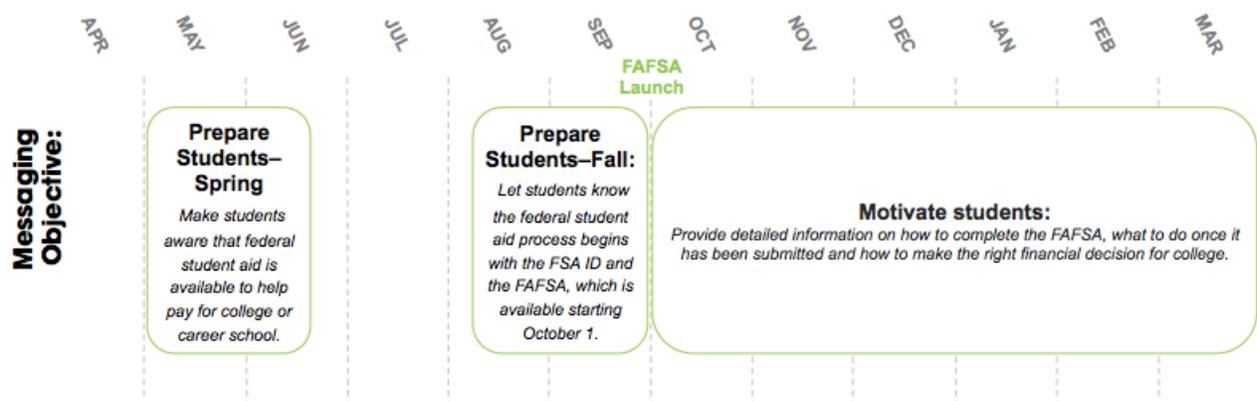


2017–18 FAFSA® Messaging and Planning Calendar

This document provides suggested outreach activities that can help you plan your communications to students and parents for the 2017–18 FAFSA®. It provides timing, messaging objectives, target audiences, suggested outreach, and suggested resources.

Using a printed version of this document? You can access an electronic version, with live links to all the resources, at FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov/resources/fafsa-messaging-calendar.pdf.

2017–18 FAFSA® Outreach Objectives and Timing



Prepare Students–Spring

Goal: As you encourage students to begin exploring their college or career school options, let them know about resources available, such as federal student aid, to help them cover the costs. We don't want students to rule out a postsecondary education just because of the cost.

Timing: May–June 2016

Target Audience: Juniors/rising seniors

Secondary Audience: Parents of juniors/rising seniors (Note: While this document focuses on outreach to students, this information also can be used in your outreach to parents.)

Primary Messaging Objective: Educate students (and their families) about federal student aid and ensure they're aware that aid is available to help pay for college or career school.

Secondary Messaging Objective: Tell students and their parents to create their FSA IDs. Students and parents are required to create and use their own username and password, called the FSA ID, to access certain websites and electronically sign documents such as the FAFSA.

Thought/Conversation Starters:

- Get students thinking about their future.
 - Have you thought about what you want to do after high school?
 - The great majority of jobs require more than a high school education.
 - It's time to start planning for college or career school.
- Introduce the financial aspect of college or career school into their planning.
 - How you will pay for college?
 - There are programs, such as federal student aid, that can help pay for college.
 - Applying for federal student aid is completely free using the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®).
- Get them comfortable with the aid process.
 - Completing the FAFSA is the first step in the federal student aid process. By completing the FAFSA, you can see if you are eligible for federal grants you don't have to pay back, low-interest loans, and work-study funds. Plus, many states and colleges use your FAFSA data to determine your eligibility for state and school aid.
 - You can start filling out the FAFSA on Oct. 1, 2016.
 - You'll need a username and password, called an FSA ID, to sign the FAFSA electronically. You should get it now, before you start the FAFSA. Your parent will need to create an FSA ID too if he or she plans to sign the FAFSA electronically.

Suggested Outreach and Resources: The following outreach activities and resources are for your consideration as you work with students and parents. These are intended to serve as a menu of options from which you can pick and choose based on your audience's needs.

Find the resources below—and many others—at FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov/resources. Many of these resources are also available in Spanish.

- Share information on federal student aid and the aid application process.
 - We have [basic introductory presentation slides](#)—"Finding Money for College"—that you can include in a presentation.
 - We have a [graphic](#) that explains the financial aid process that you can share.
 - We have information on planning and paying for college or career school at StudentAid.gov. Consider recommending the following pages:
 - StudentAid.gov/prepare: Provides information on exploring careers, choosing a school, applying to schools, and budgeting. Students (and parents) also can see checklists on getting ready for college.
 - StudentAid.gov/types: Provides information on financial aid to help pay for college or career school, including federal student aid, state aid, college/institutional aid, and scholarships.
- Are you working with parents who've been through the financial aid process previously and who might want to know what's changing? We have a fact sheet, infographic, and presentation you can share:
 - [College Students and Parents: What You Need to Know About the 2017–18 FAFSA®](#) (fact sheet)
 - [Changes to the FAFSA Process for 2017–18](#) (graphic)
 - [What's New for the 2017–18 FAFSA? Basics for Parents and College Students](#) (presentation)
- Encourage students (and their parents) to get FSA IDs. The student must create his or her own personal FSA ID, and the parent must create his or her own unique FSA ID. We have a fact sheet, presentation, video, and blog post that you can use.
 - [What's an FSA ID and Why Do I Need One?](#) (fact sheet)
 - [Creating and Using your FSA ID](#) (presentation)
 - [How to Create an FSA ID](#) (video)
 - [Why Students and Parents Need to Create Their Own FSA IDs](#) (blog post)
- Send an email or text to students and parents. We have [2017–18 FAFSA® Talking Points](#) that can help you get started.

- Hang posters around your school. FSA has a **Federal Student Aid Poster** that encourages students to think about their future and that makes them aware that financial aid is available. Get information on how to order Federal Student Aid materials at FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov/order.
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Prepare Students—Fall

Goal: Encourage students to think about how they will pay for college or career school. Teach them how federal student aid can directly help them cover the costs, and how it indirectly allows them to qualify for state, institutional, and/or organizational aid.

Timing: August–September 2016

Target Audience: Seniors

Secondary Audience: Parents of seniors (Note: While this document focuses on outreach to students, this information also can be used in your outreach to parents.)

Primary Messaging Objective: Educate students (and their families) about the student aid process: First each student should create an FSA ID, then he or she will fill out the FAFSA, which is available starting Oct. 1.

Secondary Messaging Objective: Tell students (and their parents) to create their FSA IDs, which are username and password combinations that provide access to certain websites and allow individuals to sign electronic documents such as the FAFSA. Remind students and parents (1) to keep the FSA ID secret and (2) never to create an FSA ID for anyone else, because that can cause problems or delays with the student aid process.

Thought/Conversation Starters:

Get students and parents comfortable with the aid process—preparing for the FAFSA, filling out the FAFSA, and following through after submitting the application.

- Help them understand what the FAFSA is and how to get ready to fill it out.
 - By completing the FAFSA, you can see if you are eligible for federal grants you don't have to pay back, low-interest loans, and work-study funds. Plus, many states and colleges use your FAFSA data to determine your eligibility for state and school aid.
 - We recommend getting an FSA ID before filling out the FAFSA.
 - You'll find a short list of what info to gather for the FAFSA at fafsa.gov (click on "Help," and then "Before you begin").
- Get them comfortable with the FAFSA.
 - You can start filling out the FAFSA on Oct. 1, 2016.
 - You'll need a username and password, called the FSA ID, if you want to sign the FAFSA online. You should get it now, before you start the FAFSA. Your parent will need to create an FSA ID too if he or she plans to sign the FAFSA electronically.
 - The FAFSA will ask for your 2015 tax information and your parents' 2015 tax information. You can retrieve tax information directly from the IRS as you complete the FAFSA online.
- Introduce them to what happens once they fill out the FAFSA.
 - After you fill out the FAFSA, you will receive a *Student Aid Report* that contains your Expected Family Contribution. This is what schools use to determine your financial aid award.
 - After a college or career school has decided to offer you admission, you will receive an aid offer from the school that will tell you how much and what types of financial aid you may receive at that school.

Suggested Outreach and Resources: The following outreach activities and resources are for your consideration as you work with students and parents. These are intended to serve as a menu of options from which you can pick and choose based on your needs. Remember, you can download the resources below at

FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov/resources unless otherwise noted.

- Share information on federal student aid and the aid application process with students.
 - [The Financial Aid Process](#) is an infographic that explains the steps in the process.
 - [Myths About Financial Aid](#) is a fact sheet that dispels misconceptions about financial aid.
 - [The FAFSA® Process](#) can help students as they prepare and fill out the FAFSA.
 - We have information on the different types of financial aid at [StudentAid.gov/types](#).
 - The [FAFSA4caster](#) tool allows students to estimate how much federal student aid they might receive; having the estimate helps families plan ahead for college.
 - The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) can be confusing to students and parents. [StudentAid.gov/how-calculated](#) will help them understand it.

- The content below, which highlights the 2017–18 FAFSA changes, will help parents and students who have already been through the FAFSA process in previous years.
 - [College Students and Parents: What You Need to Know About the 2017–18 FAFSA](#) (fact sheet)
 - [Changes to the FAFSA Process for 2017–18](#) (graphic)
 - [What's New for the 2017–18 FAFSA? Basics for Parents and College Students](#) (presentation)

- It is important that students and their parents each create their own FSA IDs, preferably before the launch of the FAFSA. This content will help explain the FSA ID, why it's needed, and the process for signing up:
 - [What's an FSA ID and Why Do I Need One?](#) (fact sheet)
 - [Creating and Using your FSA ID](#) (presentation)
 - [How to Create an FSA ID](#) (video)
 - [Why Students and Parents Need to Create Their Own FSA IDs](#) (blog post)

FAFSA Launch

Timing: Oct. 1, 2016

Messaging and planning calendar details will be provided in September 2016.

Motivate Students

Timing: October 2016–April 2017

Messaging and planning calendar details will be provided in September 2016.

August 2016