



MIDWEST FAFSA SUMMIT

Building Effective Solutions for College Access



Tuesday, June 11	
5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Camelot Ballroom	Reception Kick off the Summit with an opportunity to network with like-minded individuals representing diverse organizations involved in shaping state-level FAFSA policy and practices. Mingle, exchange ideas, and forge valuable connections that will empower us to drive positive change in the realm of financial aid.
6:00 - 7:00 p.m. King Arthur Court	Dinner Join us for dinner where you get to savor a delectable meal while connecting with like-minded individuals. Picture this: a table filled with culinary delights, laughter, and stimulating conversations. It's the perfect opportunity to network and mingle with fellow FAFSA enthusiasts over a scrumptious dinner.
7:00 - 7:45 p.m. King Arthur Court	Opening Plenary: Beyond FAFSA: Empowering Students Through the entire journey Karla Robles-Reyes, Chief Program Officer for OneGoal, will highlight the broader holistic support needed to ensure every student is supported on their quest to define their own futures. Through personal anecdotes and actionable insights, she will guide the group to reflect on the systemic changes required to make comprehensive postsecondary advising and support an integral part of the educational experience of our young people inclusive of the critical role FAFSA plays in this journey. Presenter: Ms. Karla Robles, Chief Program Officer, OneGoal Introduced by: Mr. Bill DeBaun, Senior Director, Data and Strategic Initiatives, National College Attainment Network (NCAN)
Wednesday, June 12	
7:00 - 8:00 a.m. Camelot Ballroom	Breakfast: A full hot breakfast buffet will be available throughout the hour.



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8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Avenue Ballroom	Welcome
8:30 - 9:45 a.m. Avenue Ballroom	Plenary Session: A Wild Year in Review: The 2024-25 FAFSA and Where We Go From Here The 2024-25 award year FAFSA deserves a lot of adjectives, not many of them good. This opening session will offer an overview of how we got here, what has happened so far for the high school class of 2024 and other FAFSA filers, and what has to happen next in order to connect more students with the federal and state. The session will blend policy, practice, and data to set the stage for the rest of the FAFSA Summit’s learning and activities. Presenters: Mr. Bill DeBaun, Senior Director, Data and Strategic Initiatives, National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Ms. MorraLee Keller, Senior Director, Strategic Programming, National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Introduced by: Dr. Jenny Parks, Vice President, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)
9:45 - 10:00 a.m.	15-Minute Break
10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Avenue Ballroom & Streeterville	Morning Breakout Sessions Breakout Session 1A: Views from the Top: Two Successful State Approaches to FAFSA Completion Join us for an insightful session where representatives from Tennessee and Illinois, two states renowned for their exemplary FAFSA completion rates, will share their successful strategies. Discover the innovative approaches these states have implemented to overcome challenges and boost student participation in financial aid programs. Engage in dynamic discussions about the collaborative efforts between schools, community organizations, and government agencies that have driven their success. Learn actionable best practices that can be adapted and implemented in your own state to enhance FAFSA completion rates and support student achievement. Presenters: Mr. Eduardo ("Eddie") Brambila, Managing Director, Capacity Development, Illinois Student Assistance Commission Ms. Jessie Greene, Director of Communications, Tennessee Higher Education Commission Mr. Jason Seay, Senior Director of Outreach, Tennessee Higher Education Commission



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	Moderator & Introduced by: Mr. Bill DeBaun, Senior Director, Data and Strategic Initiatives, National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Breakout Session 1B: Adult Re-Engagement with FAFSA and Higher Education As the population of adults with some college but no credential (SCNC) continues to increase, institutions are turning their attention toward reengaging and reenrolling this key segment of the market. Expanding access for adult learners is vital to meeting enrollment goals and also key to meeting workforce needs and equipping adult learners with SCNC with the skills and credentials necessary for the most in-demand and rewarding jobs. While some challenges to returning are well-known—family obligations, work requirements, stranded credits—sometimes, a lesser-known impediment gets in the way of a student’s ability to return: failure to make satisfactory academic progress (SAP) in their prior enrollment. In this interactive session, we'll discuss the growing population of adult learners and the data available on the subpopulation that can't easily access federal student aid dollars due to SAP. We'll share innovative ways states and systems are helping students navigate their SAP constraints and the policy decisions institutions can make to better serve adult learners in this predicament. Items to be covered include: • Context for the population of potential learners with SCNC • Exploration of the barriers to returning to higher education this population faces with an emphasis placed on the federal student aid barriers • Requirements to receive federal student aid and the standard of Satisfactory Academic Progress • Policy levers (specific to student aid) that can be used to support adult learner reengagement and reenrollment, including examples from across the Midwest Presenters: Ms. Brittany Pearce, Program Manager, Educational Transformation Program, Ithaka S+R Introduced by: Dr. Jenny Parks, Vice President, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)
11:00 - 11:15 a.m.	15-Minute Break



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11:15 a.m. – Noon Avenue Ballroom	Plenary Session: State Spotlight: What worked to get this FAFSA legislation passed? Staff from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education share the story of how the state proposed, passed, and implemented universal FAFSA completion legislation. Presenters will describe the conversations, compromises, and relationships needed to create the conditions needed to ensure the success of the legislation and the initiative. Presenters: Ms. Angel Mcallister, State Director for Financial Aid, Indiana Commission for Higher Education Ms. Kate Marling, Postsecondary Transitions Manager, Indiana Commission for Higher Education Introduced by: Dr. Jenny Parks, Vice President, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)
Noon - 1:00 p.m. Camelot Ballroom	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Avenue Ballroom	STATE WORK SESSION: Resources and Stakeholders to engage with FAFSA Completion Work in your State This interactive session invites state teams to engage in collaborative problem-solving around FAFSA completion. Participants will use SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to comprehensively assess their state's resources and partnerships. Teams will identify existing strengths and resources that can be leveraged to increase FAFSA completion, recognize gaps and weaknesses that hinder progress, and explore opportunities for new stakeholder engagement. By analyzing potential threats to completion efforts, participants will refine strategies to overcome obstacles. Facilitated by: MHEC, NCAN, & SHEEO
2:00 – 2:15 p.m.	15-Minute Break
2:15 - 3:15 p.m. Avenue Ballroom & Streeterville	Afternoon Breakout Session Breakout Session 2A: Plan, Prepare, Pay...A Three Prong Approach to College Attainment State outreach teams build their student services in an effort to increase FAFSA completion and college matriculation. The three-pronged approach of Plan, Prepare, Pay engages students, parents, and school counselors to create and implement innovative initiatives and utilize tried-and-true programs which build, maintain, and enhance the state's college-going culture. Learn new initiatives, best practices, and just have a blast with this vibrant, excited panel who's on fire for college access.



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	Presenters: Ms. Jeneen Hatoum, Director, High School Innovation, Michigan College Access Network Mr. Keith Ritchie, Assistant Director of Outreach, Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) Ms. Casi Benedict, Director of Outreach Services, Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) Ms. Liz Yaddof, Community Engagement Consultant, Iowa College Aid Moderator: Ms. MorraLee Keller, Senior Director, Strategic Programming, National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Introduced by: Dr. Rachel Burns, Senior Policy Analyst, State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) Breakout Session 2B: Data Systems to Support Successful FAFSA Completion Initiatives Join a panel of professionals from Nebraska, Tennessee, and Minnesota as they delve into using data to drive FAFSA completion. This session will cover essential topics such as SAIG agreements, ISIRs, and effective data visualization and dashboards. Gain insights on how these states share crucial data with districts and schools to enhance decision making and boost completion rates. Explore best practices and innovative strategies to leverage data in supporting students' access to financial aid and educational opportunities. Presenters: Ms. Daphne Hall, Senior Vice President of College Access Programs, EducationQuest Foundation Mr. Jason Seay, Senior Director of Outreach, Tennessee Higher Education Commission Ms. Nichole Whelan, Research Analyst, Minnesota Office of Higher Education Moderator: Mr. Bill DeBaun, Senior Director, Data and Strategic Initiatives, National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Introduced by: Ms. Louisa Woodhouse, Policy Associate, National College Attainment Network (NCAN)
3:15 - 3:30 p.m.	15-minute Break



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3:30 – 4:30 p.m. Avenue Ballroom	STATE WORK SESSION: Barriers, Gaps, Opportunities for collaboration on FAFSA Completion Initiatives in Your State In this focused session, participants will explore ways to build partnerships and align stakeholder efforts, leveraging collective strengths to develop comprehensive strategies that address specific needs. This work session will guide teams toward crafting a collaborative action plan that bridges gaps, removes barriers, and fully utilizes available resources, ultimately creating a stronger support network to help more students complete the FAFSA and access financial aid. Teams will leave with an action plan that incorporates stakeholder collaboration and optimizes available resources to elevate FAFSA completion statewide, ensuring more students have access to financial aid for higher education. Facilitated by: MHEC, NCAN, & SHEEO
5:15 p.m.	Meet in Lobby for Dinner Groups
5:30 p.m.	Group Dinners
Thursday, June 13	
7:00 - 8:00 a.m. Camelot Ballroom	Breakfast A full hot breakfast buffet will be available throughout the hour.
8:00 – 8:45 a.m. Avenue Ballroom	Plenary Session: Situating FAFSA within State College and Career Readiness Policies and Initiatives This session explores the critical role of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in state-level college and career readiness policies and initiatives. Despite the millions of dollars available in state and federal financial aid, many students fail to complete the FAFSA. This session examines how state policies in Illinois and Minnesota have integrated FAFSA completion into broader strategies to enhance college and career readiness, ensuring equitable and affordable access to higher education for all students. Presenters: Ms. Jacqui Moreno, Chief Service Officer, Illinois Student Assistance Commission Mr. Mike Dean, Executive Director, North Star Prosperity Introduced by: Dr. Aaron Horn, Associate Vice President of Research, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)



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8:45 – 9:15 a.m. Avenue Ballroom	Plenary Session: Q&A with Under Secretary James Kvaal Presenter: Under Secretary James Kvaal Introduced by: Ms. Susan Heegaard, President, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)
9:15 – 9:30 a.m.	15-Minute Break
9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Avenue Ballroom & Streeterville	Breakout Sessions: Effective Messaging for Students and Families Breakout Session 3A: Cracking the Communication Code Deciphering what works for college-bound students in terms of your communication flow is a lot like unlocking a mystery. Join two states as they discuss what has worked in their communication strategies and what clues can possibly inform your own plans for reaching your students and families successfully. Presenters: Ms. Casi Benedict, Director of Outreach Services, Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) Ms. Jessie Greene, Director of Communications, Tennessee Higher Education Commission Introduced by: Mr. Bill DeBaun, Senior Director, Data and Strategic Initiatives, National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Breakout Session 3B: What do families hear when we say financial aid and FAFSA? Aristotle’s “Tell them what you will tell them, tell them, and tell them what you just told them” is timeless advice for delivering a message, but does it hold up in 2024 when talking with students and families about their postsecondary options? Postsecondary enrollment and attainment rates remain stubbornly static despite these outcomes being more important than ever for students, families, communities, states, and our nation. This session will consider various studies and surveys to understand effective messaging to students and families around topics like financial aid and college-going. What do these audiences say is most important to them? What are their worries and uncertainties? Which words do we use that confuse or put them off the idea of a postsecondary pathway? We’ll consider the evidence and then, as a group, find a way forward for making our own messaging more effective. Bring your ideas, communications campaigns, and your successes and stumbles; we’d love to *hear* them.



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	Presenters: Ms. Alessandra Cipriani-Detres, Program Associate, National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Ms. Kathy Hastings, Interim Deputy Director for Outreach and Communications, North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (NCSEAA) Ms. Louisa Woodhouse, Program Associate, National College Attainment Network (NCAN) Introduced by: Ms. Louisa Woodhouse, Policy Associate, National College Attainment Network (NCAN)
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	15-Minute Break
10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Avenue Ballroom	Plenary Session: Plans for Summit Follow up and Ongoing Engagement Presenters: Dr. Aaron Horn, Associate Vice President of Research, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) Dr. Jenny Parks, Vice President, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC)
11:00 a.m. – Noon	Closing Plenary Session: Roundtable Topic Discussion and Wrap up Discussion Participants will engage in three rounds of table talks based on key issues and topics that emerge during the Summit. Thoughts emerging from those table talks will be shared and discussed.
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