

**DECEMBER 2017**

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## Financial Aid Season Update

Have you scheduled a financial aid night or FAFSA lab for students and parents? If the answer is yes, congrats on taking the plunge into the world of financial aid applications, which opened on October 1, 2017.

If your answer is no, we encourage you to please take time to review your schedule and make this a priority for senior students and parents. Many grants and scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the funds are depleted, eligible students will be out of luck and must search for other avenues of funding for their postsecondary education.

How can you get the process started?

- Select a date and time for your event.
- Request a speaker from OSFA's Speakers Bureau by emailing the Outreach Unit at [Pedro.Hernandez@fldoe.org](mailto:Pedro.Hernandez@fldoe.org) or [Jan.Smith@fldoe.org](mailto:Jan.Smith@fldoe.org).
- Indicate the number of seniors at your school this year and we will ship brochures directly to you for the event.

# Important Announcements



**Early Evaluations:** The Bright Futures Scholarship Program will begin the early evaluation process in the spring semester. Encourage students to submit any service hours they've earned so far which will be reflected on their December transcript. Also, encourage students to review the initial eligibility requirements of this program to ensure they are on track.



## Wait, what? That's not true!

The TV show "Mythbusters" works to dispel common myths by testing the scenario and providing scientific evidence to back up the results.

Did you know that financial aid applications are affected by myths as well? Every year, we hear the same comments from students which perpetuate a misunderstanding of the financial aid process:

**Financial "aid" is for low-income people.**

*No, not really. Many students qualify for scholarships and grants that are not need based.*

**I won't qualify for anything.**

*Let the federal and state specialists evaluate your situation and make a determination.*

**I'm going to an out-of-state school.**

*That's fine. But if you return within two years and have not completed the state application, you have forfeited any Bright Futures Scholarship award you may have earned.*

**My parents said they make too much money.**

*The FAFSA application will factor income into their equation but there are many other criteria factored in such as family size, assets, employment, etc.*

**I don't qualify for Bright Futures.**

*The Florida Financial Aid Application allows you to be evaluated for other grants and scholarships.*

**I haven't been accepted to school yet.**

*No problem! You can still complete a financial aid application to see what the institution may offer you.*

**I'll just fill it out later.**

*Many grants and scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis which means the money may be gone unless you apply early.*

Let's help students by dispelling the myths associated with these applications.



**The following training modules are available for students free of charge:**

[Guide to Life After High School](#)

(Each guide is prepared for a particular year of high school)

[Evaluating Financial Aid Award Letters](#)

(Audio presentation)



FORM  
YOUR  
FUTURE

**Form Your Future Florida** is your access to free FAFSA Completion events in Florida.

**Form Your Future Florida** events were held October 1 through November 30, 2017.

Thank you to everyone who has hosted a Form Your Future Florida event this year. From the paperwork received so far, we are seeing great participation in this year's campaign.



What's next?

- Scholarship winners will be selected in December and notified before the holiday break. What a great way to start the holidays!

*If a scholarship winner attends your school, consider recognizing the student through the morning announcements or the school newspaper. Students love to be recognized plus it may spur other students to complete their financial aid applications.*

- Continue tracking your school's FAFSA completion progress through the FAFSA Challenge data system offered by the Florida College Access Network. In addition to checking your school's progress, you can view other Florida schools' progress. This might be an interesting idea for a friendly competition in the school district.

### **Keep up the good work!**

For more information, please contact:

**Jan Smith | 850-245-1822 | [Jan.Smith@fldoe.org](mailto:Jan.Smith@fldoe.org)**

**Pete Hernandez | 850-245-1821 | [Pedro.Hernandez@fldoe.org](mailto:Pedro.Hernandez@fldoe.org)**

*Sponsored by the National College Access Network (NCAN), Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (FASFAA), Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA), in partnership with the Florida College Access Network (FCAN).*

# Outreach Services Update

In the spring semester, students will be comparing financial aid award packages and finalizing their school choices. Reading through a financial aid award letter (hardcopy or electronic) can be confusing.

Most financial aid award packages will include student loans. The student will have the option to “decline” or “accept” student loans. If a student accepts the loans, he/she must understand this will need to be REPAID. Unlike scholarships and grants which do not have to be repaid, student loans follow the student throughout his/her adult life until paid.

The Outreach Unit will be offering webinars for students and parents to help them understand the award letter, financial aid package details, and how to compare institutional financial aid award packages. If you would like to schedule a webinar for your students and/or families, please contact [Pedro.Hernandez@fldoe.org](mailto:Pedro.Hernandez@fldoe.org) or [Jan.Smith@fldoe.org](mailto:Jan.Smith@fldoe.org) for more information.

## Counselor Resources

Counselor Resources: [NavigatingYourFuture.org](http://NavigatingYourFuture.org)

Select Resources Tab: Free Materials and Publications

- Order form for brochures, posters, bookmarks
- NyFF/OSFA Publications
- Downloadable Materials – PowerPoint Presentations
- Toolkit: How to Host a Financial Aid Night
- Toolkit: How to Host a FAFSA Lab

Financial Aid Resources:

- Fastweb Scholarships, Internships, Colleges and More
- Florida Scholarships and Grants
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

### **Additional Free Resources:**

Mapping Your Future: [MappingYourFuture.org](http://MappingYourFuture.org)

- Middle and High School Student resources
- Parent resources
- Middle School/High School Counselor resources
  - ⇒ Prepare for College
  - ⇒ Pay for College



# Calendar

December 25 - OSFA office closed.

January 1 - OSFA office closed.

January 31 - Service Hour and Test Score Deadline for Bright Futures Early Evaluation.





## THE OSFA PHILOSOPHY



The Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) has the ability to offer its partners and customers something few public agencies can, the ability to shape OSFA programs and services based on their specific needs and concerns. OSFA provides financial aid workshops, publications, prompt services for participants, and helps fund scholarship and grant programs. If a participant has a problem or suggestion, the OSFA management team listens and makes every effort to implement a solution that meets their needs. Public dollars deserve the kind of accountability OSFA provides in financing education.

The News to Know for Counselors is available on the Counselors page of the website [www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org). Previous editions may be viewed on the [Archives](#) page.

### Contact OSFA

Tallahassee, FL

OSFA Customer Service: **888-827-2004**

Email: [OSFA@fldoe.org](mailto:OSFA@fldoe.org)

Federal Loans: **800-366-3475**

Locally: **850-410-5200**

Email: [OSFAStudentLoans@fldoe.org](mailto:OSFAStudentLoans@fldoe.org)

Visit our website: [www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org)