



Surviving the Financial Aid Season

While the cold weather and snow mark the coming of winter, they are also an indication of another season: financial aid. Over the next few months, your students and their families will be engrossed in completing all the necessary financial aid applications. We hope that with the help of our December newsletter, you can help your students through the financial aid process.

The FAFSA

If your school has not already, be sure to request paper FAFSAs (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) from the Department of Education (<http://www.ed.gov/finaid/landing.jhtml?src=ln>) and information sheets from the CollegeBoard for the CSS Profile. Encourage your students to file the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1, and definitely before the deadline at the schools to which your students are applying.

Top Ten Tips for Filing the FAFSA

1. You should submit your FAFSA as early as possible, but no earlier than January 1, 2007. Each college has its own individual deadline. Don't miss it!
2. If your 2006 tax forms will not be completed before the earliest college deadline, you should estimate. Consider using your 2005 tax returns and 2006 end-of-year paystubs to get estimated figures. It is much better to use estimated tax information than to miss a deadline.
3. When reporting investment net worth, FAFSA questions #44 and #45 (student) and #88 and #89 (parent), report the current value minus debt owed. While you do not have to include the total value of your protected retirement savings on question #88 (investment net worth), you must provide your annual contribution, as well as any other untaxed income, on question #85.
4. Do NOT leave any items blank on the FAFSA form. If the appropriate response is zero, then enter zero. Blanks could delay the processing of your financial aid information.
5. On the FAFSA, the yellow section is to be completed by students and the purple section is to be completed by parents. It is especially important to make sure your social security number, date of birth, and e-mail addresses are accurate and in the appropriate sections.
- 6.

The Center for College Planning

provides parents and students with the information, materials and guidance they need to begin the process of applying for college admission and financial aid. We offer free services and materials for every population. Call our Concord office with questions or to schedule an appointment with one of our college counselors, 800.525.2577 x119.

- Individualized college counseling in our Concord office
- Specialized lists of colleges that match search criteria
- Calculation of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) for financial aid purposes
- Access to career surveys and popular college majors
- Assistance filing complicated financial aid paperwork

Students can submit their college essays for feedback to collegeplanning@nhheaf.org

Sponsored by



The NHHEAF Network Organizations
Center for College Planning
1.800.525.2577 x119
collegeplanning@nhheaf.org

Upcoming:

March: Help your students navigate their financial aid award letters.

7.

The FAFSA has limited room for school choices, the student should put his/her top choices on the FAFSA first. Once the student receives his/her Student Aid Report (SAR), the other schools may be added.

8.

When reporting parent information (questions #56 – 89), it is important to include information from the parent that the student lived with 51% of the time. In question #57, parents must indicate the month and year they were married/remarried or divorced/separated. If the custodial parent is remarried, then all income and asset information from the new spouse must also be included. Remember: Filing the form does not obligate parents to pay.

9.

To apply on-line, go to www.fafsa.ed.gov. Both the student and one parent must register for a personal identification number (PIN), at www.pin.ed.gov. Your PIN will be e-mailed to you within 3 days or mailed to you within 2 weeks. Be sure to keep it in a safe place as it serves as your electronic signature and is yours for life.

10.

Applying for financial aid may require additional forms, for example, the CSS Profile: www.profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp. You may also have to provide copies of your income tax returns or bank statements to the colleges. Make sure you submit all required documents by the colleges' deadlines and respond to correspondence from the financial aid offices immediately.

Don't Get Scammed

As your students search for private scholarships to help with the growing cost of college, advise them of the growing number of fraudulent scholarship services that solicit funds from college bound students and their families. These fraudulent companies guarantee that students will receive a minimum of scholarships for up-front fees. Often, students are left empty-handed. Encourage your students to use these free scholarship resources on-line:

www.nh93.com (The NHHEAF Network's local scholarship database)

www.nhcf.org (NH Charitable Foundation's statewide scholarship program)

www.fastweb.com (A national and college -specific scholarship database)

Center for College Planning Appointments

Parents are often overwhelmed by the financial aid process. Feel free to encourage them to call our office to set up a FREE one-on-one counseling appointment. We will assist parents with filing the applications and reviewing their award letters. We encourage families to check out www.finaid.org for the latest information on financial aid.

Destination College

Saturday, March 17, 2007 at Plymouth State University

The NHHEAF Network will host the 8th annual FREE statewide college conference for high school juniors.

Destination College will provide attendees the opportunity to:

[Understand the importance of education beyond high school.](#)

[Access the resources to plan for your postsecondary education.](#)

[Explore the many opportunities for postsecondary education in our own state.](#)

[Gain helpful professional advice and information from expert college and corporate presenters.](#)

[Be exposed to a college atmosphere without the intimidation often associated with the first college visit](#)

Registration information will be sent to your guidance office soon!

On that note.....Be sure to encourage your college bound seniors to check out our Destination College Scholarship Contest. We are looking for a high school senior who is currently experiencing the college planning and admission process to give our keynote address at Destination College. Contestants should send us their 10-minute written speech, an audio or vhs recording by February 9th to be eligible. The winner of our Destination College Scholarship Contest will receive a \$1000 scholarship. Promotional materials were sent out to your office in mid-November. Please click here for more information and an application:

Professional Development Opportunity!

What? College 101: New Guidance Counselor Workshop

When? Friday, January 12, 2007 - 9:00am to 3:00pm

Where? 3 Barrell Court, Concord NH

Earn certificates for 6 hours of credit

In addition to the everyday responsibilities of managing schedules, meetings, graduation requirements, counseling and advising, guidance counselors

are often expected to be experts on college admission and financial aid. With the college admissions and financial aid processes changing constantly, this task can be overwhelming. The Center for College Planning will provide you with insights and helpful tools to assist you and your students on this adventure.

You will have an opportunity to connect with you colleagues to discover what has made their experience successful! To register, please contact Zanna Blaney at 1.800.525.2577, x443.



We are Calling All High School Students.. Get Paid: The NH

Jumpstart Coalition is sponsoring a PowerPoint contest for high school students. Develop and submit a PowerPoint slide show and you could win up to \$500. Please click here for more information and an application.

Updates from the 1st Annual Guidance Director Training

On November 8th, The Center for College Planning hosted the 1st annual Financial Aid Training for Guidance Directors. Twenty-three directors attended and heard an overview presentation from CCP. Updates on new federal aid programs and recommendations on how to assist your students through the process were discussed. Directors also had the opportunity to ask questions to a panel of Financial Aid Directors from NH colleges and universities. We hope to continue this training annually. Here are a few of the highlights:

- **Federal Interest Rates-** As of July 1, 2006 the federal interest rates on Stafford and PLUS loans were changed. The Stafford loan has a fixed interest rate of 6.8% and the PLUS loan has a fixed interest rate of 8.5%.
- **New Stafford Loan Limits-** As of July 1, 2007 the Stafford loan limits for freshmen and sophomores will increase for the 2007-2008 academic year. Freshman will be eligible for up to \$3500 and sophomores will be eligible for up to \$4500. Juniors and seniors will still be eligible for \$5500 per school year.
- **Drug Question Clarification-** Because of confusion regarding the drug conviction question, the drug question on the 2007-2008 FAFSA has been revised. Federal student aid eligibility is only lost IF a student was convicted for a drug-related offense that occurred during a period of time that a student was enrolled in school and receiving Title IV aid. Meaning that essentially all of your high school seniors will answer "NO" to this question.
- **New Federal Grant Programs-**Two new federal grant programs were introduced in February 2006. The Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) is a new need based program geared toward Pell grant eligible students who have completed a challenging high school course load. The National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) grant is also a need based program for college juniors and seniors who are Pell grant eligible and are majoring in specific areas of math and science. For more information please visit: www.studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/NewPrograms.jsp
- **Fee Waivers for the CSS Profile-** Your guidance office will no longer receive fee waivers for the CSS Profile. If a student is eligible for the fee waiver it will automatically be given to them when they register for the Profile. The fee waiver process is fully automated based on the family and financial information contained in the application. Typically, it is still the students who are eligible for free and reduced lunches that will be eligible.

CollegeBoard Regional Forum February 11th -13th in Boston

The CollegeBoard's New England Regional forum will be held on February 11th-13th in Boston at the Marriott Copley Place. There will be over 60 sessions focusing on contemporary topics in admissions, financial aid, guidance, as well as, updates on CollegeBoard programs. For more information visit: www.collegeboard.com.