

FAFSA Strategies for FAFSA Pilot Districts

RIM Document Only

High School Staff

- ❖ Staff development sessions on professional development days lead by CFNC, college advisor or school counselor
- ❖ Designated senior advising sessions with mentors to complete the FAFSA during the school day (SECU bankers, FA director, counselors, student ambassadors)
- ❖ Offer stipend to attend training and assist with afternoon or evening FAFSA Outreach sessions
- ❖ Include in parent correspondence (texts, emails or calls, newsletters)
- ❖ Emphasize on teacher webpage or learning portal with graphics or reminders
- ❖ Add a FAFSA or college/career statement or advertise an event on each (K-12) school marquee
- ❖ All seniors write and edit a personal statement as the first assignment of the semester (Use the Common Application essay prompts)
- ❖ Ask all Juniors to write a draft essay in preparation for the senior year

Counselors or other FAFSA experts at each high school (college advisors, career coaches)

- ❖ Use the Finish the FAFSA report located under the Professional Tools (Pro Tools) portal on CFNC. Directions on how to get access to this report: Complete the [online request form](#) to add ProTools permissions to your CFNC.org account. Please allow 2 weeks for verification of your school/organization affiliation and processing.
- ❖ Use the [printable resources](#) on CFNC to share with students and families
- ❖ Use the [social media toolkit](#) created by myFutureNC to push out reminders
- ❖ Have the closest community college or university financial aid department on speed dial- they are great with answering questions for students with tricky situations
- ❖ Connect with the [CFNC Spanish Resource](#) and the [Specialist](#) for material and sessions in Spanish, as well as help with tricky situations
- ❖ 1:1 sessions with seniors/parents to review post-secondary plan and status of the FAFSA
- ❖ Host FAFSA Outreach events using senior class time, during and after school events, or large school events (open house, parent nights, curriculum programs, concerts, games)
- ❖ Help students complete a flow chart with post-secondary plans (especially if they are registered with the NCAA due to the many steps in that process) to include college apps, FAFSA completion, acceptances, NCAA steps, etc.
- ❖ Emphasize [Big Future](#) and [CFNC](#) for college and career planning
- ❖ Attend the NCSEAA and CFNC financial aid training each year to receive important updates
- ❖ Update a school or district scholarship search engine or list of local scholarships
- ❖ Celebrate often!

School and District Administrators

- ❖ Support by attending outreach events
- ❖ Include in parent correspondence (texts, emails or calls, newsletters)
- ❖ Include graphics and information on websites (bilingual)
- ❖ When attending community events- include the efforts in remarks so that parents, grandparents and community members are aware of upcoming events
- ❖ Contact local media to support events
- ❖ Connect with the community college leaders to show joint ownership and support
- ❖ Emphasize importance at staff meetings
- ❖ Because all of these processes are paperless, adopt a 1:1 computer policy

Counselors and College Access Partners From April Query: coffee hours 8/21/24

- ❖ Utilize bulletin boards & digital bulletin boards at schools to advertise
- ❖ Use social media sites to promote events and resources
- ❖ Offer incentives that are in your wheelhouse - prom tickets, graduation tickets, etc.
- ❖ Engage student influencers to get the word out
- ❖ Engage the younger kiddos who might need to accompany parents by having activities for them (crayons, college coloring pages, etc.)
- ❖ Conduct a parent survey at the beginning of senior year to understand experience with college applications and financial aid, time since they might have done that (since not all who need help are first-gen), what time works best for programming, would they attend virtual programs, etc.
- ❖ Consider "Parent Academies" for the school year and schedule all in advance (and all events in advance for the year)
<https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/academics/college-career-readiness/parent-academy>
- ❖ If having virtual events, consider having the same link for families to join all year, to keep it easy
- ❖ For events, lay out expectations, objectives, time for the program etc., in advance so families can plan accordingly
- ❖ Keep events engaging using tools like Kahoot, interactive polls, and college trivia
- ❖ Use other college access & community resources like through SECU
<https://www.ncsecu.org/about-us/community-impact/engagment.html>

Community College and Universities

- ❖ Engage the following on the planning team: NC Career Coach, TRIO, Student Service admissions counselors
- ❖ Connect with and seek answers from the financial aid directors
- ❖ Financial Aid directors attend high school events as well as host events on campus
- ❖ Offer 1:1 appointments (in person and virtual) by using a calendar sign up on FA websites

Community Members/Agencies//Faith Based Organizations

- ❖ Partner with the school at outreach events in order to provide more assistance
- ❖ Provide resources (food, transportation, give-a-ways)
- ❖ Advocate and publicize at organization functions to keep members aware
- ❖ Offer to host a FAFSA outreach event
- ❖ Provide a college scholarship (one-time or renewable) to graduating seniors
- ❖ Provide mentoring programs (long-term transformational change) for career and college access

Coaches, Club Advisors, Arts Directors (Band, Chorus, Drama, Art, etc.)

- ❖ Invite the counseling team, CAC, career coaches to a meeting to give a financial aid presentation (explaining the why)
- ❖ Offer to host a FAFSA completion event during a club meeting (during or after school) and bring the experts along to assist
- ❖ Help students complete a flow chart with post-secondary plans (especially if they are registered with the NCAA due to the many steps in that process) to include college apps, FAFSA completion, acceptances, NCAA steps, etc.
- ❖ Schedule a computer lab before or after a meeting or practice and invite parents to hear presentations on college and career planning (round 1) Invite parents and athletes back for round 2 to complete the FAFSA
- ❖ Offer a local college scholarship from the organization
- ❖ Involve the parent groups (booster clubs)
- ❖ Offer FAFSA help alongside events (fund-raising dinners, banquets, awards ceremonies, games)

Parents or Guardians

- ❖ Encourage the student to complete the FAFSA as soon as possible (after Oct. 1)
- ❖ Provide the necessary documents for your child paying close attention to “who is the parent on the FAFSA)
- ❖ Save your parent FSA ID and password in a safe space- you can use it for all consecutive children
- ❖ If more than one child, you can often transfer the information from one FAFSA to another

- ❖ If you meet the eligibility, you may transfer the financial information directly from the IRS website by a few easy steps
- ❖ Help the student research and meet all financial aid deadlines (each college selects their own deadline)
- ❖ Ask questions and teach the student how to ask questions to counselors and financial aid experts at the college in which they are applying
- ❖ Allow family time to review all the needed documents
- ❖ Support the school completion events by attending
- ❖ Once complete, assist other students and parents who may need additional assistance by sharing your experience
- ❖ Encourage and support the student- this can be overwhelming and complicated

Student

- ❖ The FAFSA belongs to the student so the student should own the process
- ❖ Create a personal email address to use on all accounts that will be used after high school graduation (college, FAFSA, ACT, SAT)
- ❖ Save the FAFSA document and return to it as needed
- ❖ Attend FAFSA completion events when offered by your school or organizations
- ❖ Help other students- serve as an ambassador
- ❖ Engage with teachers and school staff to encourage other students to complete the document
- ❖ Work early on deadlines- the FAFSA opens on Oct. 1 for the next school year.
- ❖ Make sure you are working in the Federal Student Aid FAFSA- do not work in a spam website. The FAFSA stands for FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID
- ❖ Record your FSA ID and password in a safe place- students use it for all years of college

Resources

(CFNC, Financial Aid Directors, SECU officials)

- ❖ In conjunction with school staff, coordinate FAFSA outreach events
- ❖ Attend and support events (open house, college application month, completion events)
- ❖ Be available to answer student questions 1:1
- ❖ Provide PD for school staff
- ❖ Provide outreach presentations to groups