

MEMBERS:

Co-Chair: Beth Feinberg Keenan, College Coach

Co-Chair: Migdalia Gomez, Emmanuel College

Co-Chair: Joanne Dashiell, MEFA

Members: Beth Hennessey-Blackstone Valley Tech, Iris Godes-QCC, Julie Shields-Rutya-MEFA, Cathy Nelson-Brandeis, Vivian Irrang-HOPE Lawrence, Janice Watson-Springfield Y, Adam Reinke-ACCESS Boston, Jerry Henry-ACCESS Boston, Ollie McArdle-OSFA, Kristi Pierce-TERI

PURPOSE:

The Committee is charged with developing and successfully implementing a statewide event that assists Massachusetts families with the first step in applying for financial aid for college – completing the FAFSA. The target demographic for these free services include low-income, first-generation and underserved prospective college students and their families. The current structure for the operational plan calls for the coordination of a network of host sites at key locations around the state.

Each site will be sufficiently staffed with experienced volunteers from MASFAA and partner organizations. Families will be able to obtain comprehensive instruction on FAFSA completion at each site and be able to discuss all aspects of the financial aid application process as it pertains to their unique needs. Most sites will offer services to help families complete the actual FAFSA.

A comprehensive grassroots promotional campaign including direct mail, presentations, and email, will precede the FAFSA Day events. The events will serve to increase college access among targeted families by assisting them in successfully completing the FAFSA and equipping them with a thorough understanding of the sources of available financial aid.

2011-2012 OBJECTIVES:

- Increase program participation from targeted demographic
- Identify new channels to promote FAFSA Day to target populations such as faith-based organizations and local YMCAs.
- Reinstate scholarship program and include scholarship information on all promotional materials
- Empower site coordinators to take on the majority of the event promotion and customize outreach efforts based on what works in their community.
- Explore active partnerships with appropriate organizations to establish organization-sponsored scholarships.
- Rely more heavily on the expertise and guidance of the Steering Committee to assist with various projects.

2011-2012 MASFAA GOALS:

- Advance the Art and Science of our Profession
 - with students, families, on and off-campus colleagues, faculty and administration, elected and governmental officials
- Increase engagement of members
- Continued commitment to high quality, cost effective training and professional development
- Update the Association's Strategic Plan

MONTHLY REPORT: MAY 2012

- ◆ Kendra Lider-Johnson will be adding the committee as a tri chair for the 2012-2013 year.
- ◆ Uncertain future with funding from the Y/Lumina foundation. We have reached out to key figures at the national office and at the present time there are no answers.
 - Received email back from Marcia Weston, Director of College Goal Sunday. The Y is still waiting on some direction from Lumina on funding and to determine if they are going to still continue to fund the program.
 - There was no national forum as there has been for the past 5 plus years and very little contact from the national office with state chairs.
- ◆ Initial planning meeting for 2013 FAFSA Day was held on April 27th. Discussed budget and the potential loss of funding from the national program.
 - FAFSA Day 2012 Costs were lower than they have been in the past due to cutting out some site materials that we have provided in the past.
 - Costs may slightly increase next year and we have plans to reach out to partners for an increase in sponsorship to make up for part of the loss of funding from the national office.
 - Plans are being made to reach out to current sites and to reach out to organizations who contacted us last year with interest in hosting a site.

MONTHLY REPORT: MARCH 2012

- ◆ The National College Goal Sunday office analyzed our 2012 survey data and forwarded along the following results summary and recommendations:

Summary:

- 63% of participants at CGS Massachusetts 2012 were members of the target audience. Sites that attracted the highest percentages of target audience members and had at least 65 students attending the event included Somerville (87%), Malden (84%), and Wakefield (81%).
- Compared to state demographics, CGS Massachusetts did well attracting participants from all target audience categories. 42% of CGS participants were members of racial/ethnic minority groups (versus 26% statewide). CGS Massachusetts attracted Black, Hispanic, Asian American, and American Indian participants at rates above what would be expected based on state demographics. 41% of CGS participants came from families earning \$40,000 or less each year

(versus 27% statewide). 34% of CGS participants came from families in which neither parent attended college (versus 28% statewide).

- A number of Massachusetts CGS sites both attracted substantial numbers of students and did well with specific target audience categories, including families earning under \$20,000 a year (Wakefield 26%, Somerville 24%, Brockton 22%, Holyoke 21%, Malden 21%; Hispanic families (Wakefield 41%, Holyoke 28%); Black families (Somerville 30%, Malden 28%, Brockton 27%); and families in which neither parent graduated from high school (Wakefield 59%, Somerville 56%, Malden 43%, Holyoke 42%).
- Almost half (48%) of Massachusetts CGS participants heard about the event from a high school counselor. Other outreach strategies that reached substantial numbers of participants were high school publications (18%), high school teachers (12%), and financial aid presentations (11%). Target audience members were more likely than others to say that they heard about the event from high school counselors, high school teachers, posters at a high school, or mailings. On the other hand, non-target audience members were more likely to say they heard about the event from the radio, an email, or a financial aid presentation.

Recommendations

- Out of 29 sites, four returned less than 30 student surveys. While some of these sites may have had difficulties administering the new web surveys, it is worth looking at the registration numbers to see if turn-out was unusually low at any of these sites. In some cases, low turn-out may be the result of a one-time problem, but sites with a pattern of low turn-outs may need expanded outreach efforts or should perhaps be dropped to preserve scarce resources.
- Of the 12 sites that attracted at least 65 students, eight had target audience percentages below the state average. At three of these sites, less than half of participants were target audience members. It might be helpful to consider if these sites can benefit from additional outreach aimed at the target audience or if additional resources should be allocated to sites with lower turn-outs but higher target audience percentages.
- As the findings above make clear, certain outreach methods worked better with the target audience. Emphasizing these outreach methods may attract additional target audience members in the future.
- ◆ We continue to post messages through our Facebook and Twitter accounts, keeping our followers up to date on industry trends and providing reminders about important post-FAFSA actions. We currently have: 146 Facebook “likes” and 307 Twitter followers.
- ◆ Thank you luncheon and wrap-up meeting for steering committee members and site coordinators is being held at O’Connor’s Restaurant in Worcester on 3/23.

MONTHLY REPORT: FEBRUARY 2012

- ◆ Volunteers
 - 412 Total Volunteers
 - 218 MASFAA Members
 - 87 more volunteers this year, 56 more MASFAA members were volunteers this year.
 - We still need more FAFSA experts in the future to help out at FAFSA Day sites across the state.
- ◆ Pre Registered Participants
 - 1592 total pre registered as of 1/30/2012 the day of the final events. Last year we only had 1155 pre-registered.
 - The week of the event we had 667 pre register, almost 75 students a day.
- ◆ Sites
 - 29 sites in total this year
 - Total number of students for 2012 was 1630 and total people who came through the doors was 2763. This is up by 125 for this year (students).
 - For 2011 we also went to Lawrence HS and did the event at their school. That was 147 students alone. If we take those numbers out our numbers increased by 272 this year.
 - The following sites hit capacity for pre-registrants before their events – Wakefield, Fitchburg, Franklin, Webster, Lynn and Amherst.
 - We had a number of sites that saw over 90 students and their families – Wakefield 100, Malden 108, Framingham 92, Holyoke 107, Fall River 116.
- ◆ Surveys and Feedback
 - We had 1110 attempt the survey and 1082 completed the on-line survey. Some sites collected paper surveys and entered in the data from their sites. 66% completion rate.
 - We sent out a follow up email to all participants with the survey link to complete if they did not at the event. We received feedback from three different parents expressing their gratitude for the event and assistance received.
- ◆ Reminder to like us on Facebook , follow us on Twitter, we are still posting information and sending out reminders to those following us on social media sites.
 - www.facebook.com/FAFSADayMA
 - www.twitter.com/FAFSADayMA20
 - Plan to send out 2 more emails to pre registrants reminders about IRS retrieval and our what to expect next document.
 - Other media outreach...
 - Contacted by the Mass Department of Higher Education – Press Release the week of the event wanting to highlight the 10 public colleges that are hosting events.
 - Gail Holt was on WWLP in the Springfield area for an interview
 - WGGB came and did a piece on FAFSA Day at the Springfield Site, this will be posted on our web site.
- ◆ 2013 Sites
 - In March we plan to start to reach out to current sites and those places that reached out to us with interest in being a site to secure sites for 2013.

MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2012

- ◆ Volunteers
 - 360 Volunteers
 - 205 MASFAA Members
 - 19 Executive Council Members
 - We have 35 more volunteers than we did last year, we could still use more FAFSA Experts
 - Brockton is looking for financial aid experts who could help with translation in Haitian Creole and Cape Verdean.
- ◆ Pre Registered Participants
 - There are 581 students pre-registered as of 1/9/2012
 - Jan 9th 2011 we had 344 families who were pre-registered
 - 221 students have pre-registered in January so far-average of 25 a day
- ◆ Sites
 - Wakefield is at capacity but continues to let new registrants sign up, they are prepared for on site registrants also. They have 98 students pre registered
 - Other sites with large numbers are:
 - Franklin (Dean College) 40 students
 - Burlington 45 students
 - Amherst 65 students
 - Most families are learning about the event via guidance counselors
 - On Friday January 6th we had our packing meeting with all site coordinators and went over final logistics.
- ◆ Reminder to like us on Facebook , follow us on Twitter, help us spread the word by ordering materials on www.fafsaday.org to distribute.
 - If there are organizations that you work with or have contacts at that would benefit from FAFSA Day services please order materials for them to distribute and spread the word.
 - www.facebook.com/FAFSADayMA
 - www.twitter.com/FAFSADayMA

MONTHLY REPORT: DECEMBER 2011

- ◆ Volunteers
 - 245 Volunteers
 - 140 MASFAA Members
 - 15 Executive Council Members
 - We are double where we were last year but still over 100 less than last years' total. There are 190 volunteers from last year who have not volunteered.
 - Need more FAFSA Experts and also those who speak a foreign language
 - Sites that need volunteers are **Amesbury, Brockton, Burlington, Chelsea, Fall River, Framingham, Springfield, Turner Falls, Wakefield and Webster**
 - December 14th last day to register to be able to get a t-shirt
- ◆ Pre Registered Participants
 - 130 students and families pre registered

- 17 students have registered in December
- ◆ Sites
 - Brockton has been finalized. They are having their event Jan 30th from 6:30-8:30PM
 - Site specific flyers have been posted to the web site to be down loaded and/or attached to emails.
- ◆ 2012 Goal is to help 2, 2012 students and their families.
- ◆ Reminder to like us on Facebook , follow us on Twitter, help us spread the word by ordering materials on www.fafsaday.org to distribute.
 - www.facebook.com/FAFSADayMA
 - www.twitter.com/FAFSADayMA

MONTHLY REPORT: NOVEMBER 2011



MONTHLY REPORT: OCTOBER 2011

- Funding Update
 - Beth had a conversation with Latoya in the National CGS office this week. Highlights from the call include:
 1. Grant awards for 11-12 may be as much as \$15,000. Funding from the national office is ending after this year. Massachusetts is not the only state whose funding is ending after this year
 2. National office is compiling information from states who are in the same situation. They are aware that due to economic conditions, and the change of the industry, states have lost funding partners.
 3. After national funding expires, states have the liberty of running their own programs and are not subject to national policies such as how survey data is collected.
 4. Looking at other partnership opportunities on the national level, at this time there is no guarantee going forward.
 5. States doing the same work and also competing against each other for funding for from outside grant opportunities
 - For the past 2 years operating costs have been under \$25K
 - Estimated in kind support is \$18K from partners
 - To eliminate costs, sites are print their own materials, moving toward providing on line materials and operating with a grass roots PR campaign
 - Future funding ideas
 1. Recipients of raffle proceeds at MASFAA Conference
 2. Asking partners to increase monetary funding by \$1500 each
 3. Reaching out to the National Y for funding opportunities
 4. Executive Counsel Members at large to assist with fundraising
 5. Working with the development chair and/or identifying members with grant writing experience
- Other Updates:
 - In the final stages on developing updated promotional materials and website

- Significantly enhanced Facebook “like” and Twitter followers.

MONTHLY REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2011

- ◆ We are in the process of collecting site contracts; we have received contracts from 14 locations and are waiting to hear back from 15. We are planning on offering around the same number of sites as last year (30)
- ◆ Kick-off steering committee meeting was held on 8/19
- ◆ New ideas for promoting FAFSA Day include:
 - Providing promotional materials at fall MASCA conference. Currently working on establishing a connection at MASCA to eliminate a vendor charge.
 - Utilize students groups in the high schools such as NHS, FBLA, etc. as ambassadors to promote the event
 - Provide FAFSA Day materials at fall college fairs
 - Provide FAFSA Day materials to guidance counselors to distribute at early fall high school information nights
 - Notify FAFSA Day attendees from previous years about 2012 dates and locations via email
 - Partnering with Executive Office of Education or Governor’s office for help getting the word out through a press release or social media outlets
 - Established a twitter account. Strategically following media outlets and organizations with similar missions to increase our number of followers and expand our reach.
- ◆ New ideas for engaging MASFAA members:
 - Coordinate with Emerging Leaders program to encourage volunteering for FAFSA Day
 - Work with Just the Facts sub-committee to coordinate speaking opportunity to increase awareness and promote FAFSA Day involvement
 - Have a presence at the MASFAA conference by setting up a booth in the vendor area and making an announcement during lunch or a general session
- ◆ We in the process of working with Steve Culp to redesign the FAFSA Day website to make the navigation more intuitive. We are waiting on final updates from Steve before the site can go live.
- ◆ Instead of offering college-sponsored scholarships, we are exploring the idea utilizing money from the budget to support scholarships and partnering with the YMCA – or another organization with a similar mission – to match scholarship dollars. We will be offering one or two larger scholarships vs. a larger number of smaller scholarships as a strategy to increase attendance.
- ◆ The October meeting for steering committee members and site coordinators will be held on October 28th at Quinsigamond Community College – Thank you Iris!

MONTHLY REPORT: AUGUST 2011

