

March 2017

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## Financial Aid Award Letters

As spring approaches, many institutions will begin packaging financial aid and sending financial aid award letters to students. Often times, the breakdown of aid awarded and vocabulary used is confusing therefore causing students to accept an award package that is heavily loaded with student loans. With acronyms like COA and EFC along with names like Federal Direct Stafford or Perkins, it's easy to see why so many students simply "accept" the entire package without fully investigating what the long term financial impact will be.

When counseling students and families on interpreting the financial aid package, consider having them contact a member of OSFA's [Outreach Team](#), who will gladly explain the details of the award letter and show how to compare award packages from different institutions. Our goal is to help students and families make the best informed decision when it comes to funding a postsecondary education.

A new "on demand" presentation will be added to our website in March. It will explain how to interpret financial aid award letters. Be on the lookout and refer students and families to this important training at [www.NavigatingYourFuture.org](http://www.NavigatingYourFuture.org).

# Important Announcements



## Legislative Session Begins...

The Office of Student Financial Assistance is tracking bills as they move through the legislative process. Key staff members have been working hard to gather all information requested by our legislators.

Many bills are on the proverbial “table” for the 2017 legislative session.

If you ever have the opportunity to visit Tallahassee while legislative session is in progress, it is quite a fascinating process to watch.

There is a section of seating just for the public to view legislative proceedings.

(Photo Credit: WUSF News)



## Bright Futures Early Evaluations

If you will notice on the month by month calendar provided on OSFA’s State Grants and Scholarships page, March is the month that Early Evaluations for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program may begin. The results will post on students’ online accounts under the Financial Aid Recipient History (FARH).

Encourage seniors to apply for the Bright Future Scholarship even if still working toward meeting test score requirements or volunteer service hours. Many seniors mistakenly believe that they cannot apply until all of these items are fully met. Seniors should apply now and continue to work toward meeting scholarship requirements.

If you are not sure who has applied or not applied, please visit [OSFA’s website](#) and log in to review student activity for the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA). Your students may need a reminder from your office to get motivated to complete this important application for a variety of state scholarships offered by the state of Florida.

# Drum Roll Please... Navigating Your Financial Future (NyFF) has a brand new look!



NyFF recently had a makeover. We know you must be thinking “how did I miss the big reveal on *Fixer Upper* or *What Not To Wear*?” Even though we were not featured on either of these TV shows, we certainly think you will like the new look and usability of the website. As we move forward, we will continually add more content to the pages of our website. Let us know if there is a topic you would like to see featured on our website—your suggestion just might help another counselor in our state!

New and improved features:

- ◆ It is now device friendly meaning that it will automatically resize to the scale of the device you are using: phone, tablet, desktop.
- ◆ The NyFF order form is more streamlined for your convenience.
- ◆ We have a brand new **“Presentations On Demand”** page for schools and partners to access for training in small segments of much larger topics. For example, a counselor may only want information about the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, and not the entire Federal Aid topic. We now offer it! These recordings include many of the most popular National Training for Counselors and Mentors (NT4CM) topics requested by staff. It also includes our standard NyFF financial literacy topics to supplement your efforts on campus.
- ◆ Not sure who your regional outreach representative is? Check out our “Contact Us” page complete with staff photos, contact information, and area served.

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## FSA ID Instructions

As the focus moves to juniors this spring, get a jumpstart on the senior year financial aid process by providing this wonderful handout to students and families. This will help them set up the FSA ID username and password which allows them to electronically sign the FAFSA and access the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. You may locate the handout on our website under the toolkits (Resources tab) or by simply clicking [HERE](#).





# Calendar

- February 27- March 4      America Saves Week
- March 7                      Florida Legislative General Session
- March 12                     Daylight Saving Time begins
- April 1- 30                  Financial Literacy Month

## OSFA'S OUTREACH TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

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## 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 now 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: **1-888-827-2004**

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

Federal Loans: **1-800-366-3475**

Locally: **850-410-5200**

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

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