



New Orleans, Louisiana
Hilton New Orleans Riverside
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NCCEP/GEAR UP CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP

EXCEL • PROVE • MOBILIZE

Confessions of Financial Aid
Experts: Implementing Financial Aid
Activities and Answering Your
Questions



The Financial Aid process is a moving target with frequent changes in procedure, policy, and terminology, and no guarantee of successful outcomes. This session will provide participants with successful strategies for engaging students and parents in the financial aid process. An open forum will be included to address questions.

Panelists:

- April Bell, Director, College Readiness Division, Baltimore City Public

Schools

Meet the Panelists



- Institution/Organization, affiliation with GEAR UP
- GEAR UP program structure, number of schools and students served
- Experience with GEAR UP and/or in the financial aid industry

Operational Systems: Delivery of Financial Aid



- In terms of financial aid and FAFSA completion:
 - What operational system does your program have in place to support financial aid activities for your GU population and/or statewide?
 - Does your state have a FAFSA completion database?
 - If so, how do you access it and how/when do you use it?
 - If not, what do you do instead?

Best Practices: Middle School



- Distribute resources to students and parents such as Federal Student Aid's (FSA) middle school checklist
- Create fun, informational resources:
 - financial aid and scholarship comic strips
 - word searches
 - animated videos to play in classrooms

Best Practices: Middle School



- Familiarize students with the following terms:
 - Associate's Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Pell Grants, Loans, FAFSA, Scholarship
- Activities include:
 - Classroom workshops monthly
 - Difference between grants, loans, and scholarships
 - Different types of scholarships
 - College Bingo and College Jeopardy to learn terminology

Best Practices: Middle School



• Provide students with information and resources about age- and grade-appropriate financial literacy and financial aid information, resources, and tools in multiple languages from federal and state entities including:

- U.S. Department of Education, the Federal Trade Commission, the U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission, and the State Higher Education Commission.

• Encourage school counselors and teachers to incorporate financial literacy into their existing

Best Practices: Middle School Parents



- Ensure that GEAR UP parents, families, mentors, and supporters understand their role in supporting GEAR UP students in developing early awareness of financial literacy and financial aid processes for future college and career readiness opportunities.
- Ensure that parents and families understand that their financial circumstances do not prevent their students from applying for and securing most financial aid from federal, state, and district sources.
- Teach parents and families how to research and apply

Best Practices: High School



- Grades 9, 10, and 11 are a continuation of middle school activities with these additional activities:
 - Distribute FSA resources including grade-level checklists, factsheets (can order through FSA)
 - Research scholarships
 - Enrollment in economic and personal finance course at high school (required in some states)
 - College visits with speaker from the financial aid offices to

Best Practices: High School (Gr 12)



- Research scholarships
- Distribute resources on tuition waiver programs like military dependent tuition waivers and SREB's Academic Common Market (if applicable)
- Make students aware of financial aid and scholarship scams (e.g., websites that charge like www.fafsa.COM, scholarships that charge an application fee)

Best Practices: High School (Gr 12)



- Senior seminars in the fall to organize the year for the various deadlines
- Constant reminders; posters, connect ed, social media, workshops, color coding, (e.g., all info dealing with financial aid is on blue paper, college application process on orange paper, etc.) text message, and email
- Financial Aid Night late Nov. for students and families
- FAFSA prep sheet given to students with all documents necessary to complete FAFSA

Open Forum



•Questions...?

Resources



·Free Application for Federal Student Aid:

www.fafsa.gov

·Federal Student Aid Toolkit:

www.financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/

·Federal Student Aid YouTube:

www.youtube.com/user/FederalStudentAid

·Federal Student Aid Publications: www.fsapubs.gov/

·Big Future: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

Resources (continued)



- American Student Assistance: <https://www.asa.org>
- Federal Student Aid: <https://www.studentaid.gov>
- The College Board: <https://www.collegeboard.org>
- FinAid! The Smart Guide to Financial Aid:
▪ <https://www.finaid.org>
- Naviance - **Family Connection**: This is a software product that a school must have an account for to

Thank you for attending this session



·April Bell: Director of College and Career Readiness, Baltimore City Public Schools GU program, aebell@bcps.k12.md.us

·Tierney McAuley: Associate for Financial Aid, GU Scholarship Administrator, Co-Manager Virginia Super FASFA Project, tierneymcauley@schev.edu

·Taryn Tompkins: Worcester Schools GU Director, MA State GU, ttomkins@massedco.org

·Dianne Griggs: Interim Director, VT State GU, VT Student Assistance Corporation, griggs@vsac.org