

Engaging Parents in FAFSA Completion

This document specifically talks about engaging parents and families in financial aid and FAFSA completion activities

Build Capacity

- Make sure anyone who presents information on FAFSA completion has adequate training and is knowledgeable about the topic. Conduct information sessions first. Then move to events where you're actually facilitating FAFSA completion.

Use Online Tools

- One example is the [FAFSA4caster](#) from FSA.

Marketing

- Make the FAFSA completion campaign visible. This can be done through bulletin boards, college banners, parent newsletters etc.

Start Early

- Begin holding financial aid events in middle school if possible. The sooner parents are introduced to the significance of financial aid to their child's postsecondary success, the more they can learn.
- Introduce financial aid terminology. This should include terms such as cost of attendance, scholarships, loans, work-study, tuition and fees, etc.

Conduct Multiple Sessions

- Host events at a variety of times so all parents are informed about what documents are needed to complete the FAFSA, [have created an FSA ID](#), understand FAFSA eligibility, and are familiar with award letters.
- Conduct one-on-one meetings. Once parents understand the financial aid process, schedule one-on-one meetings so they can ask questions confidentially, get assistance completing the FAFSA, and receive advice on reviewing and assessing financial aid award letters, and determining whether financial aid package is sufficient.

Coordinate with school personnel

- Make sure they understand the importance of FAFSA completion and support/echo these efforts. Have parents and students work together. This will help equip students to complete the FAFSA on their own during the following year(s).

Address key topics. Make sure parents understand:

- A postsecondary education is a long-term investment with many positive impacts on the individual student, his/her family, and the community.
- How to prepare to financially support their student throughout his/her postsecondary career.
- The importance of completing the FAFSA and the relationship between FAFSA completion and postsecondary enrollment.

Parents are an integral part of a child's life, and having them on board and educated about the financial aid application processes will make it significantly easier. We encourage you to try some of these strategies to increase engagement with the parents in your community.