

FAFSA UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2026



PELL GRANT AWARD AMOUNTS REMAIN FLAT FOR 2026-27

The maximum amount a student could receive in Federal Pell Grant funding for college will remain unchanged for the 2026-27 academic year – at least for now.

On January 30, the Department of Education announced the Pell Grant maximum and minimum award amounts for the 2026-27 award year (July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027).

Under continuing appropriations approved by Congress last November for the 2026-27 award year, the maximum Pell Grant award remains fixed at \$7,395. In the announcement, the Department advises that the Pell Grant amount could change at any time pending further action by Congress. The Pell Grant minimum award amount for 2026-27 is \$740 or 10 percent of the maximum amount.

LOWER EARNINGS INDICATOR

Students completing the 2026-27 FAFSA who have selected one or more schools with lower earnings will receive a notice after submission.

The indicator identifies schools where the median earnings of graduates are lower than those of typical high school graduates in the same state.

The Department of Education said the indicator is not a judgment of which institutions are worthy of attendance.

SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN NORTH DAKOTA 2026-27 FAFSA COMPLETION

North Dakota's high school seniors in the class of 2026 are completing the FAFSA at a much higher rate than in the same period last year, according to FAFSA data, published by the National College Attainment Network (NCAN).

As of January 23, NCAN reported a 147.3 percent increase in seniors completing their FAFSA compared to the same period last year. This is especially evident in rural areas and low-income high schools.

The ND FAFSA Completion Project shows that 33 percent of high school seniors have completed their FAFSA, and that high schools that participate in the ND FAFSA Completion Project are showing higher completion rates. If your school is not yet participating in the ND FAFSA Completion Project, please reach out to the ND University System Financial Aid Office for more information.



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