

FAFSA Nights and FAFSA Completion Best Practices – The New FAFSA Special Edition

Ideas for high school counselors, college advisers, and other college preparation professionals

With the introduction of the new FAFSA form, high schools are facing unprecedented challenges in guiding students through the financial aid process. In response, Utah high schools have implemented innovative ways to support their students. This *special edition* of best practices highlights dedicated efforts, offering advice on how to address the unfamiliarity of the updated FAFSA form and enhance students' access to higher education. [Best practices from previous years are still available.](#)

These ideas, tips, and best practices are from Utah's top FAFSA-completing high schools, recognized by the 2024 FAFSA Cup. These ideas are a reference and can be adapted to match individualized needs or to develop new strategies that support students and parents in completing the new FAFSA form. High schools interested in competing in a future FAFSA cup can learn more about how to apply via email, which is shared each spring.

Each example in this document is unique; FAFSA completion is not a one-size-fits-all process. Some exercises may suit your school and students, while others may not. Don't be afraid to explore ideas that prioritize students and consider what works best for them.

How to Navigate this Document

Underlined words, headers, and arrows are organized with links to make moving through the information easier. Users may select a link to navigate to a new page or external web link. Arrows in the bottom left-hand corner navigate to the [Table of Contents](#).

**Please note that the quotes in this document have been lightly edited for clarity and brevity. If the author of a quote has questions or concerns, please contact fafsahelp@ushe.edu.*

Table of Contents

The Leading Best Practices.....	3
Building a Positive FAFSA Experience.....	4
Ensure Your Team is FAFSA Trained.....	5
Create StudentAid.Gov Accounts in Advance.....	5
Leveraging Handouts.....	6
Classroom Presentations.....	6
Advocating FAFSA for Every Student Path.....	7
Effective FAFSA Promotion Strategies.....	8
Integrate FAFSA into UCAW Events.....	8
Using School Events to Boost FAFSA Participation.....	9
Building Partnerships for FAFSA Support.....	10
Enhancing FAFSA Engagement Through Incentives.....	10
Strategically Reaching and Supporting Students.....	11
Keeping Families Informed.....	13
Providing Language Support for Families.....	14
Supporting Parents without Social Security Numbers.....	14
Supporting Students without Social Security Numbers.....	14
Tracking FAFSA Data.....	15
Targeted Follow-Up Strategies for FAFSA Applicants.....	16



The Leading Best Practices

Spread FAFSA Awareness Year-Round

- “We feel it is essential to educate all year about the FAFSA, not only to demystify the FAFSA process but also to highlight the various financial aid opportunities available.” (Park City High, 2024)

Host Multiple FAFSA Events

- “Because of the FAFSA delay, we made sure to host three FAFSA nights between January and May.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “We hosted three separate FAFSA nights - two in January and one in February.” (Granger High, 2024)
- “We hosted three FAFSA nights between January and February and held a financial aid night from the University of Utah in April.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Strategically Inform Students

- “Once every few weeks, we created flyers with upcoming college deadlines, FAFSA information, and other information that would be passed out to seniors in their classes.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Find New Dynamic Ways to Promote the FAFSA

- “We color coordinated all FAFSA documents with different shades of blue for the whole year. This made it easy to identify which documents were for FAFSA.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Connect, Collaborate, and Build Your FAFSA Team

- “We shared our FAFSA data with our counseling team, UCAC, and GEAR UP personnel so as a team we could make sure every student who needed help finishing the application (or was not able to attend FAFSA night) gets AT LEAST one opportunity to sit down with someone to get help where they may have been encountered a snag.” (Taylorsville High, 2024)

Offer Flexible, Accessible, and Even Extended Availability for FAFSA Support

- “Our 30-minute daily walk-in times (flexible times during the school day), and hours before and after school, have been extremely beneficial for students and families, because they know they can always come in during those set times to get immediate, one-on-one help with the FAFSA, scholarships, and any other post-high school questions.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)

Build and Maintain Relationships with Your Local Colleges and Universities

- “We made sure that we were in contact with our local colleges and universities to see what type of support they were offering students since the FAFSA was so delayed.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)



Build FAFSA Awareness Early

- “With this specific senior class, we began advertising the FAFSA application at the end of junior year. I went into different classrooms to discuss the importance of FAFSA in their college preparation journey for next year.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “Our counseling team has a long-term strategy when promoting the FAFSA. We start by talking about the benefits of completing the form as early as sophomore year, so by the time they hit their senior year, most students have a basic understanding of what FAFSA is.” (Payson High, 2024)

Building a Positive FAFSA Experience

- “The main point we highlighted was making it clear how important filing the FAFSA is for anyone going to higher education. Even though it isn't "easy" this year, it's just as important as sending in the college application.” (East High, 2024)
- “As the spring progressed, we tried new strategies to incentivize and educate parents and students who were reluctant or negative about the FAFSA. I called a lot of parents to answer questions and overcame a lot of misconceptions through these one-on-one conversations.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “We kept track of students who faced issues and did everything possible to help them stay motivated and not give up.” (Granger High, 2024)
- “The last month has been intense as we've worked tirelessly to help as many students as possible submit their forms. It's been awesome to see students persist and persevere. We've been diligent in encouraging them to keep going, and some have even attended all three FAFSA nights despite ongoing issues. It's been essential to reassure these students that they remain a priority, and we're committed to supporting them until they successfully submit the form.” (Granger High, 2024)
- “For months, our focus has been listening to our families' fears and frustrations, assisting those needing to contact the Department of Education helpline, and ensuring families that we would continue to research and use the latest guidance from USHE. Our bilingual team had honest yet positive conversations with students. Being in the trenches was emotional for all.” (Wasatch High, GEAR UP Utah – Region 10, 2024)

Ensure Your Team is FAFSA Trained

- “All the teachers and counselors involved in our FAFSA Night attended at least one FAFSA training webinar so we could learn how to best support parents with the FAFSA delays.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “To get more experience with the new FAFSA and to better help our own students, we helped at several other FAFSA events, including at schools not associated with UCAC or in the Alpine School District. At these events and our own FAFSA nights, we increased our knowledge of the FAFSA by talking to financial aid professionals from the colleges.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)



- “We participated in multiple workshops and training seminars well before the FAFSA opening date, including meeting with officials in charge of the new FAFSA at NACAC, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, in Baltimore in the Fall of 2023.” (Park City High, 2024)

Create StudentAid.Gov Accounts in Advance

- “We hosted two StudentAid.Gov account creation workshops during the school day in December and one StudentAid.Gov account creation workshop during the school day in January.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)
- “In December, we hosted multiple StudentAid.Gov account creation workshops during a flex time period offered at our school.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)
- “We organized a separate night for LIA parents and students to go over FAFSA and how to create a StudentAid.Gov account before our FAFSA night.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “We had a couple of StudentAid.Gov account creation nights where we informed students and parents with details about the FAFSA delay and what to plan for this school year.” (Payson High, 2024)
- “By having them create their accounts beforehand, they were ready to come to FAFSA night and complete their applications.” (Taylorsville High, 2024)
- “We provided a parent Zoom night in December to talk about the FAFSA but also to help parents create their StudentAid.Gov accounts and talk about our upcoming FAFSA night.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “I made introductory phone calls to parents of seniors and asked many of them if they had created their StudentAid.Gov accounts. Then, I reminded them about the 2024-25 FAFSA opening in December and asked if they had any questions.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “Wasatch High has a 30-minute study hour multiple times each week, and students were called in during December and beyond to create their StudentAid.Gov accounts with GEAR UP Utah staff members.” (Wasatch High, GEAR UP Utah – Region 10, 2024)
- “Our senior seminar teacher, a class that all seniors take, has worked with students throughout the fall to help them create their StudentAid.Gov accounts. This is a requirement before they attend FAFSA night so that we can help parents and students use their time effectively at the event.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)

Leveraging Handouts

- “We provided handouts with dates and times of all the FAFSA events happening in the valley, encouraging families to put them on their fridge.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)



- “As we met with each senior to go over their post-high school plans, we gave them several handouts that included a personal To-Do Checklist about applications and scholarship deadlines, as well as important information on how to complete the FAFSA.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)
- “We incorporated FAFSA and HB 144 information into every meeting we had with students and parents this year, usually leaving them with a printout of USHE's ‘FSA ID-Your Key to Financial Aid’ page, printed on one side in English and the other in Spanish.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “Knowing that our students would find everything about the new FAFSA confusing, we created physical folders with written instructions for FAFSA, college applications, etc., with tags for them to keep all of their college passwords in one place.” (Taylorsville High, 2024)
- “We had tabling events with handouts on upcoming events that were given to seniors and their parents during lunches, after school, and during parent-teacher conferences.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Classroom Presentations

- “During the first weeks of school, I visited seniors and financial literacy classes to discuss scholarships and FAFSA. We helped students create StudentAid.Gov accounts and sent them home with a flier explaining how their parents could create a StudentAid.Gov account, when our FAFSA event was, and what to bring.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “In September, the counseling team and I presented College and Career Readiness to senior English classes. Parents were encouraged to come to those presentations.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “I went into the English classrooms and helped the students create StudentAid.Gov accounts, and I advertised FAFSA night.” (Hurricane High, 2024)
- “We changed our College and Career Readiness classroom presentations to a FAFSA and UCAW prep presentations prepared by our UCAC, CTE coordinator, and counselors. ” (Taylorsville High, 2024)
- “We entered the classrooms early in the year and tied our UCAW/FAFSA program to our CCRP counseling program so that we had students creating goals for the future and outlining the steps to reach them.” (Taylorsville High, 2024)
- “I gave presentations in all 'Financial Literacy' classes about the new FAFSA, what to expect, and how to fill it out. I also gave presentations in all Language Arts 12 and AVID classes about deciding what to do after high school and the importance of financial aid.” (East High, 2024)
- “I engaged with students in Financial Literacy and AVID classes, offering insights into college funding options. I introduced the FAFSA, utilizing instructional videos for better understanding, and advertised the new FAFSA form.” (Logan High, 2024)



Advocating FAFSA for Every Student Path

- “I created a handout of programs at our local tech college that accepts FAFSA funding to advertise effectively to our students who want to pursue a vocational program.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “I noticed last year that most students didn't complete the FAFSA because they planned on a gap year or a religious mission. I encouraged students to complete the FAFSA during their senior year so getting back to school would be a smoother transition.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “The scholarship coordinator and I held personalized discussions with a few students who planned on gap years because they wanted to work to save up for college. We encouraged them to complete the FAFSA because there's a chance that they may qualify for a grant that can cover tuition. I also created a gap year brochure encouraging FAFSA completion and technical training.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “Though the majority of our students who plan to defer pursue trades or technical programs, my presentations included information on how most technical certificates are eligible for federal aid.” (Tooele High, 2024)

Effective FAFSA Promotion Strategies

- “Before winter break, the counseling team mailed out informative postcards to every senior and their parents, outlining the event's agenda and providing instructions on creating a StudentAid.Gov account beforehand.” (Logan High, 2024)
- “I only made one social media post a week before the FAFSA event in previous years. This year, I posted on the THS Counseling Instagram two weeks before the event, then one week before, and one day before.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “The scholarship coordinator made several flyers with Canva throughout the school year to promote FAFSA.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “The scholarship coordinator advertised individual FAFSA sessions through *Talking Points*, a text messaging program, used by the school district starting this year, targeting students who qualified for fee waivers.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “Student council made an announcement every day the week before the events.” (Hurricane High, 2024)
- “We put many 'FAFSA Wanted' posters in the hallways of the school, so students could not avoid them.” (East High, 2024)
- “The college access advisor and one counselor also went on two morning radio shows to discuss FAFSA and financial aid, including when events were and who they could contact about getting the help for FAFSA.” (Uintah High, 2024)
- “When we advertised our December StudentAid.Gov account creation night with an all seniors-and-parents email, we included two PowerPoints: "FAFSA Changes for Parents" and "FAFSA Basics for Parents".” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)



- “Regarding forms of advertising, we placed infographics with FAFSA details on our *NextGrad* board outside of the attendance office. Working with admin, we sent out information, updates, and reminders to all the senior’s parents through *Blackboard* messaging systems. We also used our senior’s *Canvas* pages to announce FAFSA updates and upcoming deadlines.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Integrate FAFSA into UCAW Events

- “We added 'Create a StudentAid.Gov account' to our UCAW Checklist, making it easier for students to get started.” (Granger High, 2024)
- “During Utah College Application Week, we had students create their StudentAid.Gov accounts and provided updates in their UCAW folders.” (Hunter High, 2024)
- “During UCAW (which we offer for 6 to 7 days each year), we not only enter the classroom and host multiple FAFSA Nights (3 nights this year), we also invite all the university and technical college reps to join us for a kickoff where we have games, prizes, and opportunities for students (all students, not just seniors) to get to learn about all the amazing options our state offers.” (Taylorsville High, 2024)

Using School Events to Boost FAFSA Participation

During the Fall

- “During parent-teacher conferences, we left the Career Center available as an open house called the ‘FAFSA Help Center’ for students and families.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “We hosted a ‘Parent University’ information session during Parent-Teacher Conference Night in November that included significant FAFSA and Scholarship information.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “During parent-teacher conferences in the fall, we had a table to discuss scholarships, FAFSA, and college applications to help parents and students learn important deadlines throughout the year.” (Hunter High, 2024)
- “During the last week of August, small groups of seniors and their parents came to the College and Career Center for a senior-focused College and Career Readiness presentation. Where we shared 20 minutes of important college info. During this presentation, we gave a brief overview of the FAFSA and asked all students to sign up for a one-on-one appointment.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)
- “We set up a Paying for College presentation that students could attend during our intervention time on November 30th.” (Snow Canyon High, 2024)



During the Spring

- “Because of the FAFSA delay and early glitches, we rescheduled our FAFSA Night in a computer lab for the same day and time as the parent-teacher conferences. A few parents told me that scheduling the FAFSA Completion Workshop at the same time as the parent-teacher conference was convenient for them. We had 30 seniors and families show up to the event. We saw a 280% increase in attendance compared to the past two years.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “We have created opportunities for students to come in during parent-teacher conferences or during school hours to continue working on their applications.” (Granger High, 2024)
- “Our college adviser set up tables at parent-teacher conference nights to offer FAFSA help. We offered Taki chips to any student who came in and told the access advisor they finished their FAFSA. She advertised her availability for FAFSA help on PTC nights.” (Uintah High, 2024)
- “We hosted additional FAFSA nights on February 6 and 7 during spring parent-teacher conferences to make it easier for parents to attend since they would already be at the school.” (Hunter High, 2024)
- “We hosted a first-gen scholarship and financial aid workshop for students during the day in February.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)
- “For Decision Day, we provided a flyer with information on how to view FAFSA offer letters and accept and deny offers for scholarships, loans, and work-study. This flyer also had information on deferment, HB 144, and a reminder that FAFSA needs to be completed each academic year, starting October 1.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Building Partnerships for FAFSA Support

- “Not only did we put in effort to help our students, but we worked with Bridgerland Technical College to host a FAFSA night in the spring for all students in the valley, because we knew individuals throughout the valley were struggling with FAFSA.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “We set up several meetings with USU's financial team to have one-on-one visits to ensure that students who were struggling with specific challenges got the help they needed if we were unable to resolve their FAFSA application challenges.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “Come March, the College Access Advisors extended their support by hosting an additional FAFSA Night at Bridgerland Technical College. This provided extra support for seniors and parents to address any lingering issues with the new form.” (Logan High, 2024)
- “We had an additional FAFSA night with SLC School District, and this was specifically geared for those having problems.” (East High, 2024)
- “The University of Utah and Hunter High School co-hosted a financial aid night in April.” (Hunter High, 2024)
- “Tooele Education Foundation funded meals for students who missed breakfast or lunch to submit their FAFSA, a bonus incentive. We were able to help 14 students.” (Tooele High, 2024)



- “We established partnerships with local community organizations and financial institutions to provide additional resources and assistance.” (Park City High, 2024)
- “One of our staff members created a financial resources document for our students without Social Security Numbers and we took those families to the Dream Center at SLCC to get their unique questions answered and to build relationships with staff at that higher education location.” (Wasatch High, GEAR UP Utah – Region 10, 2024)

Enhancing FAFSA Engagement Through Incentives

Incentives For FAFSA Events

- “We applied for and received a grant for an incentivized FAFSA night in April. We split the money between food to motivate students to attend and two raffle-style scholarships to motivate parents, which were advertised through flyers, email, phone calls, school announcements, and social media.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “We posted the USHE FAFSA Scholarship on the board during FAFSA night so that when students finished their FAFSA, they could apply for the scholarship.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “This year, we started clearing absences for those who showed up to our FAFSA workshops and for those who showed proof of FAFSA completion, usually an email from the Department of Education.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “We give each student that attends FAFSA night either free donuts or tacos, Keys to Success points, and raffle tickets for prizes that we announce to the whole school during our Tville TV program.” (Taylorsville High, 2024)
- “We had snacks and pizza available for families who came to our FAFSA Night.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “One thing we did to incentivize the students to attend our first FAFSA night was give out free taco vouchers for a local taco truck after they completed their FAFSA form.” (Payson High, 2024)
- “We had Crumbl Cookie donations which helped FAFSA night attendance numbers.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Incentives To Engage Students

- “We started a new strategy where students could make up a poor citizenship grade by completing the FAFSA with our help or showing us their completed FAFSA.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “One of the things Provo High did to increase FAFSA submissions was to share a giveaway. If students confirmed they applied to college(s) and showed their FAFSA was complete, they were entered into the giveaway.” (Provo High, 2024)
- “We also did giveaways throughout December if the student created their StudentAid.Gov account at our account creation night or at home and showed proof.” (Provo High, 2024)



- “We have celebrated students by giving out free Jersey Mikes cards and FAFSA stickers or candy when they submit their FAFSA.” (East High, 2024)
- “To increase FAFSA numbers, we provided incentives like candy bars to students who had completed their FAFSA form.” (Payson High, 2024)
- “We had a drawing for a giveaway of Tuacahn tickets for those that completed the FAFSA and let me know by a certain date.” (Snow Canyon High, 2024)

Strategically Reaching and Supporting Students

Phone Calls, Emails, and Online Courses

- “I made many phone calls to students to ensure that those who had not completed the FAFSA application could get help with the process. This resulted in finding many students who had issues with the application and wanted support.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “We made phone calls to families that have not yet submitted their applications.” (Wasatch High, GEAR UP Utah – Region 10, 2024)
- “I’ve sent mass emails to parents whose kids are planning on college but haven’t completed FAFSA; one was general information, and the other was for students planning on serving a religious mission or taking a gap year.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “We have a Canvas course, specifically for seniors, that outlines how to fill out the new FAFSA. All my information and their counselor’s information are available if they need help through the outlined steps.” (East High, 2024)

Surveys and Questionnaires

- “We sent our emails to students and families with a questionnaire, asking if individuals would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to get additional FAFSA help.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “Using the responses from our spring senior survey, we set up in-person and phone appointments, as well as called down the individual students who indicated they still needed help.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)
- “I conduct Senior Exit Interviews with each graduating senior. I asked each student about the status of their FAFSA form during these interviews. We often check their progress in their account to ensure accuracy and address any necessary corrections. If a senior hasn’t completed the form yet, I offer personalized guidance through the FAFSA form, providing hands-on assistance.” (Logan High, 2024)

Reaching Specific Student Groups

- “For all of our students who qualified for the Opportunity and Prime Scholarships, we pulled them individually out of class to ensure that their FAFSA application was complete so they could get the scholarship.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)



- “We worked closely with our Latinos in Action teacher to ensure that LIA students had the help and resources they needed in order to complete the FAFSA application.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “The scholarship advisor effectively advertised the importance of the FAFSA for obtaining scholarships to students who are partway through a Davis Technical College certificate by emailing each of them.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “We reached out to the most vulnerable seniors at Wasatch High, which has resulted in most of them completing their FAFSA and slowly receiving their SAI information.” (Wasatch High, GEAR UP Utah – Region 10, 2024)

Promote Your Office as a Place to Get Help

- “Our number one priority at the College and Career Center is being available for students. When the FAFSA opened, and because of the advertising we did before the FAFSA opening with direct emails, texts, posters, and appointments, our students and parents knew they could come to our Career Center with FAFSA questions.” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)
- “The times offered for the FAFSA sessions were before school, during lunch, and after school. If none of those times worked for the students, but they have a study hall class, they can come to our office during that period.” (Tooele High, 2024)
- “We have an ‘open door’ policy for any FAFSA issues.” (East High, 2024)

Reach Students Where They Are

- “We organized a time during advisory class for students who have been having problems with the new FAFSA to work on it and get help during school.” (East High, 2024)
- “When we see seniors in the hallway, we ask about their FAFSA and where they are in the process.” (East High, 2024)
- “Some of the Counseling Center staff chaperoned Prom, and we asked the seniors coming in about their FAFSA status. They can't escape us!” (East High, 2024)
- “We organized FAFSA completion events during school hours and evenings, accommodating students' schedules and ensuring accessibility to resources.” (Park City High, 2024)

Keeping Families Informed

- “Recognizing the challenges posed by any new FAFSA issues, we proactively communicated updates and guidance to students and families, leveraging various communication channels such as email, text messaging, and social media platforms.” (Park City High, 2024)
- “Anytime we had an update from FAFSA, we made sure to send them in Spanish and English to all families.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “Our strategies for addressing FAFSA awareness include emailing students and parents with any updates and information about the FAFSA as we received them.” (Snow Canyon High, 2024)



- “I was able to text the students and the parents with FAFSA updates and information. This seemed to work better than emailing, and I received more responses from my text messages.” (Snow Canyon High, 2024)
- “Once school resumed in January, we used Canvas, the intercom, paper flyers, and emails to parents and students to send out information regarding the FAFSA application being open.” (Hunter High, 2024)
- “We let students know about FAFSA changes well in advance to prepare them for some of the challenges they may face when working on their FAFSA.” (Payson High, 2024)
- “We made sure to continue sending out updates and information, encouraging parents and students to try during the day or early in the morning, and log in multiple times.” (Hunter High, 2024)
- “Students in Senior Seminar, a class that all seniors take, received many updates throughout the school year regarding new scholarships and FAFSA updates.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “Before the colleges sent out FAFSA offer letters, we showed students how to access the Submission Summary to educate them on their potential aid and if corrections would be necessary.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Providing Language Support for Families

- “We provided and guaranteed translators at all the events to help our families that speak Spanish. All our presentations and communications sent out were also translated to Spanish.” (Provo High, 2024)
- “We had a translator at our FAFSA Night so that Spanish-speaking families could get the best support possible.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “Any webinar or email we got in Spanish, we made sure to send it out to our families.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)

Supporting Parents without Social Security Numbers

- “We noticed that our parents without Social Security Numbers had difficulty creating their StudentAid.Gov accounts. We supported the students in getting as far with the FAFSA as possible and supported their parent(s) with emails and webinars during the following months when FAFSA had worked through its issues.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “The parents that had specific issues with the StudentAid.Gov account due to their Social Security Numbers were individually contacted so that we could see their progress and ask if they needed support.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “We reached out to first-generation students or those students whose parents may not have Social Security Numbers to help them create accounts and troubleshoot issues.” (Hunter High, 2024)



Supporting Students without Social Security Numbers

- “I personally worked to add each school's HB 144 application process to the page for every public university in Utah. This way, if students didn't feel comfortable disclosing their immigration status, they could still access that information.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “For students without Social Security Numbers, I helped them fill out the HB 144 form. I had a couple of students who told me their parents don't speak English, so I sent them the FAFSA instructions in Spanish.” (Hurricane High, 2024)
- “For students without Social Security Numbers, we provided information on HB 144 and alternative financial aid and scholarship opportunities.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Tracking FAFSA Data

- “I keep track of the senior's FAFSA status. I track who hasn't started the FAFSA, students who have created their StudentAid.Gov account, FAFSAs that are in progress, submitted FAFSAs, and students who aren't filing a FAFSA.” (Hurricane High, 2024)
- “We tracked our data this year, in addition to the FAFSA Survey provided by USHE, to see who was attending. This informed us of issues students and parents encountered, and then we could follow up.” (Taylorsville High, 2024)
- “We maintained a comprehensive list of over 50 students who had manually submitted the form and ensured they could resubmit correctly. We also kept track of students who couldn't submit due to their parents' having account creation issues and supported them individually.” (Granger High, 2024)

Tracking Student Progress During Events

- “By tracking our FAFSA completion ourselves, we used a sign-out sheet for students during both UCAW and FAFSA nights, where students let us know if or asked how they need to follow up on both FAFSA and college applications.” (Taylorsville High, 2024)

Conducting Surveys throughout the School Year

- “We created a mid-year survey for seniors to fill out, which showed if they submitted the FAFSA or not.” (Hunter High, 2024)
- “We conducted a spring senior survey with questions about FAFSA submissions: Have they created a StudentAid.Gov account? Have they submitted the FAFSA? Do they have any questions, or would they like any help with their FAFSA?” (Skyridge High, FAFSA Cup Runner-Up, 2024)
- “I sent out a Google Form at the beginning of April asking students if they were able to complete the FAFSA, along with other questions about scholarships they received.” (Snow Canyon High, 2024)



Conducting Surveys through Text Messaging

- “I sent out FAFSA follow-up texts every two weeks to parents and students to see who needed help with their FAFSA, and I was able to collect data on who has and has not completed the FAFSA.” (Payson High, 2024)
- “I sent out texts to check where students were with the FAFSA. I received good responses when I sent out text messages.” (Snow Canyon High, 2024)
- “Following up with students has been crucial. We used SMS messaging to send messages requesting parents to reply with a number correlated to their FAFSA progress. For example, 1=processed, 2=submitted, 3=in progress, 4=StudentAid.Gov account created, 5=needs help, and 6=not filing. This allowed us to follow up with those parents who had not submitted it yet.” (Hunter High, 2024)

Adding FAFSA Questions to Senior Exit Surveys or End of Year Surveys

- “We also included a question regarding FAFSA in the required senior exit survey that has to be done to be cleared for graduation.” (Provo High, 2024)
- “We added FAFSA completion to the mandatory senior end-of-year survey.” (Uintah High, 2024)

Targeted Follow-Up Strategies for FAFSA Applicants

FAFSA Events Follow-Up

- “During our FAFSA night, if students encountered challenges with the application, we created a shared document where the support team and I listed the names of those students. This allowed me to identify who needed a follow-up in the coming week to provide additional assistance with their FAFSA application.” (Green Canyon High, FAFSA Cup Winner, 2024)
- “We made sure to follow up with our FAFSA night families bi-weekly to see where they were in the process and if the FAFSA updates allowed them to proceed.” (Salt Lake Center for Science Education, 2024)
- “We had a sign-out form at our FAFSA nights that asked a couple of questions. It asked if the family could complete the form, including the parent section, fully. With this information, we were able to schedule follow-up meetings.” (Payson High, 2024)

Ongoing Outreach to Help Students Start or Finish the FAFSA

- “Our follow-up assistance is keeping a list of students having issues with the FAFSA or who have started it but are not finished. I follow up with these students occasionally through meetings or calling home to see how things are going or how I can help. Many families follow up with me multiple times to work through FAFSA glitch issues.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)
- “For the students who haven't started the FAFSA, I have sent them texts and emails about how to create a StudentAid.Gov account. I have also called some of those students down, but most of them don't know their Social Security Number. For the students who have created their StudentAid.Gov account, I have been calling them down to help them with the student portion of



their FAFSA, explaining how their parents need to fill out the parent portion, and sending their parents an email as well. For the students who have completed their FAFSA, I congratulate them via email, and I let them know that if they have any other questions, they are free to reach out.” (Hurricane High, 2024)

- “For students who have submitted their FAFSA, we regularly provide updates on the status of their application and offer assistance with any additional documentation required. For students who have yet to submit their FAFSA, we employ targeted outreach methods, including personalized emails, phone calls, and in-person meetings, to remind and encourage them to complete the application.” (Park City High, 2024)
- “We have continually called down the seniors who still don't have a FAFSA submitted to get an update on whether or not they are planning on submitting a FAFSA. If they say they aren't, we get to the bottom of why and try to encourage them as much as possible.” (Provo High, 2024)
- “We would make a plan with the student to follow up about once a week (until the issue is resolved), having the student update us if there are any changes.” (East High, 2024)
- “For those who were not able to get their FAFSA fixed during our advisory class, I have been calling them down for assistance.” (East High, 2024)
- “I would follow up with students by calling them down from class, and if I weren't able to reach them in person, I would reach out with a text to check in and see if they needed help.” (Snow Canyon High, 2024)
- “Individual appointments are ongoing; our seniors have been informed that they can connect with us during the summer via the texting platform we use.” (Wasatch High, GEAR UP Utah – Region 10, 2024)

Involve School Resources and Other Teams to Assist in Follow-Up

- “Our teen center has done a phenomenal job of following up with their students who are homeless/at risk of homelessness to ensure everything goes well and that required FAFSA verification documentation is provided to the colleges.” (Clearfield High, FAFSA Cup Third-Place Winner, 2024)

Providing Follow-Up Support Post FAFSA Completion

- “If I am in a 1:1 meeting with a student and they tell me that they have completed their FAFSA, I review their financial aid summary and explain the difference between a loan and the Pell Grant. If they have an error on their form, I look at the error and show the student how to fix it.” (Hurricane High, 2024)
- “Counselors, GEAR UP, and College Advising all assisted with FAFSA corrections and made several announcements on various platforms announcing that they had been made available.” (Hunter High, 2024)
- “As schools started sending out offer letters from FAFSA, we would call down students or encourage them to make appointments to review those offer letters and see how much aid they were offered.” (Hunter High, 2024)

