



# PA FAFSA Go! Statewide Call to Action

Dr. Carrie Rowe - Deputy Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Dr. Kate Shaw - Deputy Secretary and Commissioner for Postsecondary and Higher Education

Diona Brown, Director of PA School Services, PHEAA



May 7, 2024



# PA FAFSA Go! Webinar Agenda

## I. Why FAFSA is Key in the Keystone State

- Student Spotlight

## II. FAFSA Completion Concerns: Implications for PA students, institutions, and the economy

- College Counselor Spotlight

## III. Resources and Assistance to Drive FAFSA Submissions

- Financial Aid Officer Spotlight

## IV. *Call to Action* – All Hands-on Deck for PA FAFSA Go!

# FAFSA Unlocks Dollars for Students in PA

Up to \$7,395 in Pell Grants

Up to \$5,000 in PA State Grants

PHEAA [Special Programs](#) such as Ready to Succeed and PA TIP

Federal and State Work Study Dollars

Many Scholarships and Institutional Aid Programs

Federal Student Loans: Best Rates & Repayment Options

# FAFSA Unlocks Aid for Pennsylvania's Postsecondary Institutions

- PA Community Colleges
- PASSHE Universities
- Thaddeus Stevens and Rural Regional College
- State-Related Universities
- PA's Private Colleges & Universities
- Career and Technical Centers
- Postsecondary Proprietary Schools
  - Accredited to leverage Federal Student Aid dollars

# PA Student Spotlight

Ella Wilkerson, Philadelphia PA

- School District of Philadelphia Graduate, 2020
- Temple University, School of Social Work, BSW graduation tomorrow!
- Masters of Social Work candidate

Insights from student experience:

*How has FAFSA been key to your journey toward your degree?*

*What resources were most helpful for you to complete FAFSA?*

*What do you recommend to best help students complete FAFSA?*



# FAFSA Completion in PA

Concerns for students, institutions and the statewide economy



# Tracking Pennsylvania High School Seniors' FAFSA applications

Tracking FAFSA rates is crucial to target support and drive submissions before summer.

PA public district and high school FAFSA completion data is regularly available from Federal Student Aid [at the StudentAid.gov Data Center](#)

- *Student Level* data is available for PA districts via a [data share agreement with PHEAA](#)

National College Attainment Network (NCAN) provides national comparative data along with state and district level FAFSA completion analysis on their [FAFSA Tracker](#)

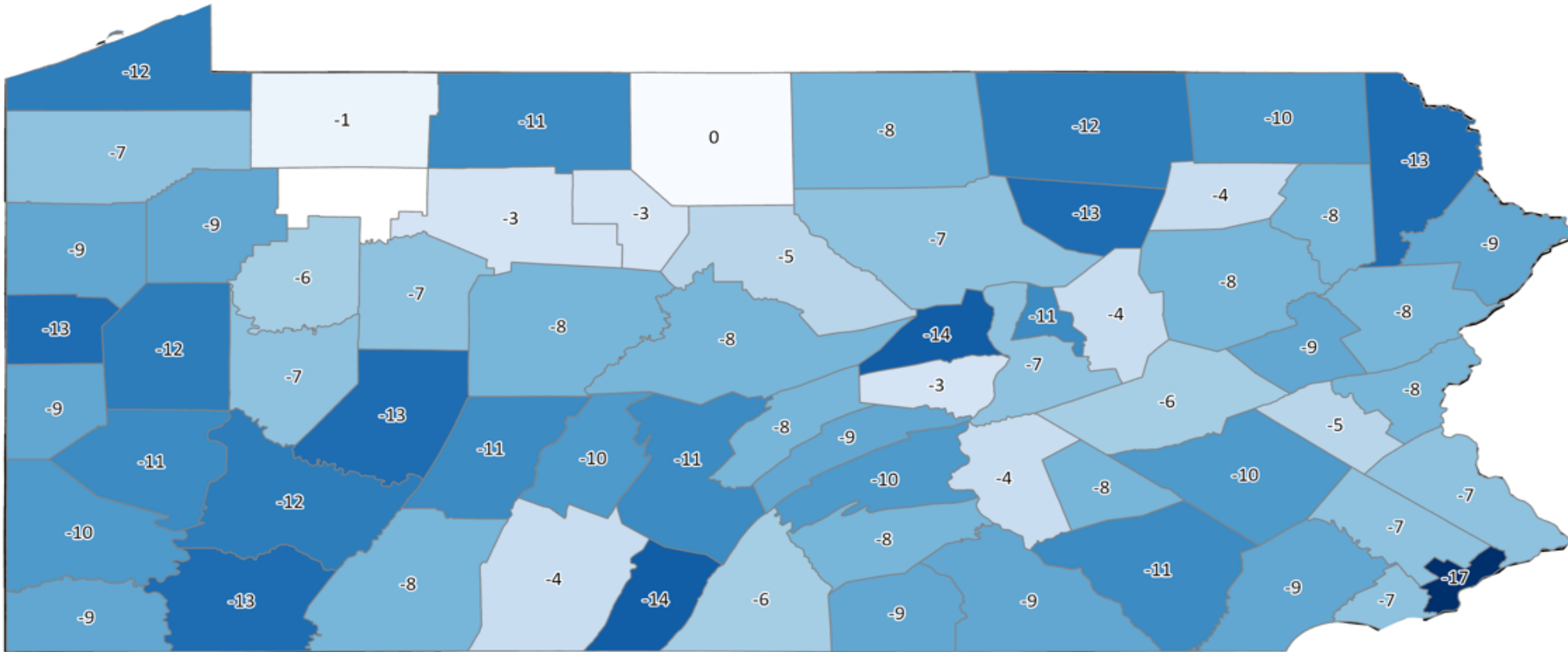
**PHEAA analysis shows Pennsylvania high school FAFSA submission rates are down by -16.2% or 13,866 fewer applications compared to this time last year.**





# PA FAFSA Submission Rate Percentage Point Change by County 23/24 to 24/25 Cycle

As of April 26th, 2024



PA Counties w/  
lowest FAFSA  
submission  
right now:

- Philadelphia
- Union
- Fulton
- Lawrence
- Indiana
- Fayette
- Sullivan
- Wayne

Submission Rate (%)

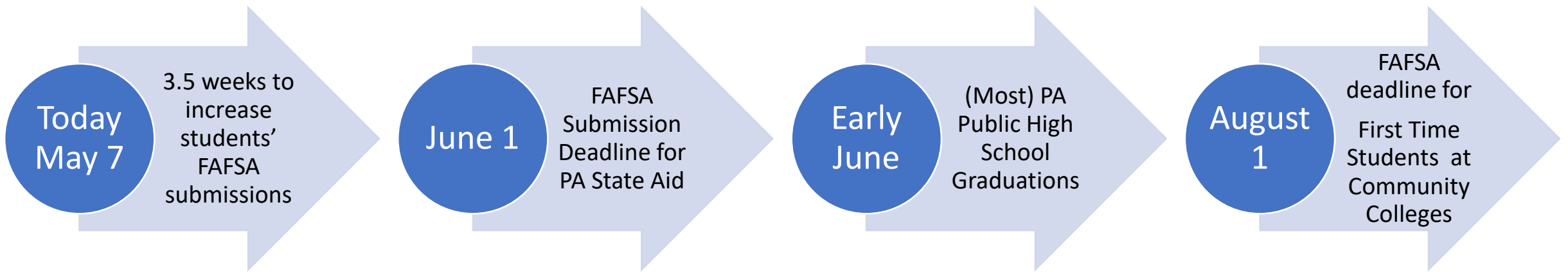


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Strategies

Submission Rate: The percentage of high school seniors who submit the FAFSA.  
Completion Rate: Percentage of submitted FAFSA forms that have been processed by the federal government.

# Timeline to PA Students' Financial Aid



# PA College Access Practitioner

Phil Jago, Lancaster PA

- Coordinator of College and Career Services
- School District of Lancaster

Insights from K-12 practitioner expertise:

*Why is FAFSA completion important for students in Lancaster county?*

*What resources have been the most helpful for FAFSA completions this year?*

*What's the most important thing leaders can do to help students complete?*



# PA School Services Outreach

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# Meet the Access Partners—Western PA



**Diona Brown**  
Director,  
PA School  
Services



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# Meet the Access Partner—Eastern PA



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Director,  
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Berks, Chester, Lancaster,  
and Lebanon Counties

# 2024-25 PHEAA Outreach Efforts

August 2023–April 2024

| Activity Type              | Activity Count | Attendee Count |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Financial Aid Nights       | 694            | 23,280         |
| FAFSA Completion Workshops | 716            | 6381           |
| Student Presentations      | 214            | 4614           |
| Counselor Workshops        | 37             | 950            |

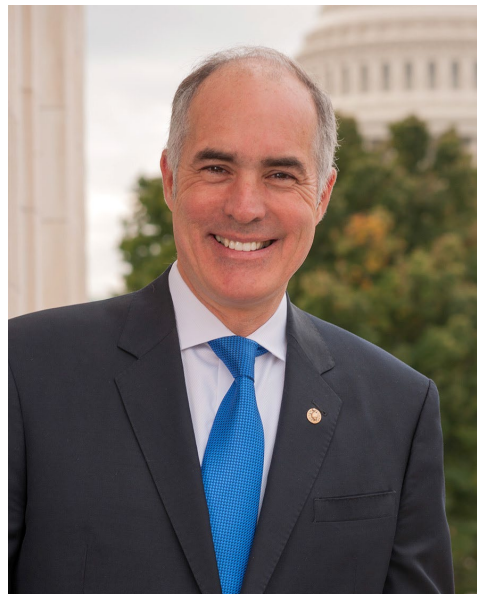
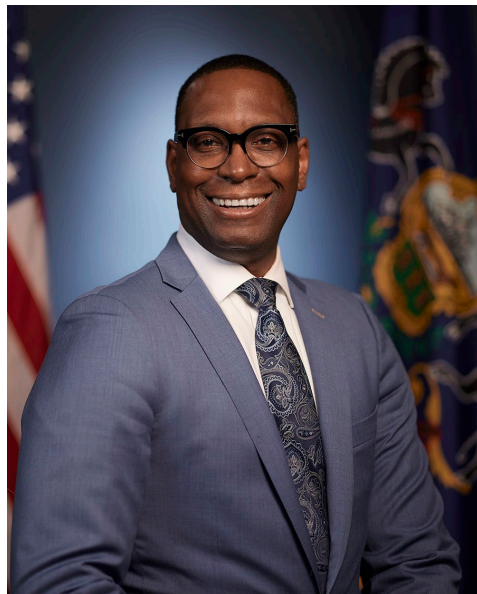
## Media Outreach Efforts

- ✓ Good Day PA / Nextstar Broadcasting
- ✓ U.S. News & World Report
- ✓ Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN)
- ✓ Local news, print & TV

# Recent FAFSA Outreach Events

- Statewide FAFSA webinar held with Senator Bob Casey's office on Feb 12
- FAFSA and financial aid webinar held on April 9 with Department of Treasury

- PHEAA/PDE joint FAFSA completion event at State Library on Feb 28





# PHEAA FAFSA Support Services

## **Resources, Training and Advising for all PA higher education stakeholders:**

- K-12 school leaders
- Community Based Organizations
- Postsecondary Institutions
- PA students and families
- And beyond...



# NEW SERVICE: FAFSA Virtual “Office Hours”

**FAFSA<sup>®</sup>**  
**Workshop Sessions**

Every **Wednesday** in **May**  
9:00 AM-4:00 PM


Schedule a one-on-one session with your local access partner at [pheaa.org/contactHEAP](https://pheaa.org/contactHEAP)

**PHEAA**

- PHEAA’s Higher Education Access Partners are available for one-on-one virtual FAFSA sessions on Wednesdays in May from 9:00 AM-4:00 PM.
- Open to college-bound students and their families, as well as school counselors, who have questions regarding the FAFSA.

# Statewide FAFSA Webinars

- Statewide webinars continue to be offered by PHEAA each month on a variety of topics:
  - Creating your Federal Student Aid Account (FSA ID)
  - Financial Aid 101
  - FAFSA Overview
- Schedule and Registration:
  - [Financial Aid Webinars \(pheaa.org\)](https://pheaa.org)



**2024 PHEAA Statewide Webinars**

**FAFSA Overview—Line by Line**

PHEAA Access Partners will present an overview of the 2024-25 FAFSA process to guide students and families through a step-by-step process of filing the FAFSA and PA State Grant applications.

|                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wednesday, February 21   | Tuesday, April 9         | Tuesday, July 9          |
| <a href="#">Register</a> | <a href="#">Register</a> | <a href="#">Register</a> |

6:00–7:00 PM (ET)

**Student Loans 101**

PHEAA Access Partners will present an overview of student loans including federal Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans, PLUS Loans, and private education loans. This session will discuss the details of the loan programs including loan limits, interest rates, and repayment plans. We will also review Direct Loan Consolidation and the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.

Tuesday, April 23

[Register](#)

6:00–7:00 PM (ET)

**Understanding & Comparing Financial Aid Offers**

PHEAA Access Partners Amy Sawdey and Wendy Dunlap will present information on the steps students should take after completing the FAFSA. They will discuss the financial aid process, strategies to review and understand financial aid offers from colleges, and how to compare different types of aid.

Wednesday, March 20

[Register](#)

6:00–7:00 PM (ET)

**Financial Aid Junior JumpStart**

Join us for an exciting session tailored to high school juniors that will inspire them to take charge of their future! This session is all about empowering students to plan and set goals, setting the stage for a successful senior year. We'll equip them with invaluable insights into navigating the financial aid process, ensuring they're well-prepared to tackle the challenges that await.

But that's not all—this session is open to both students and their parents who are exploring various postsecondary education options. It's an opportunity for families to gain a deeper understanding of what lies ahead and how to make the most of it. With valuable information and expert guidance, everyone involved is bound to benefit immensely from this session.

# Additional FAFSA Outreach

- **Hershey Park Education Days throughout May**
- **“Train the Trainer” FAFSA overview for PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation(OVR) staff**
- **FAFSA reminder email campaigns (renewal applicants)**
- **Social media & digital marketing campaigns**
- **Monthly newsletters sent to secondary and postsecondary institutions, as well as community partners**
- **General Assembly communications**
- **Higher Education Access Corner Podcast**

# PHEAA Financial Aid and FAFSA Materials



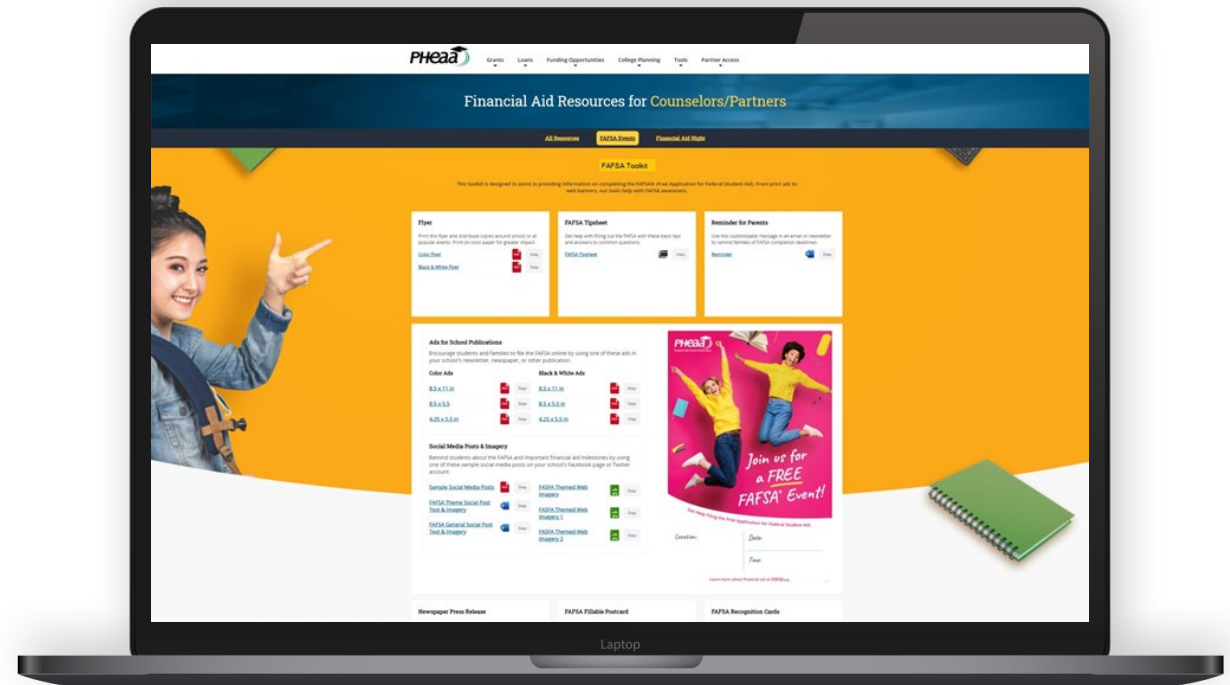
PHEAA offers a large variety of financial aid materials that are free to order at [pheaa.org/order-online](https://pheaa.org/order-online).

Many publications are also offered in Spanish!

# One-Stop FAFSA Site for Counselors & Partners

- FAFSA Toolkit

- Includes PDFs, flyers, ads for school publications, newspaper articles and planning information



# One-Stop FAFSA Resources for Students & Parents

- FAFSA resource site [pheaa.org/fafsaHelp](https://pheaa.org/fafsaHelp)
  - One-stop resource site for students and families
  - Includes short FAFSA and financial aid videos
  - FAFSA FAQ's
  - Downloadable Tipsheets
  - Links to public FAFSA completion events, Access Partner contact information ,virtual statewide webinars, and recordings
  - Opt into communications from PHEAA to get tips on college planning and paying for school

**PHEAA** Menu

## Financial Aid Resources for Parents & Students

### Resources

These resources are designed to assist in providing information on the entire financial aid process, including completing the FAFSA® (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

Types of Student Financial Aid Share

# Financial Aid 101

## What's Available

Watch on YouTube

**2024-25 FAFSA® RESOURCES**

**ADDITIONAL VIDEO RESOURCES**

- > [PA Student Aid Guide](#) PDF
- > [Spanish PA Student Aid Guide](#) PDF
- Find everything you need to know about paying for higher education.
- > [Federal Student Aid Account \(FSA ID\) Handout](#) PDF
- > [Spanish Federal Student Aid Account \(FSA ID\) Handout](#) PDF
- > [Who Needs an FSA ID?](#) PDF
- These pieces provide tips and instructions for creating an FSA ID.
- > [FAFSA Tipsheet](#) PDF
- Get help with filling out the FAFSA with these basic tips and answers to common questions.

# PA Financial Aid Officer Spotlight

Alyssa Dobson, Slippery Rock, PA

- Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Slippery Rock University

Insights from financial aid administrator expertise:

*Why is FAFSA completion important for Slippery Rock?*

*What assistance have you been able to offer students with completions thus far?*

*What actions do you recommend for financial aid officers to help close the FAFSA completion gap?*





# Call to Action for FAFSA Completion



Pennsylvania  
Department of Education

# Call to Action—School & College Access Counselors

1. Reach out to your [PHEAA Access Partners](#), community-based organizations, or local postsecondary institutions!
  - Host completion events virtually or on-line
2. Push FAFSA Messaging to Students
  - [NCAN FAFSA Communications Resource Library](#)
  - Reach out to students **individually** who haven't submitted
  - Encourage students to [opt-in](#) to communications from PHEAA and check emails regularly from Federal Student Aid and their colleges.
2. Review FAFSA completion for your high school on the [U.S. Department of Education's FAFSA completion site](#) to see where you stand.



# Call to Action—Financial Aid Officers

1. Review FAFSA completion for your area high schools and strategically deploy your resources.
  - [Federal Student Aid's FAFSA completion data site](#)
2. Reach out to your local K–12 partners.
  - How can you help?
  - Partner with [PHEAA Access Partners](#) to conduct a FAFSA Completion on your campus.
  - Send email or text reminders to students to complete the FAFSA. [Find message toolkits from NCAN](#)
  - Provide FAFSA resources for in-class or evening support. [PHEAA FAFSA toolkits](#)



# Call to Action—Community Based Organizations

1. Reach out to your Higher Education Financial Aid Officers and K-12 school counselors.
  - Where can you enhance their support?
  - What additional resources can you bring to the table? [PHEAA FAFSA toolkits](#)
  - **Stock your office with up-to-date FAFSA and financial aid information.**
    - [Get shareable materials here: Identify Yourself \(pheaa.org\)](#)



# PA FAFSA Go! Call to Action Challenge

- ✓ **SIGN-UP to be connected with colleagues and assistance in your area.**
  - Volunteer to give or get help to increase FAFSA submissions wherever you serve students.
- ✓ **Keep communicating the FAFSA completion message broadly from your networks.**
  - Post or re-post on social media. [NCAN FAFSA Communications Resource Library](#)
  - Include FAFSA information in every newsletter or email you send.
  - Attend FAFSA webinars and meetings to stay up-to-date on developments.
- ✓ **Gather resources and share them with students and their families.**
  - ✓ [PHEAA FAFSA toolkits](#)
- ✓ **Keep up-to-date on FAFSA changes**—connect folks to the FAFSA experts within your network.
- ✓ **Be a PA FAFSA Go! Advocate**—certify your commitment so that every Pennsylvania learner has access to an affordable postsecondary education.

Thank you – please be in touch if you have questions or need additional information

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