

Federal Student Aid Data in the Postsecondary Institution Ratings System

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PIRS Framework

Stated purposes:

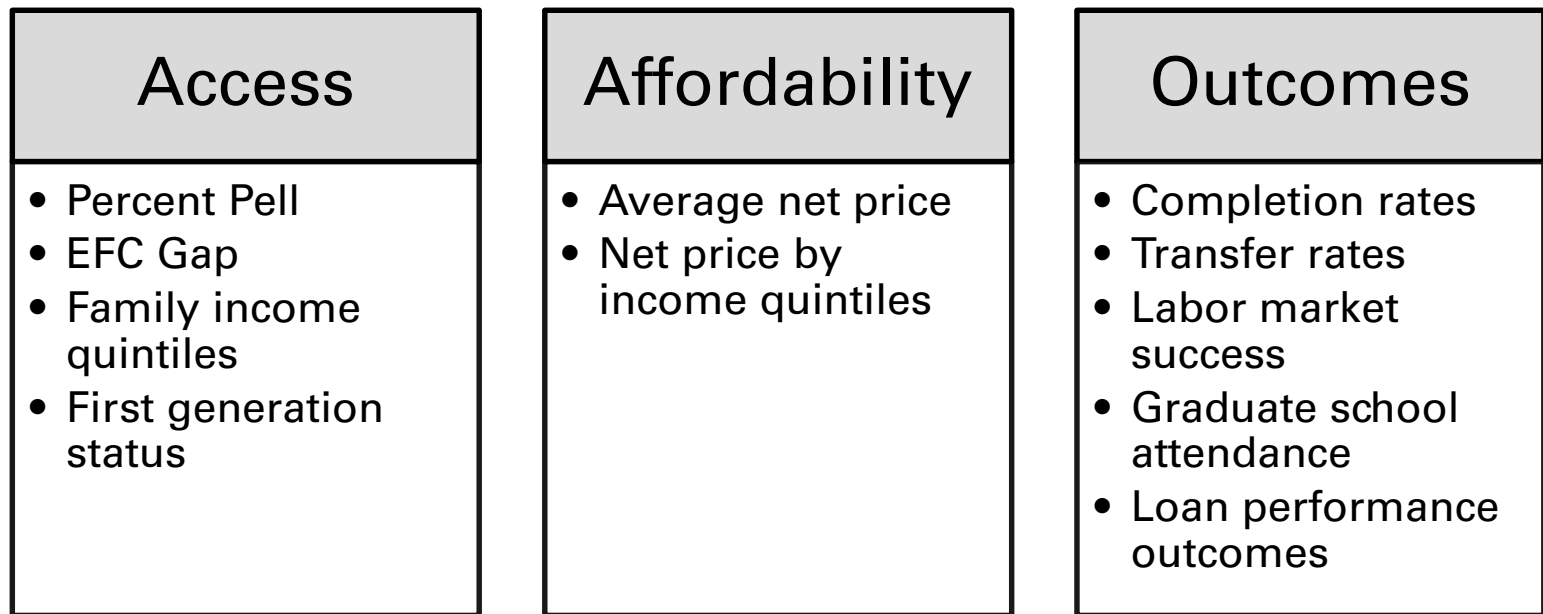
1. Help colleges and universities measure, benchmark, and improve on access, affordability, and outcomes
2. Help students and families make informed choices about searching for and selecting a college
3. Enable the incentives and accountability structure in the federal student aid program to be properly aligned to these key principles

PIRS Framework

- PIRS will rate two institutional categories:
 - Predominantly two-year institutions
 - Predominantly four-year institutions
- Ratings will be split into three performance categories: **High, medium, and low**
- Data will be from existing federal databases: **IPEDS and Federal Student Aid (FSA) data**
 - Institutions may be able to provide supplementary data

PIRS Framework

The system splits metrics into three categories and lists possible metrics in each category.



ED is not considering:

- Average loan debt
- Learning and civic outcomes
- Licensure or certification rates
- Student satisfaction

FSA Data in PIRS

Several PIRS Metrics propose using NSLDS or FAFSA data. These data reside in two distinct systems.

National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)

Includes all Perkins, Direct, and FFELP loan borrowers, and Pell, SMART, TEACH, and Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) recipients

Allows aid administrators, guarantors, and lenders to properly administer Title IV loan programs, and provides information to students about the aid they received.

Central Processing System (CPS)

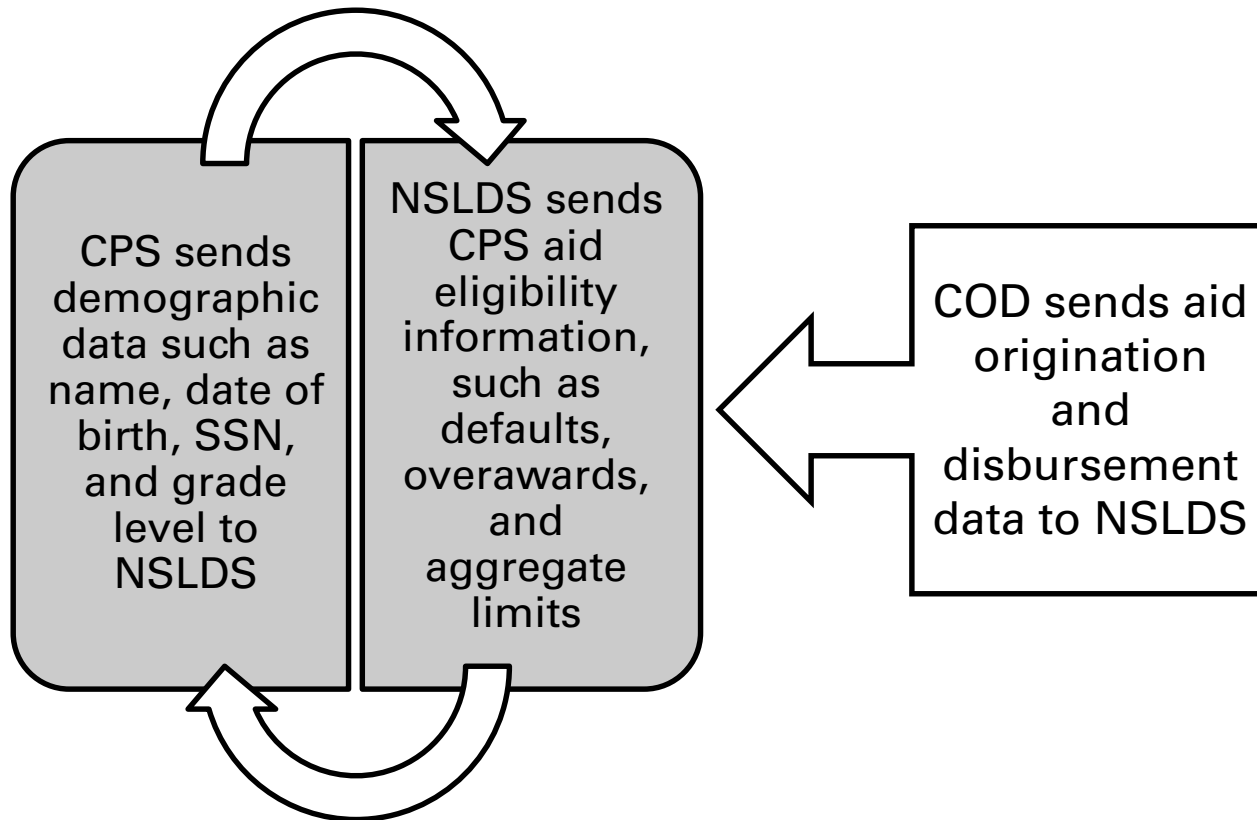
Includes all FAFSA filers

Processes, stores, and sends FAFSA data to schools and the student

Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) is another FSA system that “talks” to NSLDS and CPS to populate aid information and to verify aid eligibility.

Considerations for FSA Data

Although CPS and NSLDS do share some data, these connections exist only for application processing purposes.



Major Considerations

- How adequate are FSA data systems as sources for various metrics proposed in ED's ratings framework?
- What difficulties could arise from attempting to link records in NSLDS and CPS?

FSA Data in PIRS

Several PIRS metrics propose using FAFSA data.

Proposed Measure	Source	Data Limitations
EFC Gap	CPS	EFC is a derivative measure of wealth
Family Income Quintiles	CPS	Income information depends on dependency status; potential privacy issues
First-Generation College Status	CPS	Self-reported and optional
Graduate School Attendance	CPS	Only available if the student completes a FAFSA for undergrad and grad study
	NSLDS	Only available if the student borrows at the undergraduate level and seeks deferment or borrows at graduate level

FSA Data in PIRS

Debt data in NSLDS are mostly complete, but student enrollment and mobility is not robust.

Proposed Measure	Source	Data Limitations
Average Loan Debt	NSLDS	No private loan information
Loan Repayment Outcomes	NSLDS	No private loan information
Completion Rates	NSLDS	Institutions report; historically incomplete or incorrect
Transfer Rates	NSLDS	Only available if the student receives aid at both institutions