



November 2014

Dear Counselor or Mentor:

The office of Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education, would like to share some updates to assist you in working with students.

Publication Updates

Federal Student Aid is updating our publication portfolio to include a series of short publications to replace *Your Federal Student Loans: Learn the Basics and Manage Your Debt*. The series will cover the student loan lifecycle (from loan basics through repayment):

- *Federal Student Loans: Basics for Students* (currently available as *Direct Loan Basics for Students*)
- *Federal Student Loans: PLUS Loan Basics for Parents* (currently available as *Direct Loan Basics for Parents*)
- *Federal Student Loans: Be a Responsible Borrower* (now available to order)
- *Federal Student Loans: Repaying Your Loans* (now available to order)
- *Federal Student Loans: Loan Forgiveness Options* (available to order in 2015)

Based on customer feedback from usability studies and focus groups, we have shortened *Funding Your Education* to make it more user-friendly for students and cheaper for schools that distribute it via mail. The new six-page document provides an overview of federal student aid and the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA[®]), as well as next steps after submitting the FAFSA, and sends the reader to **StudentAid.gov** for details.

In addition to the shorter version of *Funding Your Education*, we will continue to publish the fact sheet *Do You Need Money for College*, which offers a quick glance at the basics of eligibility, the FAFSA process, types of aid, and each program's annual maximum award.

Page 4 of this letter lists a sampling of our publications; you can order them and many more at **www.FSAPubs.gov**. Please be sure to provide your e-mail address at the FSA Pubs site so we can communicate with you more effectively. You also can change your postal address or other contact information at that site.

Note: Students and parents can order publications at **www.edpubs.gov** and can download electronic versions of publications, videos, and infographics at **StudentAid.gov/resources**.

FAFSA® Materials and Updates

The 2015–16 FAFSA will go live at www.fafsa.gov on January 1, 2015. Meanwhile, associated materials are in development and will become available during the remainder of this fall and early winter. We post FAFSA news and such materials as the *EFC Formula Guide*, the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet*, and screen shots of the online application on the “FAFSA Updates” page of the Financial Aid Toolkit: Go to FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov/fafsa and click on “FAFSA Updates” under “Quick Links” on the right side of the page.

Please continue to encourage students and parents to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) to access their IRS tax information and have it automatically inserted into the FAFSA. The 2015–16 FAFSA will offer IRS DRT functionality beginning February 1, 2015. You can find an infographic about IRS DRT at StudentAid.gov/resources#irs-drt-graphic.

#AskFAFSA Office Hours on Twitter

You and your students are welcome to join us at 5 p.m. Eastern time on the last Wednesday of each month for #AskFAFSA Office Hours. (In months when a holiday falls on or near that Wednesday, we will announce a different date.) This live Q&A session on Twitter gives students, parents, and mentors the opportunity to get questions answered by the experts. Each month we feature a different topic related to federal student aid. You can submit your questions and join the conversation using the hashtag #AskFAFSA and tune in during the live event for answers from our experts. Find us at www.Twitter.com/FAFSA.

Don't have a Twitter account? Watch the stream live at <http://bit.ly/AskFAFSA2>. Not available during Office Hours? An archived transcript of the Q&A session will be posted at www.storify.com/FAFSA the day after Office Hours.

Remember: Make Use of the Financial Aid Toolkit

Be sure to visit FinancialAidToolkit.ed.gov, a website for you, the counselor or mentor. The “Search Tools and Resources” section of the site offers a searchable library of brochures, videos, fact sheets, sample tweets and Facebook posts, infographics, PowerPoint presentations, and more. Feel free to download, post, adapt, e-mail, and otherwise share the resources from the site.

Thank you and have a successful FAFSA season.

Sincerely,



Brenda F. Wensil
Chief Customer Experience Officer
Federal Student Aid

Federal Student Aid: Find the Information You Need Online

	Topic	Resource
FAFSA	Fill out the FAFSA	www.fafsa.gov
	Basic FAFSA info: what is it; how do you fill it out	StudentAid.gov/fafsa StudentAid.gov/complete
	Dependency status for FAFSA purposes	StudentAid.gov/dependency
	Determining which parent’s info to report	StudentAid.gov/fafsa-parent
	How aid is calculated (inc. link to detailed EFC info)	StudentAid.gov/how-calculated
Types of Aid/ Getting Aid	Types of financial aid	StudentAid.gov/types
	Who can get federal student aid	StudentAid.gov/eligibility
	Pell Lifetime Eligibility Used	StudentAid.gov/pell-limit
	Finding and applying for scholarships	StudentAid.gov/scholarships
	Loan interest rates and fees	StudentAid.gov/interest
	Aid for military families	StudentAid.gov/military
	Avoiding financial aid scams	StudentAid.gov/scams
Student Account Access	My Federal Student Aid (student can log in to see grant and loan records and certain eligibility info)	StudentAid.gov/login
Repaying Loans	Loan repayment	StudentAid.gov/repay
	Repayment Estimator (compares repayment plans)	StudentAid.gov/repayment-estimator
	Income-driven repayment plans (e.g., Pay As You Earn plan, Income-Based plan)	StudentAid.gov/idr
	Public Service Loan Forgiveness	StudentAid.gov/publicservice
	Loan forgiveness in general	StudentAid.gov/forgiveness
	Loan forgiveness for teachers	StudentAid.gov/teach-forgive
College Prep	College Preparation Checklist: academic and financial prep for K–12 and adult students	StudentAid.gov/checklist
	Why go to college (education and pay/unemployment rates)	StudentAid.gov/whycollege
Special Audiences	Info for parents (tax benefits, support your child, college costs)	StudentAid.gov/parent
	Graduate school funding	StudentAid.gov/grad
	Financial aid for adult students	StudentAid.gov/resources#adult-students
	Going to college in another country	StudentAid.gov/international
Social Media	@FAFSA Twitter feed	www.Twitter.com/FAFSA
	Federal Student Aid YouTube channel	www.YouTube.com/FederalStudentAid
	Federal Student Aid Facebook page	www.Facebook.com/FederalStudentAid

Federal Student Aid Resources for Students and Parents: A Sampling

Resource	Summary and URL Note: Most of these items are also available in Spanish, and several of the documents are available in Braille.	Audience(s)							
		Elementary School Student and Parent	Middle School Student and Parent	High School Student (9th-11th)	High School Senior	High School Parent	College Student	Borrower – Student or Parent	Adult Student
College Prep Checklist	How to get ready academically and financially (StudentAid.gov/checklist)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Do You Need Money for College? Federal Student Aid at a Glance	Basic overview of aid and application process (StudentAid.gov/needmoney)			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Funding Your Education: The Guide to Federal Student Aid	Understanding the financial aid process and maximizing resources on our website (StudentAid.gov/funding)			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Direct Loan Basics	Federal loan info for students and parents (StudentAid.gov/resources#loans)				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PDF FAFSA	Free application for federal student aid (www.fafsa.gov)				✓	✓	✓		✓
Video: Types of Federal Student Aid	2-minute video introducing concept of grants, loans, work-study (StudentAid.gov/resources#types-aid-video)			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Video: How to Fill Out the FAFSA	2:45-minute video providing overview of FAFSA process (StudentAid.gov/resources#how-fill-out-fafsa-video)				✓	✓	✓		✓
Video: Responsible Borrowing	2-minute video reminding borrowers to borrow only what they need (StudentAid.gov/resources#responsible-borrowing-video)				✓		✓	✓	✓
Infographic: Financial Aid Process	Graphic showing the path a student takes to apply for and receive aid (StudentAid.gov/resources#aid-process-graphic)				✓	✓	✓		✓
Infographic: Determining Dependency Status	Graphic showing dependency status questions (StudentAid.gov/resources#dependency-status-graphic)				✓	✓	✓		✓

*View the full selection of publications you can order from Federal Student Aid at www.FSAPubs.gov. Students and parents may order at www.edpubs.gov. More resources are at StudentAid.gov/resources.