

FAFSA Will Soon Only Be Available Online

By Amit Agarwal



The U.S. Department of Education will no longer send out paper copies of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Instead, the department wants to encourage students to access the FAFSA online. According to Terry W. Hartle, senior vice president for government and public affairs at the American Council on Education, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, the department will stop routinely mailing paper applications to high schools.

The Department of Education will also create a PDF version of the FAFSA that will be available on various federal student aid websites, such as www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov. Schools will also be able to access the PDF at www.fsapubs.org. Students can complete the PDF form of the application on the computer or by hand and mail it in for processing.

The move will save significant costs for the Education Department, but it may add an additional step for disadvantaged students attending college.

The online version of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid is currently used by about 90% of applicants. Students can, however, obtain paper copies of the FAFSA by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) toll-free at 800-4-FED-AID (800-433-3243).

Schools will be able to order paper copies of the FOTW Worksheet, which teaches students how to fill out the online FAFSA. Students and schools can also order promotional publications to explain how students can file the FAFSA.