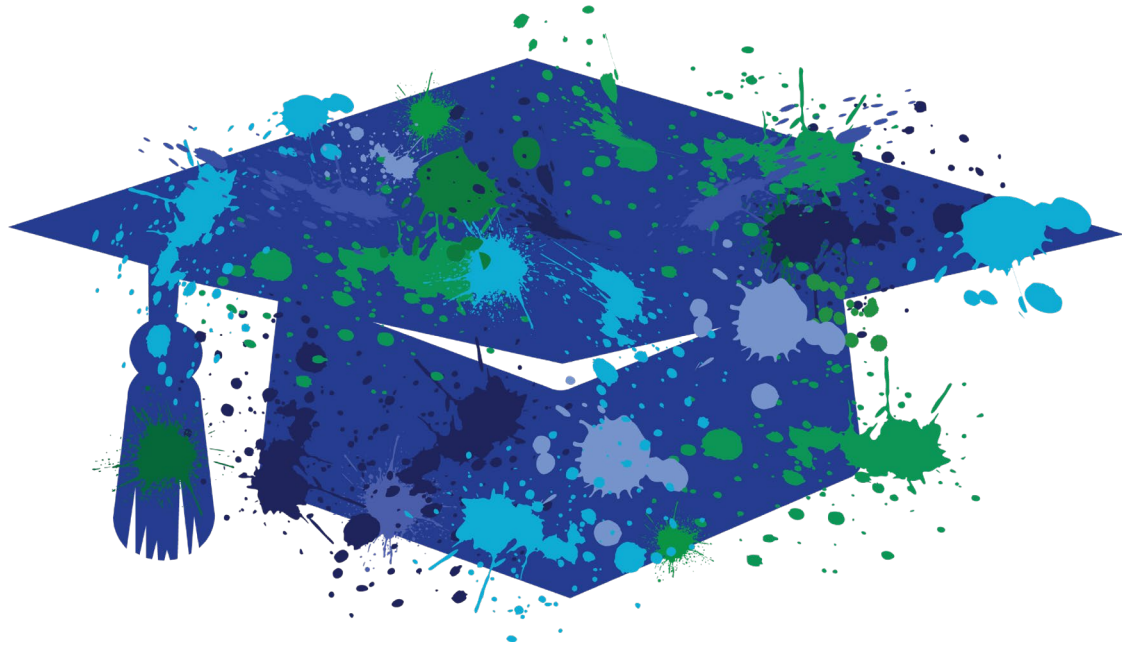




BOOSTING FAFSA COMPLETION

TIPS, TOOLS, AND TEAMWORK

RACHEL FAIRCHILD & LETHA HUDDLESTON
OKLAHOMA COLLEGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MARCH 10, 2026



OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

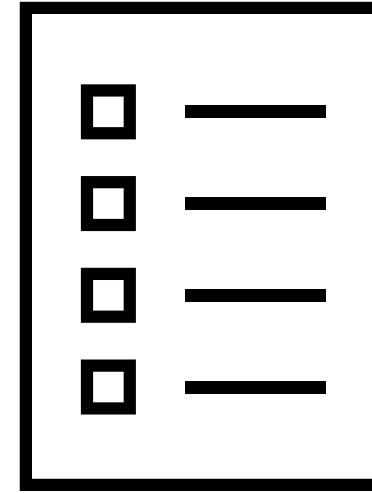
Improving our future by degrees

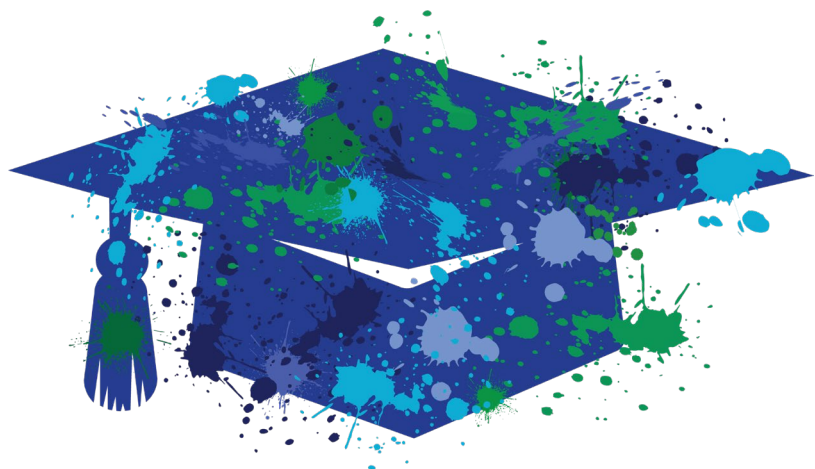


OCAPTM

Oklahoma College Assistance Program

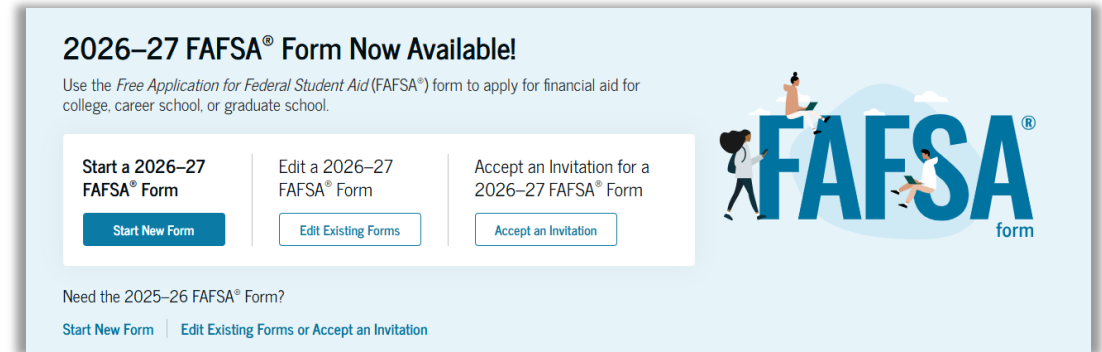
- FAFSA Facts
- FAFSA Challenges
- FAFSA Event Success
- Tools and Resources
- Brainstorming Activity
- Ideas and Questions





FAFSA Facts

- Used to determine student eligibility for federal and state student aid
 - Grants
 - Work-study program
 - Student loans
 - Parent loans



- Often requested for scholarships
- Now required for high school graduation in Oklahoma

Why FAFSA Matters

- Immediate match with Social Security Administration. Users may create account and complete FAFSA during same session
- Reduced required fields from 23 to 12, including removal of challenge questions
- Moved most critical questions to the beginning
- Immediate verification of email address and phone number (cannot create account without access to personal email)

Create an Account

Tell Us About Yourself
I certify that the information I'm providing to create an account is true and that I'm the person I claim to be. If I'm not, I must stop and exit this form now. Providing false or misleading information could result in fines, jail time, or both.

First Name

Middle Name *optional*

Last Name

Name Suffix *optional*

Date of Birth
Month Day Year

Social Security Number

What if I don't have a Social Security number? ▾

☐ I agree to Federal Student Aid's [terms and conditions](#)

Continue

Create an Account

Add Your Email Address

Email Address

Continue

Wait, then...

Secure Code Sent

Enter the secure code we sent to your email:
[topstudent@ths.edu](#)

Enter the secure code below:

[Resend code](#)

Didn't receive a code? ▾

Cancel **Continue**

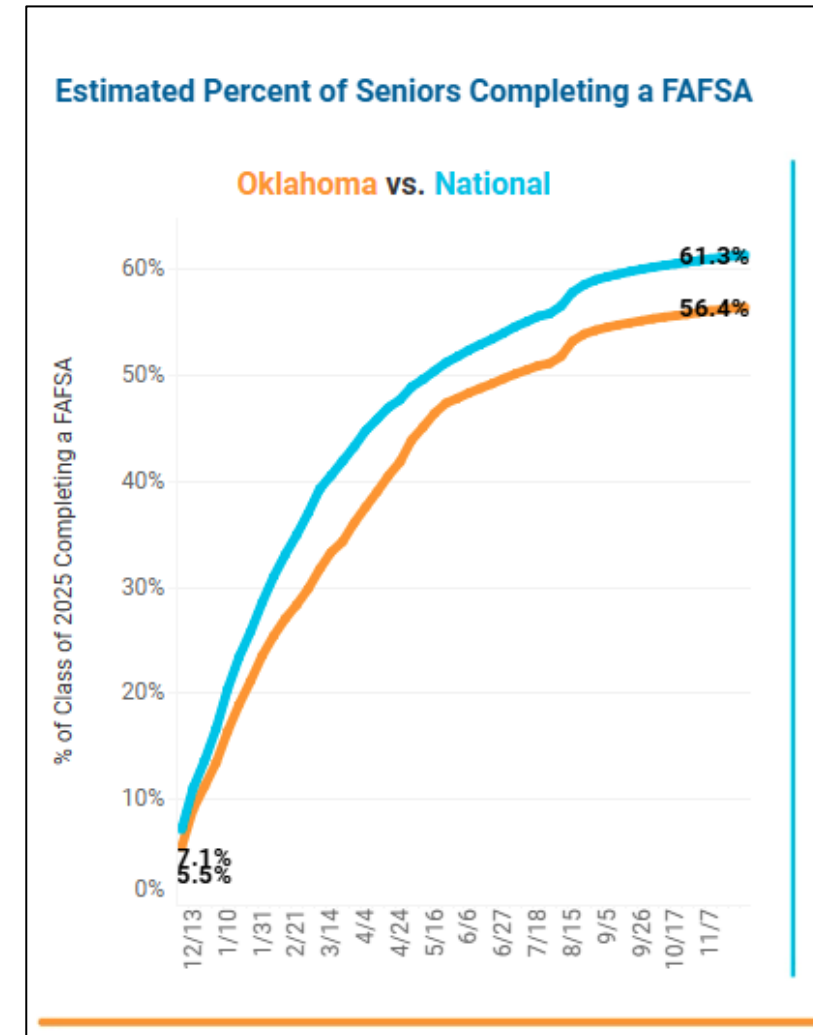
Changes to 2026-27 StudentAid.gov Account

- Invite parent contributor with email address only
- Removed onboarding videos at beginning of application
- Changed wording from Sign student section to **Finish student section**
- Emphasizes parents still need to complete section
- Changed wording to **Finish parent section and submit**

The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2026-27 interface for Student Raya Tran. The progress bar at the top indicates the following steps: Personal Circumstances, Demographics, Financials, Colleges, Contributor Invite (current step, marked with a blue circle and number 5), and Signature (marked with a grey circle and number 6). The main heading is "Invite Your Parent to This FAFSA® Form". Below this, a green box contains the text: "To determine your federal student aid eligibility, we need more information on your household financial situation. You'll need to invite a contributor to provide this information." Below the green box, it says: "As a dependent student, you need to invite a legal parent as a contributor. You only need to invite one parent." A link is provided: "Who counts as a parent on the FAFSA form?". The main form area is titled "Parent" and "Invite a Parent Contributor". It features an "Email" input field with a dropdown arrow and a help icon. At the bottom of the form is a blue "Send Invite" button.

Changes to 2026-27 FAFSA

	Rank	Est. FAFSA Completion % for 2025 Seniors		Rank	Y/Y % Chg (Completions)
Mississippi	1	73.4%	Oklahoma	1	29.7%
New Jersey	2	72.1%	Washington, D.C.	2	23.2%
Tennessee	3	71.3%	Nevada	3	20.8%
Illinois	4	69.7%	Mississippi	4	20.0%
Texas	5	69.2%	Nebraska	5	19.9%
New York	6	68.1%	Alabama	6	19.1%
California	7	67.4%	Vermont	7	18.4%
Massachusetts	8	65.6%	Florida	8	17.9%
Delaware	9	63.0%	Arizona	9	17.7%
Rhode Island	10	63.0%	Texas	10	17.0%
South Carolina	11	63.0%	New Jersey	11	16.7%
Kentucky	12	62.8%	Arkansas	12	16.5%
Georgia	13	62.7%	Michigan	13	16.0%
Connecticut	14	62.6%	Alaska	14	15.5%
Alabama	15	62.5%	North Carolina	15	15.2%
Louisiana	16	61.9%	South Carolina	16	15.2%
Pennsylvania	17	61.6%	Washington	17	15.0%
Michigan	18	61.2%	Indiana	18	14.9%
North Carolina	19	61.2%	Georgia	19	14.8%
Hawaii	20	61.1%	West Virginia	20	14.5%
Nebraska	21	61.1%	Tennessee	21	14.2%
Indiana	22	59.4%	Massachusetts	22	14.2%
Maryland	23	58.9%	Colorado	23	14.1%
Missouri	24	58.8%	Illinois	24	13.9%
Virginia	25	58.1%	Maryland	25	13.9%
West Virginia	26	58.0%	Utah	26	13.7%
Washington, D.C.	27	57.3%	Kentucky	27	13.1%
South Dakota	28	56.7%	New Mexico	28	13.0%
Oklahoma	29	56.4%	Missouri	29	12.7%
Arkansas	30	56.2%	Pennsylvania	30	12.6%
Florida	31	55.4%	South Dakota	31	12.3%



<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/bill.debaun.national.college.access.network/viz/NCANsFAFSATracker-2025-26FAFSACycle/HomePage>

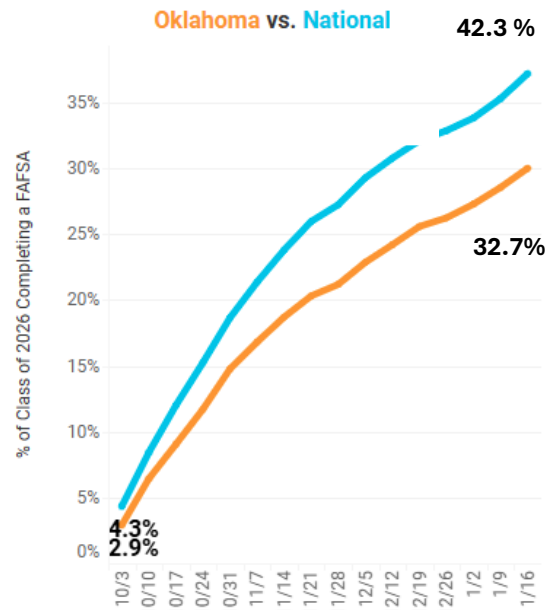
2025-26 FAFSA Completion Results

State Profile: Oklahoma

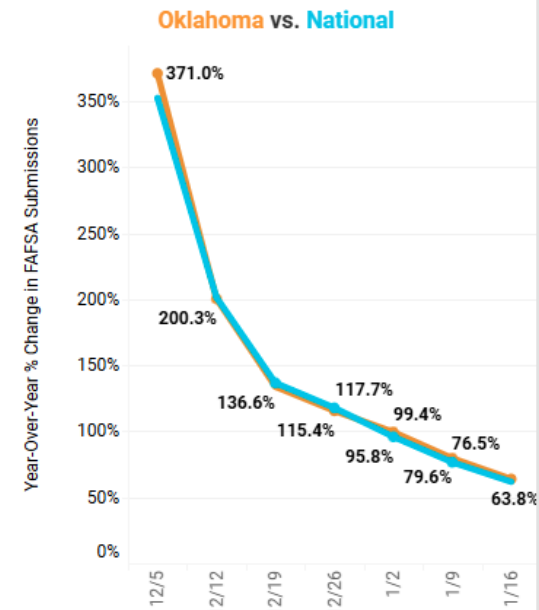
Through **January 30, 2026**, **32.7%** of the **high school class of 2026** in Oklahoma has completed a FAFSA.

There have been **16,983** completions in Oklahoma, a **42.5% change (5,068 completions)** compared to last FAFSA cycle through the same date.

Estimated Percent of Seniors Completing a FAFSA



Year-Over-Year % Change in FAFSA Completions
(compared to Class of 2025)



<https://www.ncan.org/general/custom.asp?page=FAFSAtacker>

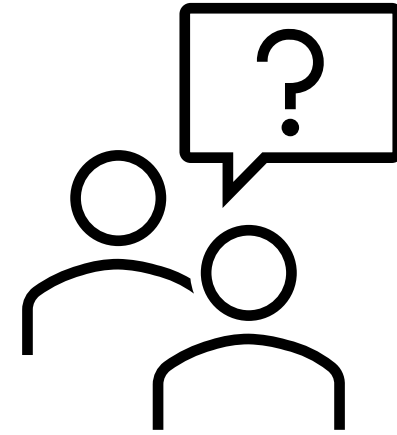
2026-27 FAFSA Completion to Date



FAFSA Challenges

What challenges have you faced with FAFSA events and FAFSA completion?

- Jot down your thoughts on the worksheet
- Share with your table
- Share with the room



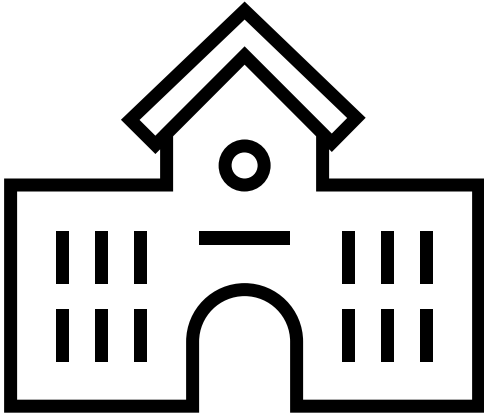


- Difficulty getting parents to events
- Other events overshadow FAFSA night
- Issues requiring assistance from FSA
 - Account creation problems
 - New phone numbers match other accounts (this has been addressed)
- Confusion over FAFSA steps
- Hard to keep track of FAFSA completion
- Students complete their section, but parents don't
- Students choose opt-out before trying FAFSA

FAFSA Challenges List



FAFSA Event Success



- **Change the format**
 - Jenks HS – Offered drop-in individual assistance to students and families during FAFSA days (1 pm to 7 pm) – partnered with OCAP, Tulsa Higher Education Consortium and nearby colleges
- **Schedule during the school day (*while other classes test*)**
 - Porum HS – Held a mandatory senior workday (*after Fall concurrent classes ended and before holidays*). Worked on ICAP, Oklahoma’s Promise applications, and FAFSA
 - Enid HS and Edison HS– Hosted a senior resource day - FAFSA workshop included as one session
 - Santa Fe South – Gave FAFSA presentations during a tutorial hour
- **Offer alternate sessions**
 - Chandler HS – Scheduled drop-in help during school hours and in evening
 - Putnam City North HS – Scheduled multiple FAFSA events
 - Carnegie HS – Worked with seniors during a mid-day session and followed up with parents at a financial aid night two weeks later

- **Combine with other events**

- Elk City HS - Held FAFSA night alongside a mini-college fair
- Laverne HS – Held FAFSA presentation/workshop on conference night

- **Make it a celebration!**

- Ripley HS – Combined FAFSA event with College Application Week. Parents decorate tables for seniors with college gear and complete FAFSA before ceremony.
- John Marshall HS – Partnered with OCAP and Gear UP to assist families. Served Raising Cane's. Took pictures of students who completed FAFSA and gave stickers

- **Advertise and REMIND!**

- Boise City HS – Scheduled FAFSA night in computer lab. Reminded students online, on social media, via phone, and flyers
- Elk City HS - Advertised FAFSA Night with announcement of new graduation requirement

A poster for FAFSA Completion Night. The top half has an orange background with white text, and the bottom half has a dark blue background with white text. The text is framed by a dotted border.

FAFSA Completion Night! 🏠
Tuesday, October 14th at 5:30pm
BCHS Computer Lab

Rachel from the OCAP (Oklahoma College Assistance Program) will be here to answer your questions & help you through the FAFSA process ALL IN ONE EVENING!!
Students & parents can create their FAFSA accounts & complete the application the same night — no need to wait!

Here's what to know:

- This event is the perfect opportunity to learn about FAFSA & complete it in one session.
- Seniors & parents should both attend to ensure everything gets finished.
- Bring a laptop if possible. (We will be in the computer lab so you may use ours!)
- Have access to your 2024 tax information, current bank account balances, and W-2 forms (especially for students who worked but didn't file taxes).
- Each attendee will need their own email address — one for the student (non-school email) & one for the parent/contributor.
- Be ready to access your email & phone that night to receive verification codes.

Don't miss this chance to get personalized help & check the FAFSA off your to-do list!

- **Choose time and location for FAFSA events that works for your school**

- Consider scheduling event when FSA offices are open
- Schedule at same time as mandatory senior/parent meetings

- **Advertise event as place to learn and complete FAFSA**

- Send details of items to bring, including phones, email addresses, taxes
- REMIND! REMIND! REMIND!

- **Get help! Partner with someone familiar with FAFSA**

- College financial aid office, UCanGo2 representative, other community resources
- Apply for a grant for food, giveaways, etc.

- **Engage families and students**

- Offer incentives like snacks, prizes, class credit, etc.
- Make it mandatory – class assignment to attend session
- Combine FAFSA event with other college prep/school events

- **Use UCanGo2 event planning checklist**

https://content.xap.com/media/54979/event_planning_checklist.pdf



UCanGo2

EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

Whether it's a financial aid event, parent night or college fair, there are several things you can do to encourage student and parent participation when planning a college access event. Visit the second page for ideas specific to different types of events! Host these as stand-alone nights or consider combining a few or coordinating with Parent/Teacher Conferences or other events that will already be bringing families to campus.

LOGISTICS: NAIL IT DOWN

- ☐ **Set the date.** Before you choose your date, think about the ages of students and families who will attend. Avoid potential conflicts with sporting events, concerts and other community events. It's best to avoid the day before and after a holiday, as well as Mondays and Fridays. Also, if you want parent participation, opt for evenings or weekends.
- ☐ **Expand your team.** Partner with other organizations or sponsors who share your goals and can provide support. They may be able to contribute money, volunteers or in-kind donations like refreshments. Consider listing them as a sponsor in your promotional materials or allowing them to distribute freebies or brochures at your event. Ask your teachers if they'd be willing to offer a few extra points to students who attend and bring back a signed brochure or handout from the event.
- ☐ **Gather giveaways or prizes.** Consider providing coupons to a local restaurant, tickets to school sporting events or other small freebies to encourage students and families to attend!

PROMOTION: GET THE WORD OUT

- ☐ **Create promotional materials.** Print posters and flyers to hang in the halls or send home with students.
- ☐ **Promote early and often.** Send save-the-date notices, post bulletin board flyers, distribute flyers and advertise on the school's website. Share reminders through social media, email blasts, mobile apps, etc. Have students chalk the sidewalks!
- ☐ **Feed them.** Providing a meal or refreshments is a great way to encourage attendance and make your participants feel valued.

PLANNING CONTENT AND DELIVERY: GET READY

- ☐ **Ask for help.** Ask local campuses for volunteers. Many teachers and professors require (or offer extra credit for) community service, and your event may serve as the perfect volunteer opportunity. Consider offering childcare for families with younger siblings.
- ☐ **Ask the experts.** Find presenters who offer free, relevant services. Contact colleges and universities to invite financial aid counselors to talk about the financial aid process. Oklahoma Money Matters and UCanGo2 will customize their presentations to fit your organization's individual needs. Visit OklahomaMoneyMatters.org or UCanGo2.org for more information; travel may be limited.
- ☐ **Prepare an agenda or schedule.** To keep everything running smoothly, you'll need to know in advance how everything will fit together. Prepare an agenda and share it with everyone who will be participating in the event. Print extra copies for volunteers who will be helping out that day.
- ☐ **Provide take-aways.** If you have informative materials or freebies, prepare them for the event. Make sure you give participants your contact information so they can reach you if they have questions later. Be sure online evaluation links or paper forms are available if you choose to use them.

FOLLOW UP

- ☐ **Review and reflect.** Plan a meeting with your team to discuss the event. Did you stay on budget? Should you have done something differently? Compile a list of recommendations to use as a reference for future events. If it's appropriate, consider asking volunteers and participants to complete an evaluation or comment card.

- Overview of graduation requirements
- PreACT results
- Career Tech

• Have questions about college readiness resources for parent and family events? Email StudentPrep@osrhe.edu.

OKLAHOMA'S PROMISE

- Remember students can apply in 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th or before December 31 of 12th grade so make sure you invite middle school parents.
- Your event might just be informational, sharing details of the program and how to apply.
- If you want families to complete the application, consider hosting the event in a computer lab or have access to laptops.
- Download flyers from the Oklahoma's Promise website to email ahead of time or print to hand out.
- Have the Oklahoma's Promise FAQ page handy to answer common questions.
- Have questions about Oklahoma's Promise events? Email okpromise@osrhe.edu.

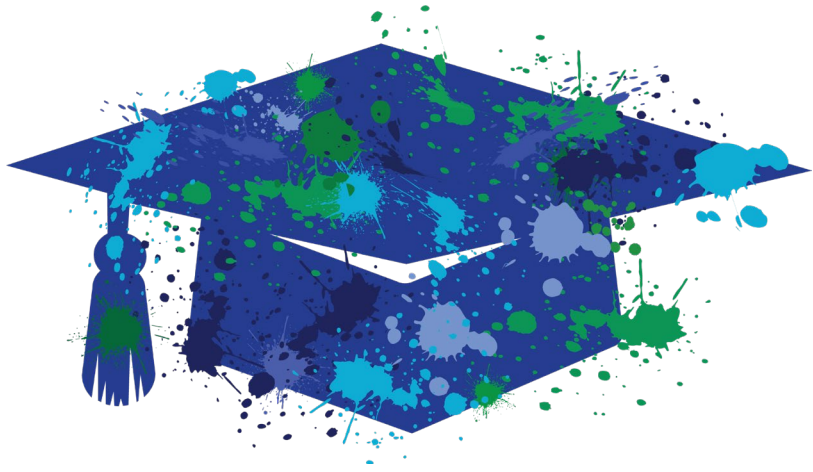
Can't host a whole event? Consider setting up a table at an athletic or other school event when families will be on campus to promote Oklahoma's Promise, FAFSA completion, concurrent enrollment or other topics.

You can also find free college planning, financial aid and financial literacy resources at UCanGo2.org, OKcollegestart.org and OklahomaMoneyMatters.org.

UCanGo2

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Best Practices for FAFSA Events

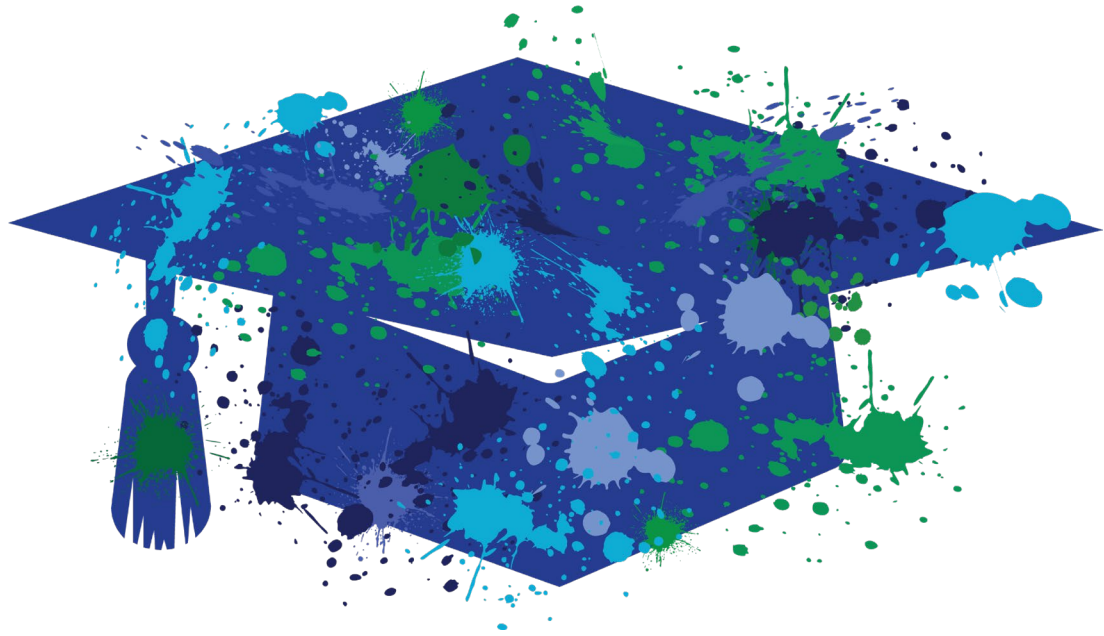


Tools and Resources

- Direct students to FAFSA guides and other publications from **UCanGo2.org**
https://www.okcollegestart.org/Home/Educators/UCanGo2/FinAid_Publications.aspx
- Request a workshop or assistance from **UCanGo2**
<https://www.okcollegestart.org/Home/Educators/UCanGo2/default.aspx>
- Use **Oklahoma FAFSA Data Portal** to track FAFSA completion
<https://okhighered.org/ok-fdp/>
- Refer to district resources. **Tulsa Public Schools** offers one-on-one FAFSA support to families <https://www.tulsaschools.org/about/teams/academics/psr/resources/fafsa>
- Contact local non-profit organizations like **Tulsa Higher Education Consortium**
<https://tulsahighered.com/fafsa/>
- Check with colleges for financial aid application assistance

Helpful Tools and Resources

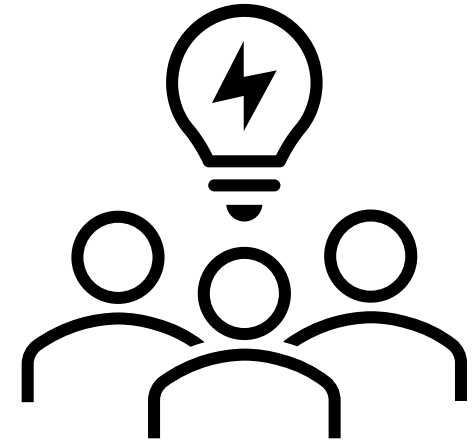
- Access information about each section at **FAFSA® Help | Federal Student Aid**
<https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out/help>
- Call or chat with **Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC)**
[Contact Us: 1-800-433-3243](https://studentaid.gov/contact-us)
- Create a new account at **StudentAid.gov**
<https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>
- Start, edit, or accept an invitation to a 2026-27 FAFSA form – **FAFSA.gov**
<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
- Determine who counts as a parent on the **FAFSA® form - Parent Wizard**
<https://studentaid.gov/fafsa-apply/parents>



Activity

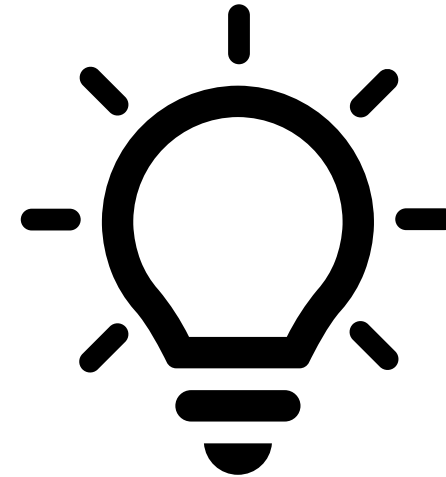
Brainstorm FAFSA event ideas in small groups

- **What type of event would work best for your school?**
 - Student only?
 - Drop-in session with experts?
 - Presentation/Workshop?
- **When is the best time of year/day for your school?**
- **Outreach methods**
 - What's the best way to reach YOUR students and parents?
- **Incentives for participation**
 - Class credit, snacks, personalized attention
- **Who can you partner with?**
 - Local colleges, financial aid experts, teachers

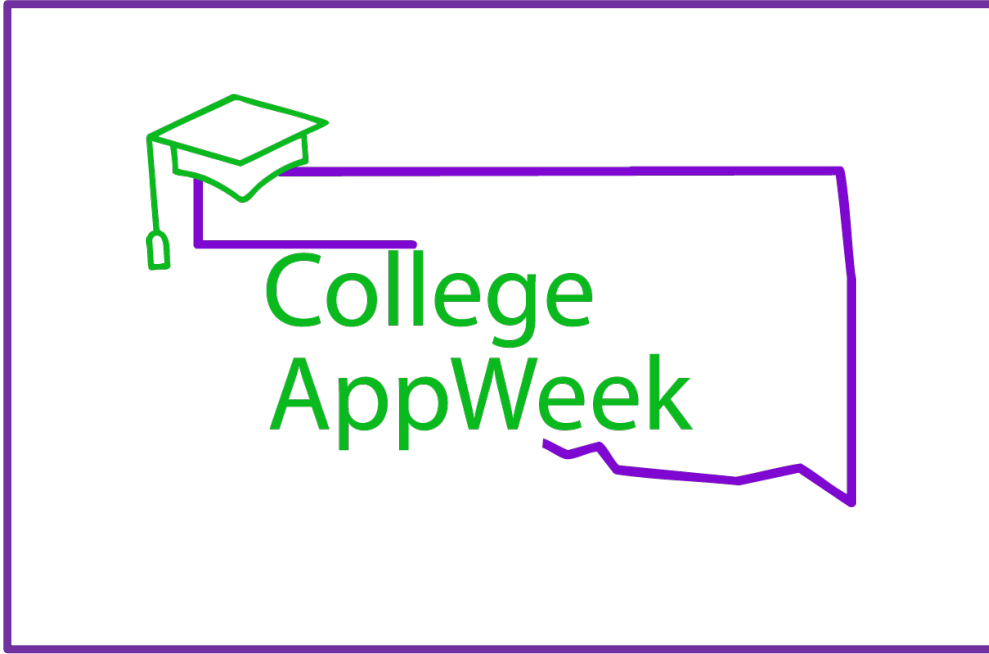


Brainstorming session

- What did you discuss at your table?
- How will you track progress and celebrate success?
- What questions do you have?



Share Ideas



- 'Official' week is September 21–25, 2026
- Schedule your CAW for any week September through October
- Opportunity for seniors to submit one or more college applications online
- Free promotional posters and 'I Applied' stickers when you enroll your school

To learn more and register your school, visit OKCollegeAppWeek.org.

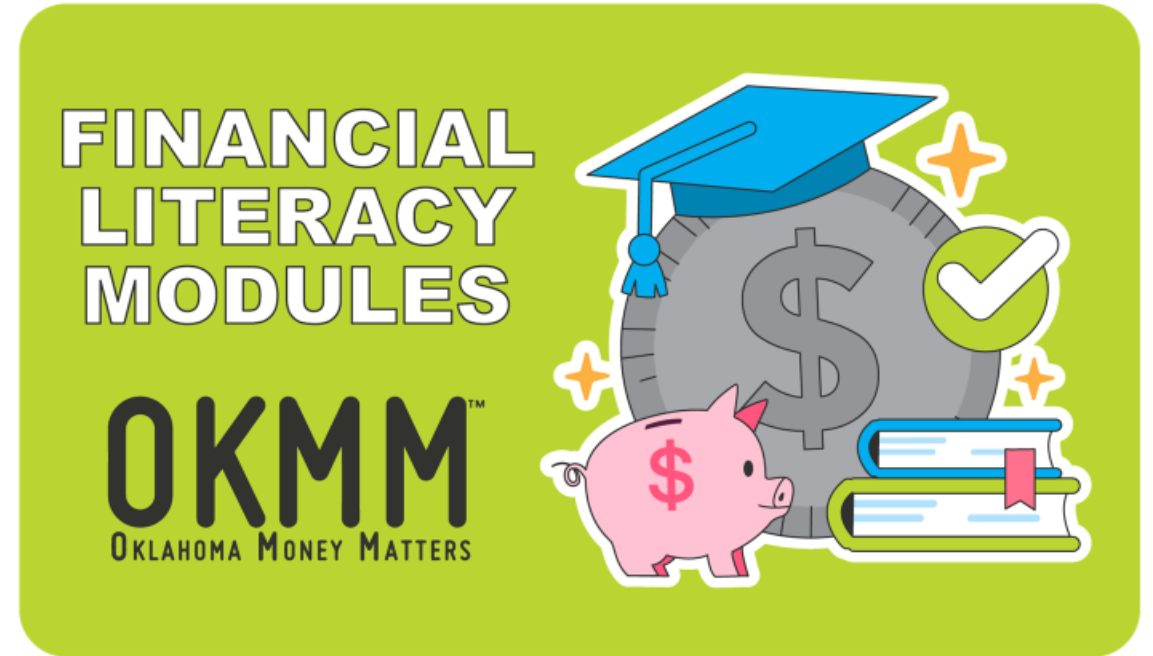
College App Week 2026

Personal Financial Literacy Standards

Oklahoma Money Matters now offers new learning modules for each of the 14 Personal Financial Literacy (PFL) standards. Each module includes a short quiz, and quiz results can be emailed directly to the counselor or teacher overseeing the activity.

The OKMM team is also available to come to your school and teach the material directly to your students.

You can find the modules under the **High School Students** tab at **OklahomaMoneyMatters.org**. Contact us at OklahomaMoneyMatters@ocap.org.



New at OklahomaMoneyMatters.org



Contact Us!



Rachel Fairchild
rfairchild@ocap.org



Letha Huddleston
lhuddleston@ocap.org



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Improving our future by degrees

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