

FAFSA Completion Strategies

Data indicates that a senior who completes the FAFSA is 84% more likely to enroll in postsecondary education, and 90% of high school seniors who complete the FAFSA immediately enroll in postsecondary education programs. The State of Michigan is providing financial incentives to support schools as they prioritize FAFSA completion. Now, more than ever, it is critical that schools and districts create FAFSA completion goals and monitor them regularly, build shared ownership, establish partnerships, and spread awareness. The following strategies and activities are known to drive FAFSA completion rates.

SET A BOLD GOAL AND MONITOR PROGRESS

Action Plan/Data Review

- Create an [action plan](#) incorporating college-going steps.
- Submit a [Data Use Agreement](#) to the Department of Treasury to access [student-level FAFSA completion data](#).
- Monitor action plans and data from the [Michigan FAFSA tracker](#) and [MiSSG Portal](#) and prioritize meeting one-on-one with students and families who have not yet filed their FAFSA.
- Use internal and external data to track progress. Sign up for [FAFSA completion updates](#) to be automatically emailed to the team.

SPREAD AWARENESS AND PROVIDE SUPPORT

One-on-one Meetings

- Use data to schedule 1:1 meetings (virtual or in-person) with families and students who have not yet submitted their FAFSA.
- Track interactions using an action plan or data-tracking system.

Parent Communication and Engagement

- Provide families with a [checklist](#)/timeline of postsecondary planning expectations beginning in 11th grade.
- Provide individualized [communication](#) to families and students.
 - Provide support in target home languages.
- Offer after-hours and virtual FAFSA completion support for families and students.
- Include communications, materials, and support at all school events (arts, athletics, curriculum nights)
- Incorporate the [Michigan Achievement Scholarship](#) and other [state](#) and local aid information into FAFSA discussions.

EXPAND CAPACITY

Dedicated Support

- Support FAFSA champions: school staff designated to lead FAFSA completion efforts.
- Hire a dedicated FAFSA/postsecondary transition support person or FAFSA champion.
- Provide stipends to support additional hours for after-school/weekend events or meetings.
- Provide opportunities for athletic coaches, teachers, and additional staff to support/follow up with students and families for consistent messaging by trusted adults across the community.

ESTABLISH A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

Shared Ownership

- Participate in [College Bound Michigan](#) and engage in the [College Cash Campaign](#) — providing dedicated time during the school day to push into classes or pull-out students for FSA ID creation and FAFSA filing support.
- Ensure that all professionals have adequate [training](#) on supporting FAFSA completion.
- Adopt a senior exit/graduation [checklist inclusive](#) of FAFSA completion and send updated status reports to students and families.
- Create a universal FAFSA policy. A universal FAFSA policy would make it a requirement that all graduating seniors need to complete the FAFSA. Having a FAFSA on file puts the choice in students' hands on their next steps instead of the FAFSA being a barrier to enrolling in postsecondary education.

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS

Support from Postsecondary Education Partners

- Connect with regional higher education representatives to support local high school counselors, individual students, and families.
- Invite college representatives to the high school for transition planning inclusive of FAFSA filing support.
- Incorporate FAFSA completion support in summer melt and transition support programming.

Community Ambassadors, Local College Access Networks, and Community Organizations

- Leverage community partners to support FAFSA completion efforts.
- Provide community organizations with materials to post throughout the community.

RESOURCES

- [MCAN Resource Hub](#)
- [Michigan Student Aid Scholarship and Grant Programs](#)
- [MI Student Aid FAFSA Resources](#)
- [MI Student Aid Students and Families](#)
- [MiSSG Counselor Portal](#)
- [Michigan Achievement Scholarship Student Site](#)
- [Michigan Achievement Scholarship Resources](#)
- [Michigan FAFSA tracker](#)
- [Federal Student Aid Toolkit](#)
- [NCAN FAFSA Resources Library](#)

For questions and support contact:

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