**GENERAL FINANCIAL AID TOOLS & RESOURCES**

Online “one-stop shop” for counselors with information about financial aid, a searchable database of resources, and outreach tools. Includes resources in Spanish and information for parents.

**College Scorecard** ([https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/](https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/))
Online college comparison tool, with data on costs, graduation rates, debt, post-college earnings, and more.

Guide to help students and families best understand all the available resources that can make higher education affordable. Offers the information students need in the form of a timeline, ranging from pre-high school through college, and includes a Parent Affordability chapter. Available for FREE and available in Spanish and English.

**uAspire Training and Technical Assistance** ([https://www.uaspire.org/events](https://www.uaspire.org/events))
Best-in-class training and ongoing support on issues of college affordability to frontline college access and success practitioners from school districts, non-profit organizations, and higher ed institutions. Topics include form completion (CSS Profile and FAFSA), Family Engagement in Financial Aid, Understanding Taxes, Award Letter Review, Verification, etc.


**EARLY FAFSA / PRIOR-PRIOR YEAR – COUNSELOR CONSIDERATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early FAFSA</th>
<th>Prior-Prior Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Begin building college lists in junior year, keep college list on FAFSA updated</td>
<td>• Encourage use of IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) for 2018-19 FAFSA (will be available by Oct 1, 2017); make students aware that information transferred from DRT won’t be viewable by students/parents for security reasons</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Begin discussing financial fit in junior year</td>
<td>• Keep an eye out for verification - motivate students to review SAR, use text reminders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teach about estimated/tentative award letters</td>
<td>• When 2016 tax information doesn’t align with current fiscal reality - educate students about what a “significant income change” means; support students when they request adjustments from colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduce the concept of award letter review much earlier; make space for review sessions from Dec – May.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Educate students about May 1st timeline and help them fight urge to make deposit before receiving and reviewing all award letters</td>
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**FINANCIAL AID AWARD LETTERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tips</th>
<th>Tools</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From uAspire:</td>
<td>• CFPB Paying for College tool: <a href="http://1.usa.gov/1hXTxNz">http://1.usa.gov/1hXTxNz</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prepare students and families ahead of time</td>
<td>• Big Future aid comparison tool: <a href="http://bit.ly/1jrydmB">http://bit.ly/1jrydmB</a> (recommended by uAspire)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide a glossary of terms to students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Analyze and compare award letters with students and families</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Broker communication with colleges (e.g., financial aid appeals and payment plan options)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourage students and families to ask you questions and be present for conversations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collect data to analyze trends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From TICAS: <a href="http://bit.ly/2wIHQ0x">http://bit.ly/2wIHQ0x</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NET PRICE CALCULATORS (NPCs)

Using NPCs can help students and families:
• Start thinking about affordability early in their college search
• Prepare for the overall financial aid process

Tips for Finding NPCs:
• School website (“Costs” and/or “Financial Aid” sections)
• Use a search engine (e.g., Google) to search for “net price calculator” and “[school name]”
• Use the following resources to find NPC links:
  – College Scorecard (https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/)
  – College Navigator (http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/)
  – Net Price Calculator Center (http://collegecost.ed.gov/netpricecenter.aspx)

For more information about NPCs, visit TICAS’ NPC resource page (http://ticas.org/NPC_resources.vp.html)

Tips for Students

Using and Comparing NPCs:
• Have family financial information ready
• Be honest and accurate
• Focus on the “net price”
• Be wary of unrealistic estimates of self-help (work and loans)

Helping Students Use and Compare NPCs:
• Create a glossary of terms
• Walk through results with students, dissect terminology
• Provide next steps: contact information for schools’ financial aid offices, scholarship resource lists, etc.
• Respect emotions that may occur

STUDENT LOANS

Tips
• You are not a loan provider – no need to be an expert
• Build comfort with borrowing smart - federal loan options over private
• Explain Subsidized and Unsubsidized terms
• Create awareness of Parent PLUS, a loan that is packaged but may not be approved.

Tools
• From TICAS:
  – http://projectonstudentdebt.org

• From the Department of Education:
  – Information on Studentaid.gov
  – Repayment estimator (studentaid.gov/repayment-estimator)
    – Enter specific loan info. (can be hypothetical), use average loan balances, or import actual loan data
    – Enter tax filing status, income, family size, state
    – View estimated payments under different repayment plans

Questions?

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Holly Morrow, uAspire, hollym@uaspire.org