

**OSFA News**  
**for**  
**School Counselors**  
January thru March  
2014

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

The *2014-15 Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) is now available. Students assisted by parents may complete the FAFSA for consideration of federal and state financial aid for the 2014-15 academic year. This user-friendly application provides built-in edits which help prevent costly errors. The FAFSA also implements skip logic to prevent the applicant from answering unnecessary questions. In addition, applicants also have the ability to link information from students' and parents' most recent tax returns to the FAFSA beginning February 1st.

Remember, the FAFSA may be completed using estimated data (with the expectation that it will be updated upon completion of the 2013 income tax form). Visit the FAFSA [website](#) for answers to questions you may have or call toll-free at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) or 1-319-337-5665.

## **CGS!Florida**

The Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance is hosting College Goal Sunday this year! **Florida's College Goal Sunday** events run February 22-24, 2014. During this weekend, high school seniors and families in your area will be able to receive FREE expert assistance completing the *Free Application for Financial Aid* (FAFSA). **For more information on CGS! Florida, or alternative dates** for assistance with completing the FAFSA, please visit the [website](#).

**According to an article from the Florida College Access "only 55% of all Florida high school graduates completed the FAFSA during the 2012 -13 school year."**

## **Financial Aid Toolkit**

The U.S. Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) announced a new resource available to high school counselors, college access professionals and those interested in learning more about the financial aid arena. The Financial Aid Toolkit provides a wealth of information and resources to promote a successful financial aid night which includes a presentation, posters, fact sheets, videos, and PowerPoint presentations. Counselors are encouraged to explore the [Search Financial Aid Tools and Resources](#) page. Viewers can filter resources by audience, topic, seasonality (time of year), and type of resource. For more condensed information use the [Financial Aid Toolkit Checklist](#).

## **Updated Resource Available**

The Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance is pleased to provide products and services to Middle and High School Counselors to support our mission of facilitating higher education access.

Visit our [updated site](#) and take advantage of the free tools offered to assist you in serving the student body at your school.

## **Florida Choices– Free Resource!!**

Florida CHOICES ([www.flchoices.org](http://www.flchoices.org)) is the state's career information delivery system. It provides career and educational exploration information for counselors, students, and parents.

To begin, set up the free profile according to your role (high school student, college student, adult learner, parent of student or counselor). Next, proceed through the website. You may obtain information on topics such as Career Planning, High School Planning, College Planning, and Financial Aid Planning. Many other selections are also available.

Florida CHOICES includes assessments for interests, skills, and values as well as information on careers and postsecondary education. Accountability reports for management of student usage are retrievable from the Professional Center of CHOICES.

Florida CHOICES is available for use by all Floridians at no charge. Schools can be set up with their own accounts. If you have questions or need assistance with the CHOICES program, please contact the CHOICES Team at [choices@fldoe.org](mailto:choices@fldoe.org) or 800-342-9271.

## **\$100 Million in Pell Grants Left Behind**

Too many Florida students are not applying for Federal Aid. Only 55% of all Florida high school graduates completed the *Free Applications for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) during the 2012-13 school year.

This following brief from the Florida College Access Network provides an overview of the FAFSA completion data at the specific school including state levels over the past two school years. This tool is helpful in monitoring our state's progress.

<http://www.floridacollegeaccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/FAFSA-Completion-in-Florida.pdf>

## **Winter Events**

- January 2014 – The *2014-15 Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) is now available.
- January 20th State Offices Closed for MLK Holiday
- Remind students of approaching ACT & SAT testing dates and locations.
- Early evaluation of Bright Futures eligibility.
- February 2014 – College Goal Sunday workshops are available in your area.

## The January 2014 NyFF E-News is available for your students.

Just visit [January 2014 Financial News for Students!](#)

In this month's E-News issue:

- *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* is now available
- College Goal Sunday Information
- Frequently Asked Questions about the FAFSA

Please visit [www.NavigatingYourFuture.org](http://www.NavigatingYourFuture.org) and select "Current E-News" to access this vital information.

Have you missed an issue of the OSFA News for Counselors?

You may visit the [archives](#) for prior editions.  
Feel free to share our updates with faculty peers!  
Contact an OSFA Outreach Representative  
about your high school's needs.

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