

WELCOME!

- Your microphone will be muted throughout the workshop; You may choose to have your video on or off.
- **Please Rename yourself as follows:** **First Last – Institution Name** *very important for ACT 48*
- **If you have questions for the panelists**
 - Please type them in the Chat area. Any not answered during the presentation will be answered at the end if time allows.
- **Evaluation and PowerPoint:** will be in the Chat area at the **end** of the presentation.
- **This workshop will be recorded.** Link will be available in the Members section of the PACAC website.

**Any attendee who completes the entire workshop today will receive a Certificate of Completion via email within a week and more information on ACT 48 credits. **



Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling

**Professional
Development,
Collaboration,
Advocacy, Support,
and Friendship**





As with all PACAC Presentations, the inclusion of any presenter or content is not an endorsement by PACAC or any of its representatives.





Financial Aid

Helping Students Navigate the Financial Aid Process

Presenters

Emi Alvarez, M.Ed

Millersville University, Director of Financial Aid

Tiffanie DeVan

PHEAA, Higher Education Access Partner



Our Discussion

- What's New
- Understanding the Basics
- Covering the Costs
- Federal & State Aid Programs
- The Application Process
- Forms are filed...What's Next?
- Resources



What's New for the 2025–26 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)

2025-26 FAFSA® Updates:

- Beta testing underway for the 2025-26 FAFSA form
 - 14,000+ students successfully completed form
 - No major issues to date
 - Expanded Beta 4 testing open to all interested students & families
 - December 1, 2024 – full launch to all users
- Improved help text and features throughout the site
- Fixes/workarounds implemented to remove issues with the 2024-25 FAFSA
- Expanded “Who’s My Parent” Wizard
- Stay up to date at
 - [FAFSA.gov/beta](https://fafsa.gov/beta)
 - fsatraining.ed.gov



Understanding the Basics

Get the Word Out!

- What is financial aid & how does it help your students?
- Students should know what the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) is and WHY they should complete the form.
- Assistance is available!



How Can Counselors Assist?

- Encourage students to **prepare now for the future they want**
 - Educationplanner.org
 - MySmartBorrowing.org
 - Collegecost.ed.gov
- Research options: Career exploration, school choice, etc.
- Prepare for tests & identify key deadlines: SAT, ACT, ASVAB, school & financial aid deadlines
- Reinforce how choices may affect future/career
 - Course selection
 - **Meeting deadlines**
 - Social media/behavior
- Self Advocacy
- Reinforce Financial Aid options



How Can Counselors Assist?

Stay alert for students facing challenges:

- Sometimes hard to identify (stigma, fear, etc.)
- Have trouble completing admission & financial aid paperwork
 - Confusing definitions: foster care, ward of the court & homelessness, student aid index, etc.
 - Difficulty acquiring/securing required documentation
- Language barriers
 - FAFSA form and resources available in English & Spanish
 - 2025-26 FAFSA expanded translation services
- Encourage research for Adequate Post-Secondary Support & Resources
 - Food and Housing insecurity when campus is closed
 - Mental and emotional support
 - Campus & Community-based resources



Covering the Costs

Apply for financial
aid & Exhaust FREE
options first!!

Various Ways to Pay

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- Federal & State Grants
- Private scholarships
- Job/work-study
- 529 College Saving Plans
- U Promise credits
- Family savings
- Tuition Payment Plans
- Federal Direct Student Loans
- Federal Direct PLUS Loans
- Private Education Loans
- Institutional Loans
- Employers' tuition reimbursement programs



Who is eligible for Financial Aid?

Eligibility Criteria may apply to receive/maintain financial aid:

- Be a US Citizen or Eligible Non-Citizen.
- Complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**.
 - Students need a valid Social Security Number, but their parents do not.
 - Provide consent & approval for federal tax information to transfer into FAFSA® form and be shared
- Earned High School Diploma or equivalent.
- Enroll as regular student in an eligible degree or certificate program.
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) while attending school.

Keep in Mind:

- Financial need required for some aid
- Additional criteria may be required based on type and source of aid



Types of Financial Aid

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Grants: Free Money (based on financial need)



Scholarships: Free Money (based on merit/select criteria or need)



Work Study: Earned Income



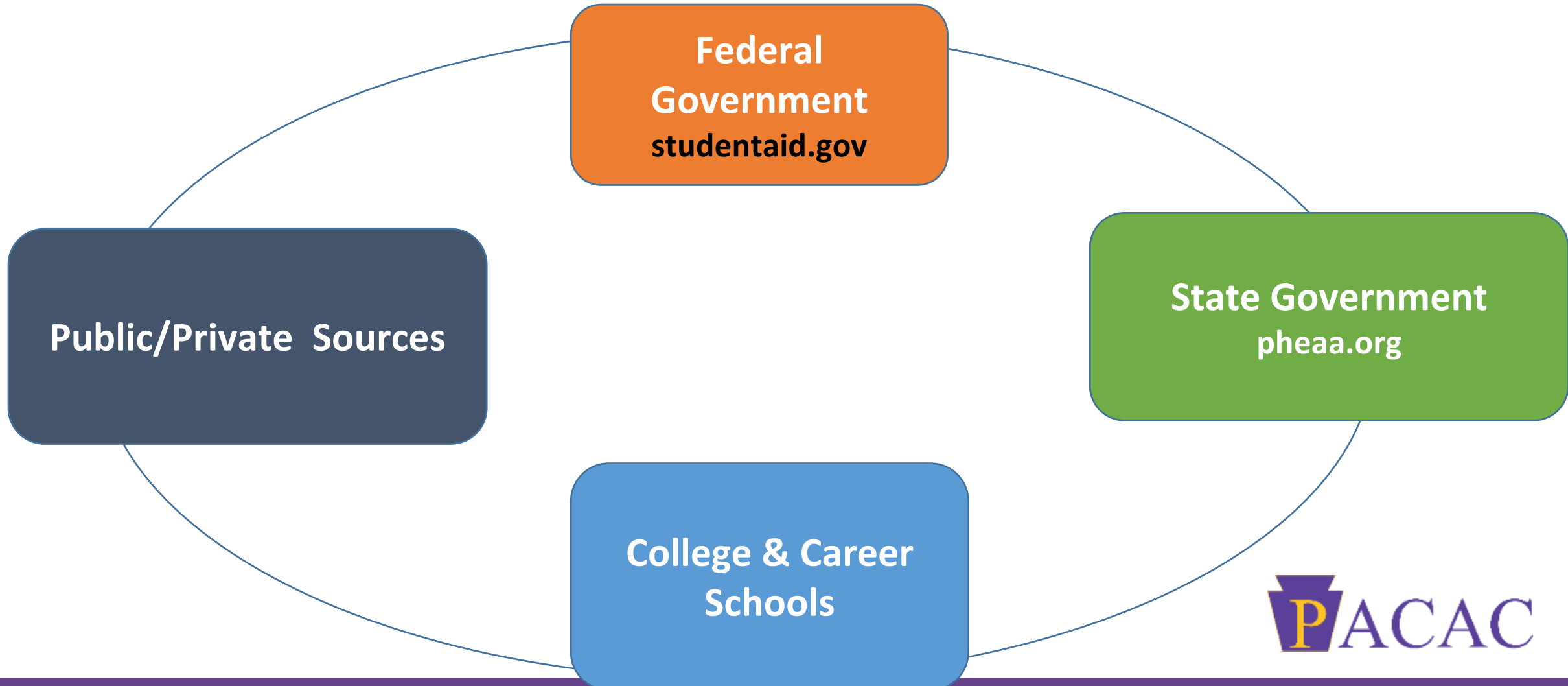
Student Loans: Borrowed money that must be repaid



Additional sources: 529 plans, tuition payment plans, savings, etc.

Sources of Financial Aid


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Scholarships

There is something for everyone!

Don't miss out on FREE money!

- Start Early and Search Often
 - Use free scholarship search sites
 - Create an Academic Resume:
 - Academic success
 - Extra Curricular Activities
 - Community Involvement/Volunteerism
 - Don't shy away from essays!
 - Secure Letter of Recommendations early
 - **Pay attention to deadlines and understand the terms**
- 

- ✓ Appily.com
- ✓ BigFuture.Collegeboard.org
- ✓ Chegg.com
- ✓ CollegeAnswer.com
- ✓ CollegeNet.com
- ✓ DoSomething.org/Scholarships
- ✓ FastWeb.com
- ✓ Goingmerry.com
- ✓ Hbcuconnect.com
- ✓ Internationalscholarships.com
- ✓ www.iefaf.org
- ✓ thepasshefoundation.com
- ✓ Raise.me
- ✓ Wwww.sacfoundation.com
- ✓ ScholarshipExperts.com
- ✓ Wwww.sacfoundation.com
- ✓ Tfec.org
- ✓ Uncf.org
- ✓ Unigo.com



Federal & PA State Aid Programs



Federal Student Aid Programs



MUST SUBMIT
FAFSA®

Federal Program	Program Details
Pell Grant	Awarded to undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	Awarded to undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need
Federal Work-Study	Provides jobs for students with financial need, to earn money to help pay school expenses
TEACH	For students who are enrolled in programs designed to prepare them to teach in a high-need field at the elementary or secondary school level
Direct Loan	Federal student loan to help cover school expenses (must be repaid)
Direct PLUS Loan	Federal <u>parent</u> or graduate student loan to help cover school expenses (must be repaid)

Visit studentaid.gov for additional details on Federal student aid

Student Loans

Loans can help cover educational expenses not met by scholarships or grants. Federal Direct Loans are guaranteed to students with a completed FAFSA. Additional federal and private loans options are available, but they require separate application and approval.

Federal Loans:

Offer low, fixed interest rates and flexible repayment options. Repayment begins 6 months after student graduates or drop below ½ time enrollment.

- **Subsidized Federal Student Loan** *(Interest free while enrolled at least ½ time.)*
- **Unsubsidized Federal Student Loan** *(Low, fixed interest rate.)*
- **Federal PLUS Loan** *(Fixed interest rate loan in the parent's name.)*

Private Loans:

Variable & fixed interest rates are available, and repayment options vary by lender.

- **Private Student Loans** *(In the student's name, requires a credit-worthy co-signer.)*
- **Private Parent Loans** *(Any credit-worthy borrower allowed.)*

Be a Smart Borrower

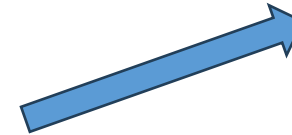


A free tool for calculating an affordable future

Encourage students to research student loan options BEFORE they borrow:

Students should always:

- Exhaust all free financial aid options before borrowing student loans
- Seek federal student loans before private student loans
- Only borrow the amount needed (loans must be repaid)



1 Select a Career

3 Factor in Savings

2 Select a School

4 Get Results

MySmartBorrowing.org: An interactive, online tool created by PHEAA that helps students and families:

- Estimate career, salaries & college tuition
- View the impact of savings on overall cost
- Calculate loan repayment
- Avoid borrowing too much money





PA State Grant Program

- Maximum awards based on:
 - Available funding
 - School costs & location
 - Student's status (f/t or h/t)
 - Approved program of study
- PA State Grant Application Process
 - Complete FAFSA
 - Look for email from noreply@grantus.pheaa.org
 - Activate account
 - Complete PA State Grant & High School Forms

Filing the PA State Grant

Need- based GRANT aid to applicants choosing to attend a PHEAA-approved postsecondary institution

Must complete the **FAFSA** & PA State Grant forms

The FAFSA logo consists of the word 'FAFSA' in large green letters, with 'FederalStudentAid' in smaller green letters below it, and 'An office of the U.S. Department of Education' in even smaller black letters at the bottom.

FAFSA
FederalStudentAid
An office of the U.S. Department of Education

Creating affordable access to hig



PA Special Programs administered by PHEAA

Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling

- PA Active Volunteer Tuition and Loan Assistance (Active Volunteer) Program – New!!
- PA Blind or Deaf Higher Education Beneficiary Grant
- Chafee Education and Training Grant Program– co-administered with the PA Department of Human Services
- PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program (FosterEd)
- PA Mental Health Education Learning Program in Schools (PA HELPS) - NEW!!
- Military College Educational Assistance Program – New!!
- PA National Guard Educational Assistance Grant (EAP)
- PA National Guard Military Family Education Program (MFEP)
- PA Postsecondary Educational Gratuities Program (PEGP)
- PA Partnerships for Access to Higher Education (PATH)
- PA State Work-Study - job related to major
- PA Student Loan Relief for Nurses (SLRN) Program
- PA Targeted Industry Program (PA –TIP)
- PA Ready to Succeed Scholarship (RTSS)
- Student Teacher Support Program – NEW!!

For details: visit [PHEAA.org](https://www.pheaa.org)



The Application Process

The Process to Apply for Financial Aid

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Create a StudentAid.gov Account (FSA ID username & password)

Complete the 2025–26 FAFSA® and PA State Grant Forms

Communicate Special Circumstances to College & Career School as well as PHEAA

Review & Compare Financial Aid Offers

Complete Financial Aid Requirements

Create StudentAid.gov Accounts

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All required contributors must have a StudentAid.gov account to:

- Start the FAFSA® form online
- Electronically sign & submit the FAFSA
- Apply for a federal student loan
- Review federal student aid received
 - Parents- If married and filed a joint return, only one needs an account.
 - <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account>
- Create at least 3- 4 days prior to completing the FAFSA.
- Users without an SSN will be able to acquire a StudentAid.gov Account.
- Do not share username and password

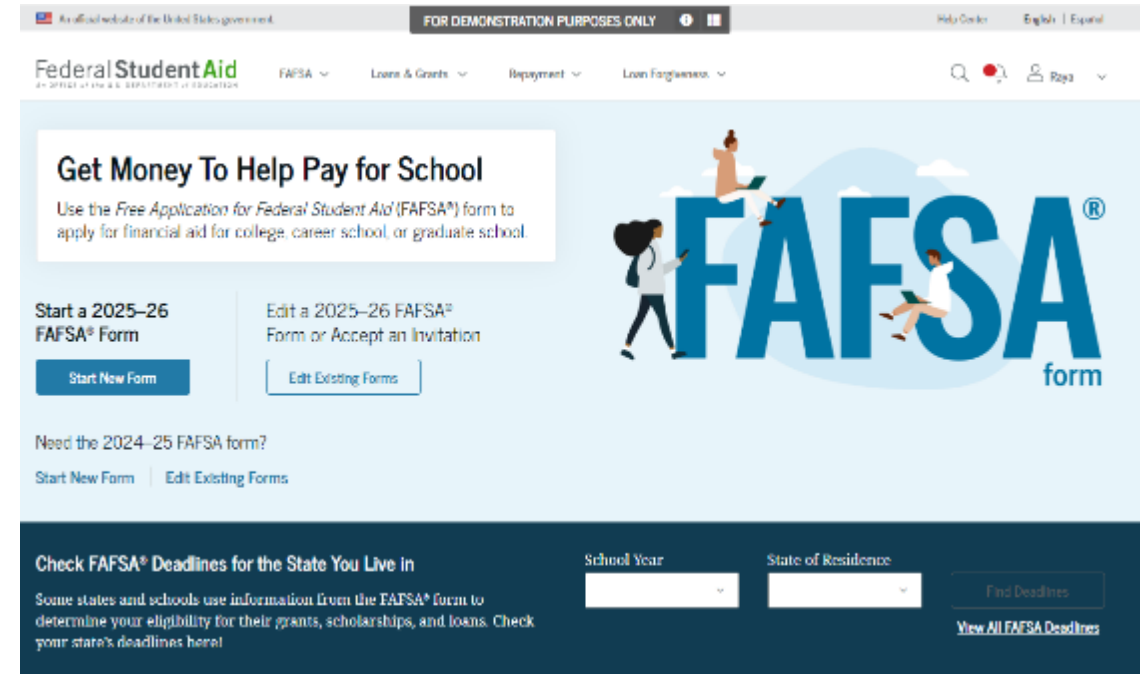


Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)

FAFSA® - primary federal form used to determine financial aid eligibility for:

- Federal & State Aid
 - School Aid
 - Some scholarship programs
 - File annually (beginning Sr. year in high school)
-
- File online: fast, secure, skip logic & built-in edits
 - Provide consent & approval
 - Help center & tools to assist
 - Available in English & Spanish

2025-26 FAFSA® - Available by December 2024



The screenshot shows the official FAFSA website. At the top, it says 'An official website of the United States government' and 'FOR DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY'. The main header includes 'FederalStudentAid' and navigation links for 'FAFSA', 'Loans & Grants', 'Repayment', and 'Loan Forgiveness'. A large banner on the right features the 'FAFSA form' logo with an illustration of students. The main content area has a section titled 'Get Money To Help Pay for School' with a description of the FAFSA form. Below this, there are buttons to 'Start a 2025-26 FAFSA Form' and 'Edit a 2025-26 FAFSA Form or Accept an invitation'. A section for 'Need the 2024-25 FAFSA form?' also has 'Start New Form' and 'Edit Existing Forms' buttons. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Check FAFSA Deadlines for the State You Live in' with dropdown menus for 'School Year' and 'State of Residence', and a 'Find Deadlines' button.



Key Sections on the 25-26 FAFSA®

- Student completes all sections
- Contributors (parents) complete three sections:
 - Demographics
 - Financials
 - Signature
- After all required data has been provided and all sections have been signed, the student or contributor can submit the FAFSA form



Personal Circumstances

Demographics

Financials

Colleges

Signature

Whose Information is reported on the 2025-26 FAFSA®?

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Student's parent(s)/ contributors must provide information on the FAFSA, unless the student has been deemed independent.

Independent Students are:

- 24 or older on Jan 1st of award year
- Veteran (includes active-duty personnel)
- Working on graduate degree
- Emancipated minor in legal guardianship
- Orphan, in foster care, or ward of the court at anytime when student was age 13 or older
- Have legal dependents other than spouse
- Student deemed homeless by proper authority



What if the student cannot provide parent's information on the FAFSA & PA State Grant forms?



Forms are Filed...What's Next?

Financial Aid Offers

Encourage students to review aid offers carefully

- Notices vary amongst schools
- Sent to students who have applied and been accepted to the school
- Presented by the school(s) and typically includes:
 - Types and amounts of aid
 - Source of aid (federal, state or school)
 - Student's rights and responsibilities & academic requirements
 - Explains what must be done to accept or reject aid
- Contact the school's FA office with questions

Bottom Line: What are your out-of-pocket costs?

SAMPLE UNIVERSITY

Dear Joe Sample:

GENERAL INFORMATION
The Office of University Financial Aid has prepared this statement using the following criteria:

Academic Level: Undergraduate Freshman
Dependency Status: Dependent
College: Undergraduate
Major/Program of Study: Non-Declared Major
Housing Category: On-Campus Housing

ESTIMATED COST OF ATTENDANCE:

Tuition and fees:	\$55,000
Housing and meals:	\$39,000
Books and supplies:	\$13,000
Personal and miscellaneous:	\$ 1,000
	\$ 2,000

AWARD

Description	Fall	Spring	Total	Accepted Y/N
1 President's Scholarship				
Federal Pell Grant	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$20,000.00	Y/N
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	\$600.00	\$600.00	\$1,200.00	Y/N
2 State Scholarship	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	Y/N
3 Federal Work-Study (FWS)	\$450.00	\$450.00	\$900.00	Y/N
Federal Perkins Loan	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$3,000.00	Y/N
Federal Stafford Loan – Subsidized	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00	\$2,500.00	Y/N
Federal Stafford Loan – Unsubsidized	\$1,750.00	\$1,750.00	\$3,500.00	Y/N
	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,000.00	Y/N
Total:	\$34,100.00			

If any of the information in the table above is incorrect, please contact the Office of Financial Aid in writing or via the Ask the Counselor service.

Office of University Financial Aid
Sample University, 199 State Street, 4th Floor, City, MA 02009
800.555.1212 www.sampleuniversity.edu

Net Price

Net Price is the amount that a student pays to attend an institution in a single academic year AFTER subtracting scholarships and grants the student receives.

Net Price Calculators

- Available at **collegecost.ed.gov/net-price** →
- All schools must have a net price calculator on their school's website
- Use the Net Price Calculators to determine your bottom-line.



Cost of Attendance

The Cost of Attendance (COA) is essentially the advertised price of a college or career school for an academic year. It includes the direct charges billed to the student as well as possible indirect expenses that a student may incur.

It is not the amount a student will owe to the school.

Direct Charges

Tuition & Fees

Housing &
Food (Meal
Plan)*



Indirect Expenses

Books

Transportation

Personal
Expenses

Complete FA Requirements

After completing the FAFSA students may need to submit additional information to their school to complete the process and finalize their financial aid.

Financial Aid offices will ask students for additional information, if necessary. In some cases, they will not be able to send a Financial Aid Offer until all items have been received.

Types of Potential Financial Aid Requirements:

- Verification of information provided on FAFSA
 - Tax/asset information, household size, marital status, etc.
 - Proof of citizenship, legal name, date of birth, or social security number
 - Proof of homelessness, legal guardianship, foster care, etc.
- Complete Terms & Conditions of Awards
- Accept Financial Aid Offer (Federal Student Loans)
- Complete Loan Entrance Counseling & Master Promissory Note



Final Thoughts: How Counselors can Help

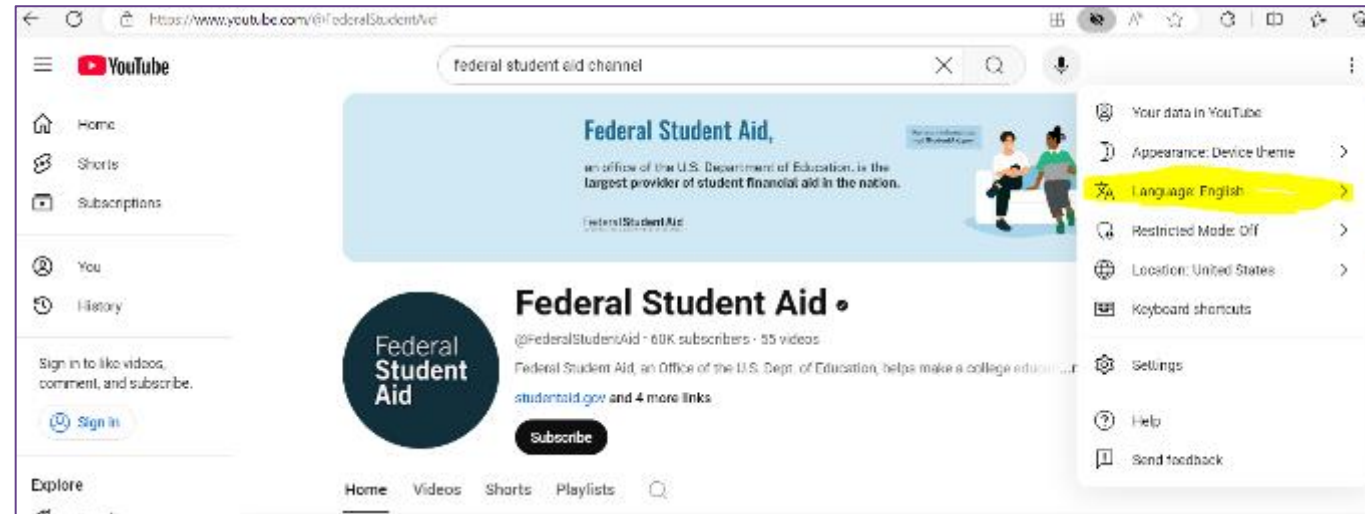
- Start the Financial Aid process **early!** The FAFSA expected to open in **December 2024**.
- Contributors, parents, guardians, mentors, teachers; **involve your student** in the entire process.
- Get prepared and **create your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID** now!
- **Students, check your e-mail!** Colleges will be sending you important information so be sure to stay on top of communications.
- **Stay organized** and know your deadlines.
- **Apply** for external scholarships.
- **Develop a plan to pay** – not just this year, but **every year!**
- **Build a relationship** with your financial aid office.
- Attend a Financial Aid Night or FAFSA Completion Workshop at a local High School, postsecondary school or community organization
- Reduce the need for financial aid
 - Graduate on time
 - Take summer courses at a cheaper school, if possible
 - Understand the impact of changing majors & transferring schools
- **Ask for assistance- it's available!**

Resources

Need assistance with the FAFSA?

Federal Student Aid Information Center

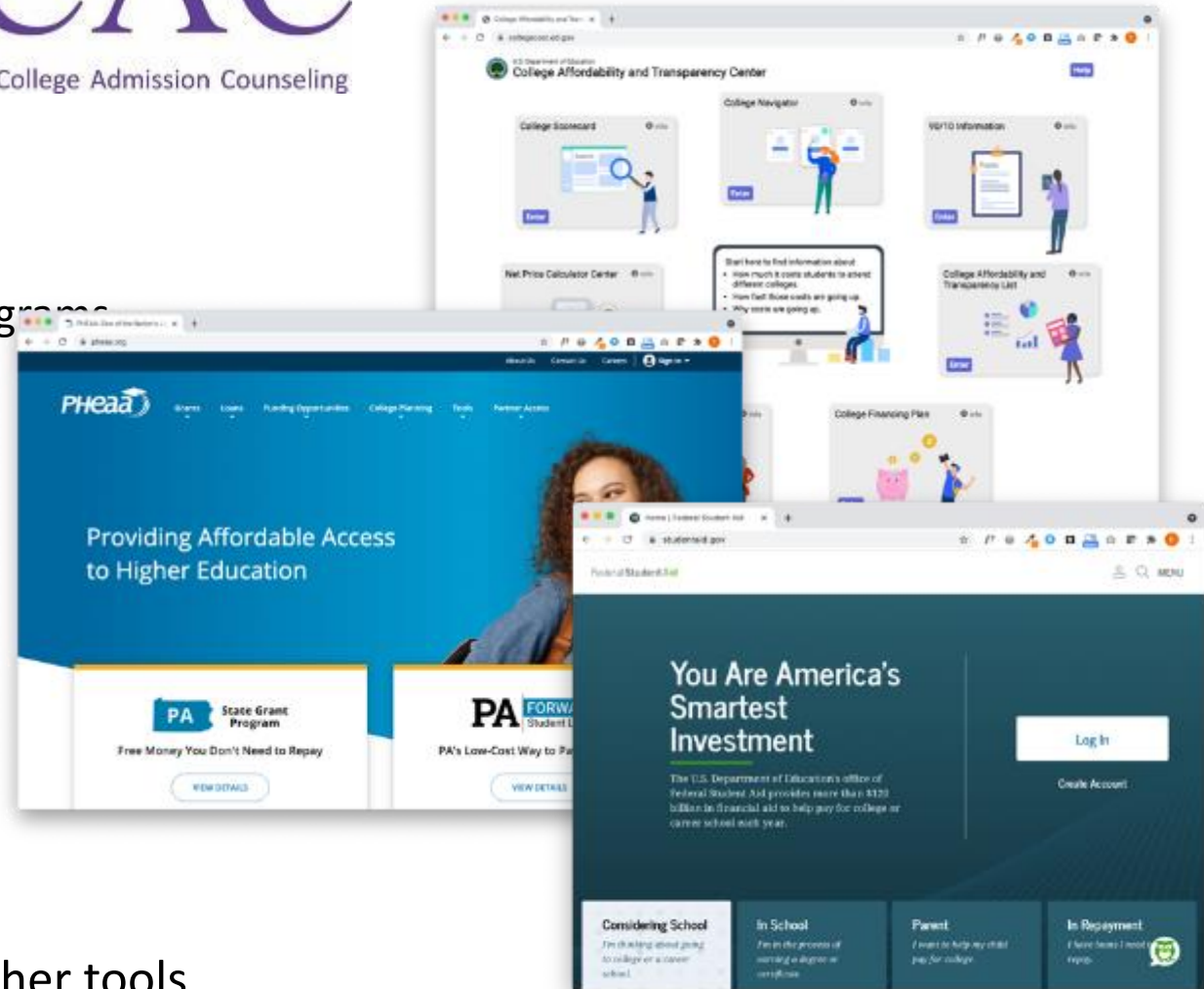
- Email, call or chat with customer service agents
- Phone: 800-433-3242 (800-4-FED AID)
- Website [Studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- YouTube – [Federal Student Aid Channel](https://www.youtube.com/@FederalStudentAid)
- Financial aid offices
- Attend a FAFSA Completion Workshop
 - Visit PHEAA.org for additional sessions



Resources

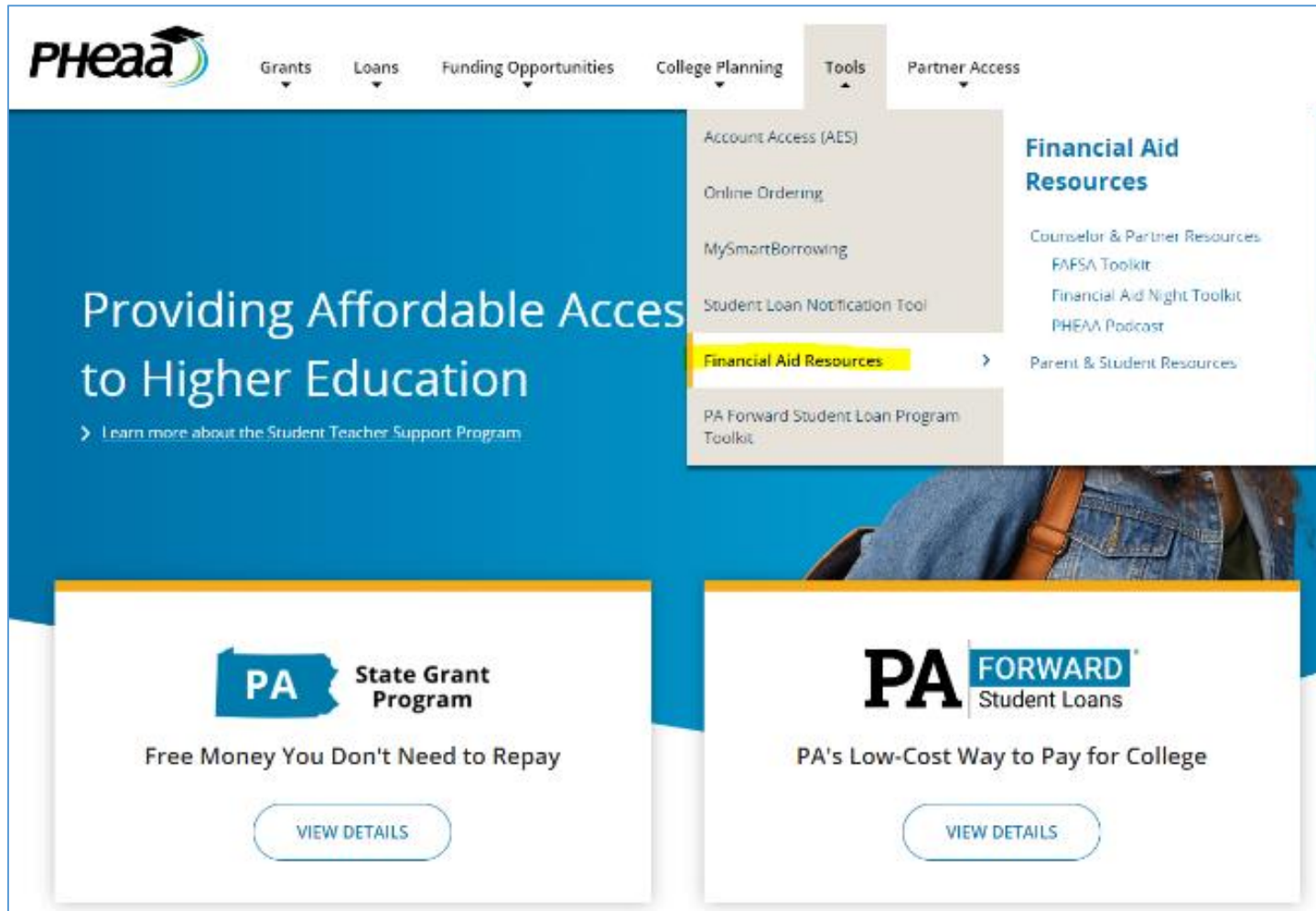


- financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov
- **studentaid.gov**
 - Learn more about the FAFSA® and other federal aid programs
 - 1-800-433-3243
- **PHEAA.org**
 - Learn more about aid for PA residents & students
 - MySmartBorrowing.org – Compare college costs
 - EducationPlanner.org –college & career planning
 - Youcandealwithit.com – financial literacy education
 - PHEAA.org/Virtual - webinars
- PA529.com – PA college savings plans
- MyNextMove.org– Research career earnings
- collegecost.ed.gov – Explore net price calculators & other tools
- Visit websites of college & career schools of interest



PHEAA Resources for Counselors and Partners

Pheaa.org → TOOLS → FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES



The screenshot shows the PHEAA website with a navigation bar containing links for Grants, Loans, Funding Opportunities, College Planning, Tools, and Partner Access. The 'Tools' menu is open, displaying a list of resources: Account Access (AES), Online Ordering, MySmartBorrowing, Student Loan Notification Tool, Financial Aid Resources (highlighted with a yellow bar and a right arrow), and PA Forward Student Loan Program Toolkit. To the right of this menu, under the heading 'Financial Aid Resources', are links for Counselor & Partner Resources (FAPSA Toolkit, Financial Aid Night Toolkit, PHEAA Podcast) and Parent & Student Resources. The main banner features the PHEAA logo and the text 'Providing Affordable Access to Higher Education' with a link to 'Learn more about the Student Teacher Support Program'. Below the banner are two promotional boxes: 'PA State Grant Program' with the tagline 'Free Money You Don't Need to Repay' and a 'VIEW DETAILS' button, and 'PA FORWARD Student Loans' with the tagline 'PA's Low-Cost Way to Pay for College' and a 'VIEW DETAILS' button.

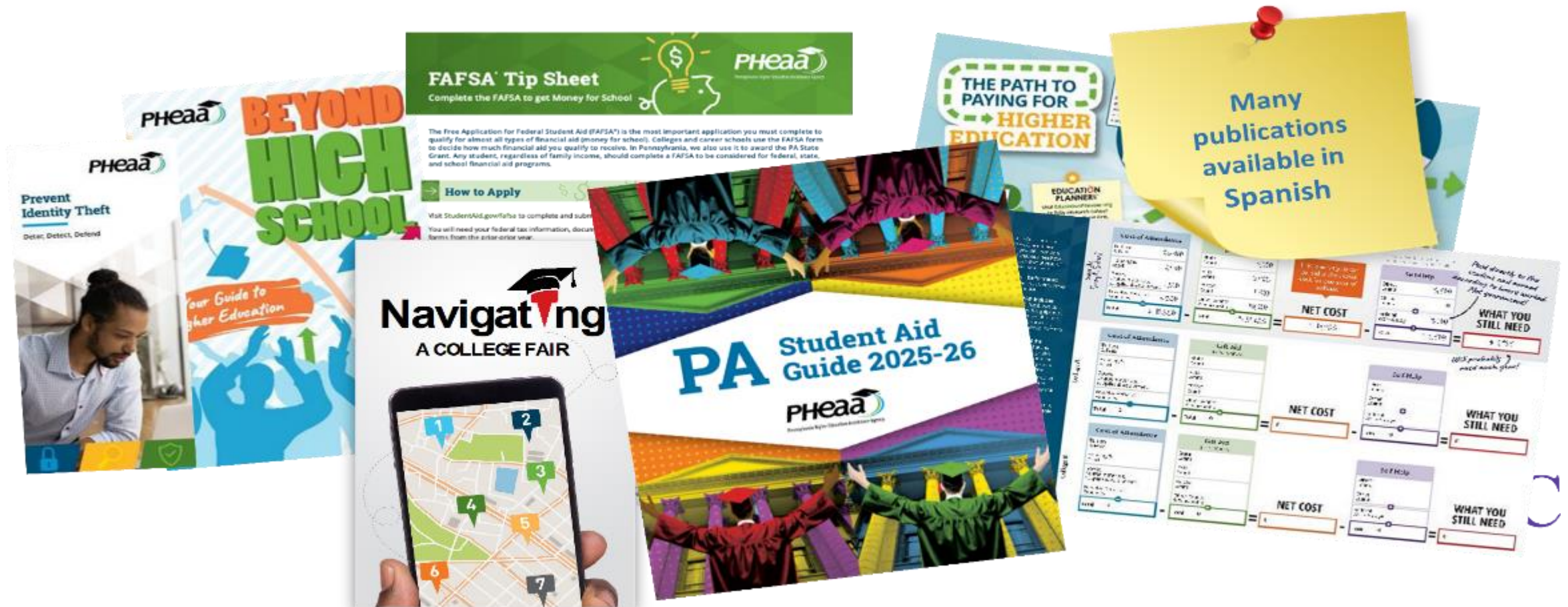
- Questions or concerns ?

Scan QR code to contact the
Higher Education Access Partner
in your region.



PHEAA Publications

PHEAA offers a large variety of materials that are **free** to order at PHEAA.org/order-online.





Thank You for Joining!

Please use the **Evaluation**** link in the Chat area to complete the short survey.**

Slides and a recording of this session will be available on the PACAC Website within about a week

Keep an eye out in your email for future date announcements on upcoming presentations.

<https://pacac.memberclicks.net/online-workshops>

