee Tops Nation in FAFSA Completion, On Pace for Tenth Consecutive Year at No. 1

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Wednesday, April 22 – The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) today announced that Tennessee once again leads the nation in Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion, marking the state’s strongest year on record for student financial aid applications.

Nearly 55,000 Tennessee high school seniors completed a FAFSA for the 2025–26 academic year, reflecting the highest level of FAFSA engagement in state history.

According to the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) FAFSA Tracker, Tennessee currently ranks first in the nation for FAFSA completion and is on pace to secure a tenth consecutive year as the national leader, pending final data later this summer.

“With a record number of students completing the FAFSA, Tennessee continues to lead the nation while helping thousands of students unlock financial aid and take the next step toward college and career success,” said Dr. Steven Gentile, THEC Executive Director.

THEC’s targeted outreach initiatives have played a significant role in increasing FAFSA completion across the state. High schools newly participating in Advise TN and GEAR UP TN have seen substantial gains, with FAFSA completion rates increasing by 16 percentage points and nearly 20 percentage points, respectively, year over year. In addition, THEC’s Outreach team visits every high school in Tennessee to provide direct support through FAFSA workshops, financial aid nights, and one-on-one assistance, ensuring students and families have the guidance needed to complete the financial aid process.

“This work is truly a statewide effort,” said Jason Seay, THEC’s Senior Director of Outreach. “By partnering with schools and communities and reaching every high school in Tennessee, we are able to connect students with the resources they need to complete the FAFSA and access the financial aid available to them.”

Another key driver of Tennessee’s continued success is the state’s network of TN Promise partners and FAFSA Champions. THEC’s TN Promise partners, tnAchieves and The Ayers Foundation Trust, provide hands-on mentorship, FAFSA assistance, and ongoing support to thousands of students statewide.

This year, [239 high schools were recognized as FAFSA Champions](#) for their outstanding

efforts to support students and families through the financial aid process. Champion schools met criteria of either a 90 percent or higher completion rate or year-over-year growth of 5 percent or more, reflecting a sustained commitment to expanding access to financial aid for Tennessee students.

Students and families can still complete the FAFSA at [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) to access federal and state financial aid opportunities. For more information on FAFSA and aid available for Tennessee students, check out [CollegeforTN.org](https://collegeforTN.org).

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About the Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. As the state's higher education coordinating body, its mission is to build a strong higher education landscape that provides opportunities for all individuals to pursue high-quality education and high-value credentials.