

# Driving FAFSA Completion

## Tips & Strategies

### Awareness & Access Campaign

Consider how students and families prefer to receive communication rather than just the simplest method for dissemination. Utilize email, text, social media, college and career readiness platforms, newsletters, bulletin boards, and other forms of communication to ensure the information gets to the appropriate audience.

- ✓ Send strategically timed messages to students and families.
- ✓ Share relevant links and resources, success stories, tips, and reminders about FAFSA deadlines.
- ✓ Find ways to integrate elements of FAFSA completion into the curriculum and specific courses to offer students more personalized support.
- ✓ The FAFSA allows students to complete the portion that includes their information and then invite their parents to continue the application. Create structured opportunities for students to complete their school portion to start the process.

### Family and Peer Mentors

Receiving information from other parents and students more familiar with the experience, rather than school-based professionals, can help to reduce anxiety and ease worries. These connections create meaningful support channels that can extend beyond a one-time event.

- ✓ Identify students who can serve as peer leaders in sharing their personal experience with the FAFSA.

- ✓ Set up opportunities for students and parents to talk through questions and share experiences.
- ✓ Ask families of high school alumni to offer their support to students and families completing the FAFSA. As part of this process, identifying families that speak a second language who can offer support and guidance is an especially valuable way to support families whose first language is not English.
- ✓ Ensure that no personal information is shared with any non-school volunteers.

## Completion Tracking, Support, and Incentives

Tracking student completion allows counselors to better understand what is needed to increase completion and offer more in depth support to specific students.

- ✓ Track completion of the FAFSA. In most states, schools can track student- and/or schoollevel data for FAFSA completion. Schools might also utilize self-reporting within a college and career readiness platform.
- ✓ Do regular check-ins to monitor progress and provide support and incentives as needed.
- ✓ Offer incentives for students who complete the FAFSA. These might include reduced prom ticket prices or entry into drawings for gift cards, swag, special parking spots, or other treasured experiences specific to your school or district.
- ✓ For any student or family who is struggling to complete the FAFSA in a timely manner, consider requesting a one-on-one appointment. At the meeting, you can answer questions, help them complete the form, and, if necessary, set a date for a future follow-up.