

TIPS FOR ENGAGING PARENTS

Engaging parents in FAFSA completion is one of the top challenges for school counselors, career development coordinators, and college access staff.

Things we need to know from parents:

- What are their challenges and beliefs about education beyond high school?
- Do their beliefs come from a place having to do with culture, experience, or lack of knowledge?
- Whose responsibility is it for making decisions about education beyond high school – students or parents?
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure that students transition to educational programs beyond high school – school counselor, parents, or students?
- Why don't parents read the information, ask questions, or research higher education options?

Until we know the answers to what parents think and hold true, it is difficult to develop messaging that resonates with held beliefs.

The good news: *“Ninety-four percent of North Carolinians believe it is very important (62%) or important (32%) to have an education beyond high school, including a professional certificate.” - from MyFuture.NC and Gallup, November 27, 2018*

Where can parents be reached?

- Community organizations where parents belong
- Places of worship
- Places where parents work
- Posting financial aid terminology in bulletins, free grocery papers, bulletin boards

Frequent Questions

What about parents who do not want to complete the FAFSA?

“Explain that the information reported on the FAFSA is only used to determine their student’s eligibility for financial aid, by completing the FAFSA they are not obligated to pay their student’s expenses. If they don’t complete it, their student is only eligible for unsubsidized loans.”

U.S. Department of Education

Where does my FAFSA information go once I submit it?

The information is sent to the colleges listed on the FAFSA and the state higher education agency to determine eligibility for state grants.

What does it mean if a student is selected for verification?

“Verification does not mean they are in trouble. Encourage them to provide the financial aid office with requested information by the school’s deadline.”

For step-by-step information on financial aid and the FAFSA:

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/2019-20-do-you-need-money.pdf>.