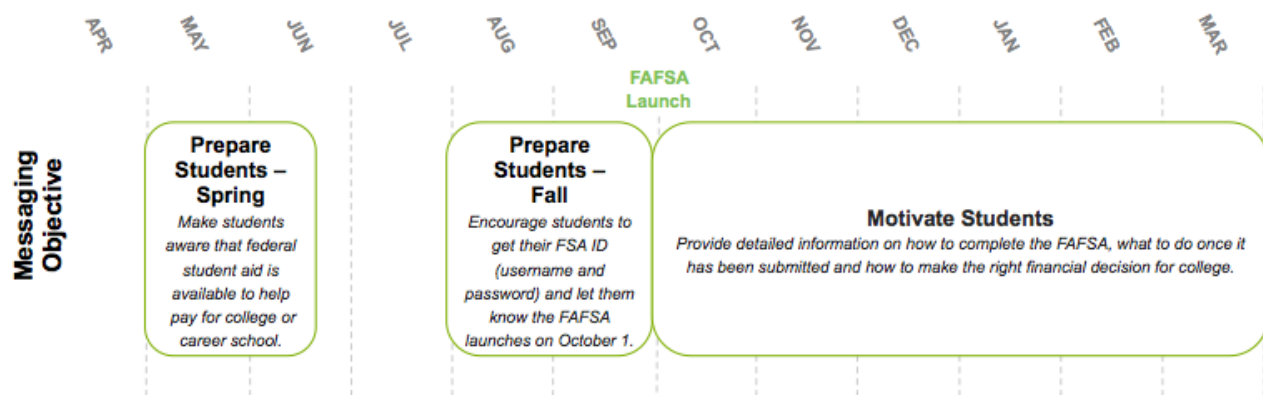


2017–18 FAFSA® Messaging and Planning Calendar

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 each create their own FSA ID—a username and password. Students and parents are required to create and use their own 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.
 - **The Digital Resources page** in the Financial Aid Toolkit includes Facebook posts, tweets, infographics, videos, and links to blog posts about the financial aid process, including information about the FSA ID, the FAFSA, and student loans.
- 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. We have a [Federal Student Aid Poster](#) that encourages students to think about their future and makes them aware that financial aid is available. Get information on how to order Federal Student Aid materials at [FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov/order](https://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 also allows them to qualify for state, institutional, and/or organizational aid.

Timing: August–September 2016

Target Audience: Seniors and Adult Learners

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 encourage each student to create an FSA ID (and remember to keep it private), then to submit the FAFSA, which is available starting Oct. 1.

Secondary Messaging Objective: Encourage students and parents to compare their various postsecondary school options by using the College Scorecard at collegescorecard.ed.gov.

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.
 - If you submit the FAFSA electronically, you will need an FSA ID—a username and password.
 - 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.

- Compare all your aid offers and choose the one(s) that best fit your situation. Remember to always choose federal student aid first, and borrow only the amount you need. You don't have to borrow the entire amount you're offered.

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.
 - [Federal Student Aid Resources for the 2017–18 FAFSA®](#) is a PDF that lists all the resources you can use to support outreach about the FAFSA.
 - [The Digital Resources page](#) in the Financial Aid Toolkit includes Facebook posts, tweets, infographics, videos, and links to blog posts about the financial aid process, including information about the FSA ID, the FAFSA, and student loans.
- 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

Goal: Ensure that students are aware the FAFSA can be submitted starting Oct. 1, and encourage them to fill it out as soon as possible.

Timing: Oct. 1, 2016

Target Audience: Seniors and Adult Learners

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: Create awareness around the Oct. 1 start date for the FAFSA.

Secondary Messaging Objective: Tell students (and their parents) to fill out the FAFSA. Ensure they know what will be expected of them, including (1) that they will need to create their own FSA IDs, which are username and password combinations that provide access to certain websites and allow individuals to sign

the FAFSA electronically, and (2) the FAFSA will ask for 2015 tax information from them and their parents.

Thought/Conversation Starters: Get students and parents to understand the value of the FAFSA and the immediate need to fill it out.

- Help them understand that the FAFSA enables all types of student aid, including state and school aid:
 - The FAFSA is the first step in determining how you can pay for college.
 - By completing the FAFSA, you can see if you're eligible for federal grants (which you don't have to pay back), low-interest loans, and work-study funds.
 - The FAFSA isn't just for federal student aid. Many states and colleges use your FAFSA information to determine your eligibility for state and school aid.
- Get them familiar with what to expect as they fill out the FAFSA:
 - You'll find a short list of the types of information to gather for the FAFSA at fafsa.gov (click on "Help," and then "Before you begin").
 - You'll need a username and password combination, called an FSA ID, if you want to sign the FAFSA online. 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.
- Reinforce what happens once they fill out the FAFSA:
 - After you submit the FAFSA, you'll 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 that school. The offer will tell you how much and what types of financial aid you may receive at that school.
 - Compare all your aid offers and choose the one(s) that best fit your situation. Remember to always choose federal student aid first, and borrow only the amount you need. You don't have to borrow the entire amount you're offered.

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.

- It's important that students and their parents each create their own FSA IDs if they plan to electronically sign the FAFSA. The content below 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)
- The content below, which highlights the 2017–18 FAFSA changes, will help parents and students who've 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)
- Share information with students about federal student aid and the aid application process:
 - [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, but it doesn't replace the need to fill out the FAFSA.

- The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) can be confusing to students and parents, but [StudentAid.gov/how-calculated](https://studentaid.gov/how-calculated) will help them understand it.
- [Federal Student Aid Resources for the 2017–18 FAFSA®](#) is a PDF that lists all the resources you can use to support outreach about the FAFSA.
- [The Digital Resources page](#) in the Financial Aid Toolkit includes Facebook posts, tweets, infographics, videos, and links to blog posts about the financial aid process, including information about the FSA ID, the FAFSA, and student loans.
- Educate students and their parents about what happens after they fill out the FAFSA:
 - [After the FAFSA: What Happens Next](#) is a video that explains what a student and his or her parent should expect after the FAFSA gets filled out. It includes information on the Student Aid Report, EFC, the role of schools, award letters, and receiving aid.
 - [Expected Family Contribution \(EFC\) Guide and Worksheets](#) explain the EFC that results from the FAFSA.
 - [The FAFSA: Applying for Aid > Next Steps page](#) on our website helps students understand what to expect after they've filled out and submitted the FAFSA.

Motivate Students

Goal: Encourage students to immediately fill out the FAFSA.

Timing: October 2016–April 2017.

Target Audience: Seniors and Adult Learners

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: Tell students (and their parents) to fill out the FAFSA. Ensure that they know what will be expected of them, including 1) they will need to create their own FSA IDs, which are username and password combinations that provide access to certain websites and allow individuals to sign the FAFSA electronically, and 2) the FAFSA will ask for their and their parents' 2015 tax information.

Secondary Messaging Objective: Educate students and parents about the importance of taking out only the minimum amount of loans a student needs to pay for college.

Thought/Conversation Starters: Get students and parents to understand the value of the FAFSA and the immediate need to fill it out.

- Help them understand that the FAFSA enables all types of student aid, including state and school aid.
 - The FAFSA is the first step in determining how you can pay for college.
 - By completing the FAFSA, you can see if you're eligible for federal grants (which you don't have to pay back), low-interest loans, and work-study funds.
 - The FAFSA isn't just for federal student aid. Many states and colleges use your FAFSA data to determine your eligibility for state and school aid.
 - You can fill out the FAFSA even before you decide which schools you'll be applying to. Then, once you've decided which schools to apply to, you should add those schools to the FAFSA. But you don't have to wait to submit your college application before listing a school on the FAFSA.
- Get them familiar with what to expect as they fill out the FAFSA.
 - You'll find a short list of the types of information to gather for the FAFSA at fafsa.gov (click on "Help," and then "Before you begin").
 - You'll need a username and password combination, called an FSA ID, if you want to sign the FAFSA online. It's more convenient if you 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.

- Reinforce what happens once they fill out the FAFSA.
 - After you fill out the FAFSA, you'll 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 that school. The offer will tell you how much and what types of financial aid you may receive at that school.
- Educate them about the implications of taking more than they need in loans.
 - You should borrow only what you need after you've exhausted all other aid including grants and scholarships.
 - You don't have to borrow the maximum amount of federal student loans each year. You can request a lower amount through your college's financial aid office.
 - You will still be required to pay back your loans even if you don't graduate or can't find a job after graduation.

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.

- It's important that students and their parents each create their own FSA IDs, preferably before the launch of the FAFSA. The content below 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)
- The content below, which highlights the 2017–18 FAFSA changes, will help parents and students who've already been through the FAFSA process in previous years.
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 - [Changes to the FAFSA Process for 2017–18](#) (graphic)
 - [What's New for the 2017–18 FAFSA? Basics for Parents and College Students](#) (presentation)
- Share information with students about federal student aid and the aid application process:
 - [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, but StudentAid.gov/how-calculated will help them understand it.
- Educate students and their parents about what happens after they fill out the FAFSA and the implications of taking out loans.
 - [After the FAFSA: What Happens Next](#) is a video that explains what a student and his or her parent should expect after they fill out the the FAFSA. It includes information on the Student Aid Report, EFC, the role of schools, award letters, and receiving aid.
 - [Expected Family Contribution \(EFC\) Guide and Worksheets](#) explains the EFC that results from the FAFSA.
 - [Types of Federal Student Aid](#) is a video that describes the various types of aid.
 - [Federal Student Loan Programs](#) is a fact sheet that describes the different types of loans.
 - [College Scorecard](#) is a website that allows students and parents to compare various colleges.

- ***Federal Student Loans: Basics for Students*** and ***Federal Student Loans: Direct PLUS Loan Basics for Parents*** are publications that explain the types of loans that are available, eligibility requirements, and more.