



Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP): Addition of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Guidance

Legislation was passed during the 2022 legislative session under [SF2382 Division II](#) which adds a new component to the Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) process under Iowa Code section 279.61, [HF2392](#), requiring school districts to advise students through the Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) process on how to successfully complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

What does this mean?

Districts will need to incorporate information, activities and experiences surrounding the entire financial aid process and the connection between student postsecondary opportunities and FAFSA into each year of ICAP. The inclusion should be developmentally appropriate to support a scaffolding approach for students and families to move towards graduation with a career and postsecondary decision that includes the opportunity to access financial aid to support additional training and education beyond high school.

See the [ICAP Overview](#) and [ICAP Guidance](#) documents.

Common Questions

What does “advise students through ICAP” mean?

While the FAFSA is a form that is completed in federally outlined steps, the process of “advise or advisement” is broader in scope and includes an understanding of the financial aid process as a whole. The ICAP requirements are designed to provide students and their families with tools, information and experiences that allow them to make informed decisions for their individual path moving beyond high school each year in grades 8-12. Financial aid opportunities and FAFSA completion must be included in ICAP to fully provide students and families with an awareness of how to apply an understanding of financial aid to their postsecondary decision-making process.

Where should districts start with including FAFSA advisement into the ICAP process?

Districts should start with reviewing and revising their district career and academic plan (DCAP). Each school district in Iowa is required to have an established DCAP that details how the district will provide support for each student’s work surrounding their individual career and academic plan (ICAP). The district plan is reviewed, revised and updated internally on a regular basis to ensure individual student planning (ICAP) is implemented by the established district career and academic planning team. For this initial year, district teams should evaluate what is currently being done to support students and families to understand and complete the FAFSA and provide this information in their yearly DCAP updates and revision. As the district team updates and revises their DCAP moving forward, a broader implementation of financial aid and FAFSA advisement should be included 8-12 in ICAP activities.

With the addition of FAFSA advisement, will this impact ICAP reporting requirements?

Yes, with the inclusion of FAFSA into the ICAP process, districts will be required to report student data surrounding FAFSA advisement in the Fall CSIP/CASA along with the other required ICAP data points. See the [Fall 2023 CSIP Data Table](#).

What is developmentally appropriate to support a scaffolding approach?

The financial aid process is a broad category of understanding to include 100s of terms and acronyms as well as steps and individual considerations towards making informed decisions on a postsecondary path. Due to the robust needs for understanding, districts should consider what each student and their family needs to know, understand and be able to apply to their decision-making process each year in grades 8-12 as well as resources, tools and supportive organizations including Iowa College Aid and Iowa College Access Network (ICAN) that support students and families in the understanding and application of financial aid and the process as a whole. As part of the connection to ICAP, districts should develop activities, experiences and knowledge sharing opportunities based upon student and family understanding needs that break down and build upon the prior year information to create a comprehensive platform. The information and delivery should be woven into the student's ICAP and should include a connection to the essential elements of ICAP, course planning and delivery of information to both students and parents/guardians.