ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

The Financial Aid Application Completion Communication Toolkit

For the 2027-28 FAFSA® and
Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid

Introduction

This guide is designed to assist practitioners who support students and families through the financial aid process. The guide provides resources to help streamline communication to ensure students and families receive the information and assistance they need to navigate this process.

Last updated: September 14, 2026

Creating a Communication Plan

To get started, identify your goals, audiences, and timeline. Use these questions to help create concise messaging.

- **What is your goal? Choose key points to highlight.**
  - Inform students of the FAFSA®/Alternative App availability
  - Inform parents of an upcoming financial aid workshop
  - Inform parents of the information they need for the financial aid workshop
  - Recruit volunteers, etc.

- **Who needs this information?**
  - Your audience will vary depending on your goal
  - If different messages are required, identify all audience groups
  - Determine how messages will differ by audience (or platform, e.g., social media)

- **When does each audience group need the information?**
  - Establish a communication timeline
  - Different audiences will need the information at different times
  - E.g., if you are recruiting volunteers to assist at a financial aid workshop, you will likely need to communicate with them first to ensure you have volunteers prior to inviting students and parents

- **How are you sharing the information?**
  - Phone
  - In-person
  - Flyer
  - Social media, etc.

Set Your Plan in Motion

Once you have a plan, work on the execution.

- **Identify materials and resources needed**
  - Printer
  - Social media access
  - Phone numbers
  - Emails, etc.

- **Recruit volunteers – depending on your method(s) of communication, you may need to enlist the help of volunteers**
  - Callers for phone bank
  - Distributing flyers at report card night or parent/teacher meetings
  - Assisting at financial aid workshop

- **Execute – spread the word!**
  - Send out your initial message
  - Periodically remind your audience
  - Try different methods of communication

Sample Student Email (FAFSA®)

Subject: Get your FREE money for college!

Dear Future College Student,
The 2027-28 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) is now available! Be sure you complete it as soon as it is available to be considered for financial aid to help pay for your college education.

Keep an eye out for announcements about our financial aid application completion workshop dates. In the meantime, you can plan by creating a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID that will serve as your application login and electronic signature for the FAFSA®. Students and parents will need an FSA ID.

You can also prepare by reviewing the list of information needed to complete a FAFSA® and gathering those documents ahead of time.

Sample Student Email (Alternative App)

Subject: Get your FREE money for college!

Dear Future College Student,
The 2027-28 Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid is available now! Be sure you complete it as soon as it is available to be considered for financial aid to help pay for your college education.

Keep an eye out for announcements about our financial aid application completion workshop dates. In the meantime, you can plan by reviewing the list of information needed to complete an Alternative App and gathering those documents ahead of time.

Sample Student Email (FAFSA® & Alternative App)

Subject: Get your FREE money for college!

Dear Future College Student,
The 2027-28 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid (Alternative App) are available **now**!

Be sure you complete a financial aid application as soon as possible to be considered for financial aid to help pay for your college education. If you are unsure which application to complete, contact [COUNSELOR NAME] at [PHONE/EMAIL].

Keep an eye out for announcements about our financial aid application completion workshop dates. In the meantime, you can prepare by reviewing the list of information needed to complete a FAFSA® and Alternative App and gathering those documents ahead of time.

FAFSA® filers will also need to create a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID that will serve as their application login and electronic signature for the FAFSA®. Students and parents will need their own FSA ID.

Sample Student Flyer
Application Availability - English

GET YOUR $$$

This is your opportunity to be considered for **free money** to pay for college!

The FAFSA® and Alternative App are now available! *You must apply to be considered for federal and/or state financial aid.*

Funds are limited, so act now!

For more information, contact:

CONTACT NAME:

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Sample Student Flyer
Application Availability - Spanish

OBTEN TU $$$

¡Esta es tu oportunidad de ser considerado para recibir **dinero gratuito** para pagar la universidad!

¡La FAFSA® y Solicitud Alternativa ya están disponibles! Debes llenar una solicitud para ser considerado para recibir ayuda financiera federal y/o estatal.

¡Los fondos son limitados, actúa ya!

Para más información, contacta a:

NOMBRE DE CONTACTO:

INFORMACIÓN DE CONTACTO:

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Sample Student Flyer
Workshop Date - English

GET YOUR $$$

We will be hosting a FREE workshop to help you complete a financial aid application.

DATE: TIME:

LOCATION:

This is your opportunity to be considered for **free money** to pay for college!

Funds are limited, so act now!

If you have questions, contact:

CONTACT NAME:

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Sample Student Flyer
Workshop Date - Spanish

OBTEN TU $$$

Tendremos un taller GRATUITO para ayudarte a llenar tu solicitud de ayuda financiera.

FECHA: HORA:

UBICACIÓN:

¡Esta es tu oportunidad de ser considerado para recibir **dinero gratuito** para pagar la universidad!

¡Los fondos son limitados, actúa ya!

Si tienes preguntas, contacta a:

NOMBRE DE CONTACTO:

INFORMACIÓN DE CONTACTO:

Sample Parent Email (Application Availability - English)

Subject: Help your student get FREE money for college!

Dear Parent of a Future College Student,
The 2027-28 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid (Alternative App) are now available!

Students must complete a financial aid application as soon as possible to be considered for financial aid to help fund their college education, and they need your help! Most students under the age of 24 are required to provide parental information to help determine their financial need and aid eligibility.

Keep an eye out for announcements about our financial aid application completion workshop dates. In the meantime, you can prepare by reviewing the list of information needed to complete a FAFSA® and Alternative App and gathering those documents ahead of time. FAFSA® filers will also need to create a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID that will serve as their application login and electronic signature for the FAFSA®. Students and parents will need their own FSA ID.

Sample Parent Email (Application Availability - Spanish)

Asunto: ¡Ayude a su estudiante a recibir dinero GRATUITO para la Universidad!

Estimado/a Padre de un Futuro Estudiante Universitario,
La Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal Para Estudiantes (FAFSA®) y la Solicitud Alternativa de Ayuda Financiera de Illinois (Solicitud Alternativa) para el ciclo escolar 2027-28 ya están disponibles.

Estudiantes deben completar una solicitud de ayuda financiera lo antes posible a partir de que estén disponibles para ser considerados para recibir ayuda financiera para pagar la universidad, ¡y no pueden hacerlo sin usted! La mayoría de los estudiantes menores de 24 años deben proporcionar información de los padres para ayudar a determinar su necesidad económica y elegibilidad para ayuda financiera.

Manténgase al tanto de los avisos que haremos sobre fechas para nuestros talleres de solicitudes de ayuda financiera. Mientras tanto, puede prepararse revisando la lista de la información que necesitar para llenar la FAFSA o Solicitud Alternativa y reuniendo los documentos con anticipación.
Todas las personas que proporcionen información en la FAFSA® necesitarán obtener una credencial FSA ID que servirá para acceder a la solicitud y como firma electrónica para la FAFSA®. Estudiantes y padres deben tener su propia credencial FSA ID.

Sample Parent Email (Workshop Announcement - English)

Subject: Help your student get FREE money for college!

Dear Parent of a Future College Student,
Students must complete a financial aid application as soon as possible to be considered for financial aid to help pay for their college education, and they need your help! Most students under the age of 24 are required to provide parental information to help determine their financial need and aid eligibility.

We will be hosting a financial aid application completion workshop on [DATE] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]. It is important to complete the application as soon as possible as funds run out.

You can prepare for the workshop by reviewing the list of information needed to complete a FAFSA® and Alternative App and bringing those documents with you to the workshop.

FAFSA® filers will also need to create a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID that will serve as their application login and electronic signature for the FAFSA®. Students and parents will need their own FSA ID.

If you have questions, contact [COUNSELOR NAME] at [PHONE/EMAIL].

Sample Parent Email (Workshop Announcement - Spanish)

Asunto: ¡Ayude a su estudiante a recibir dinero GRATUITO para la Universidad!

Estimado/a Padre de un Futuro Estudiante Universitario,
Estudiantes deben completar una solicitud de ayuda financiera lo antes posible para ser considerados para recibir ayuda financiera para pagar la universidad, ¡y no pueden hacerlo sin usted! La mayoría de los estudiantes menores de 24 años deben proporcionar información de los padres para ayudar a determinar su necesidad económica y elegibilidad para ayuda financiera.

Tendremos un taller para completar solicitudes de ayuda financiera el [FECHA] a las [HORA] en [UBICACIÓN]. Es importante llenar la solicitud lo antes posible ya que los fondos son limitados.

Puede prepararse revisando la lista de la información que necesita para llenar la FAFSA o Solicitud Alternativa y trayendo esa información consigo al taller.

Todas las personas que proporcionen información en la FAFSA® necesitarán obtener una credencial FSA ID que servirá para acceder a la solicitud y como firma electrónica para la FAFSA®. Estudiantes y padres deben tener su propia credencial FSA ID.

Si tienes preguntas, contacta a [NOMBRE DE CONSEJERO], [INFORMACIÓN DE CONTACTO].

Sample Volunteer Recruitment Email - English

Dear [VOLUNTEER],
The 2027-28 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid are now available, and we need your assistance!

We will be hosting a financial aid application completion workshop on [DATE] at [TIME] in [LOCATION] and are looking for volunteers to help students and families. Please help our students make college a reality by supporting them through the complexities of the financial aid process.

We hope you can join us! Snacks will be provided for volunteers. Information and training will be provided before the workshop.

If you can assist, please confirm your attendance with [COUNSELOR NAME] via [CONTACT INFO].

Sample Volunteer Recruitment Email - Spanish

Estimado [VOLUNTARIO],
La Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal Estudiantil (FAFSA®) del 2027-28 y la Solicitud Alternativa de Ayuda Financiera de Illinois ya están disponibles, ¡y necesitamos tu ayuda!

Tendremos un taller de solicitudes de ayuda financiera y estamos buscando a voluntarios para ayudar a estudiantes y familias a llenar sus solicitudes. El taller se llevará a cabo
[FECHA]
[HORA]
[UBICACION

¡Esperamos que puedas acompañarnos! Habrá botanas para los voluntarios. Proporcionaremos más información y capacitación antes del taller.

Si puedes asistir, por favor confirma tu asistencia con [NOMBRE DE CONSEJERO] al [TELEFONO/CORREO ELECTRONICO].

Sample Robocall Script - English

Dear Parents,
Financial aid application season is here! Attend our financial aid application completion workshop to help your student be considered for financial aid to help pay for their college education. The workshop will take place on [DATE] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]. Funds are limited, apply for yours as soon as possible!

If you have questions or cannot make it on this day, please contact [COUNSELOR] at [PHONE/EMAIL] so we can find a time and date that works for you.

Sample Robocall Script - Spanish

Estimados Padres,
¡Ya está aquí la temporada de llenar solicitudes para recibir ayuda financiera! Asista a nuestro taller de solicitudes de ayuda financiera para que su estudiante sea considerado para recibir ayuda financiera para pagar su educación universitaria. El taller se llevará a cabo el [FECHA] a las [HORA] en [UBICACIÓN]. ¡Los fondos son limitados, así que no espere!

Si tiene preguntas o no puede asistir, por favor contacte a [CONSEJERO] al [TELEFONO/CORREO ELECTRÓNICO] para que podamos encontrar otra fecha y hora que funcionen para usted.

Sample Social Media Posts - English

- Complete a #financialaid application to be considered for state and federal student aid for #college. #FAFSA #AlternativeApp

- Make #college a reality, apply for #financialaid at our financial aid workshop on [DATE] at [TIME] in [LOCATION]. #ILGoes2College

- Get #free help filling out a #financialaid application at our financial aid workshop. #FAFSA #AlternativeApp

- #IL public HS seniors: Complete a #financialaid application to #graduate. Attend our free application workshop with @ISACFinAid to get help!

- Qualifying undocumented students in #IL can complete the Alternative Application for IL Financial Aid to be considered for state aid.

Sample Social Media Posts - Spanish

- Llena una solicitud de #ayudafinanciera para ser considerad@ para ayuda financiera estudiantil para pagar la #universidad. #FAFSA #SolicitudAlternativa

- Haz de la #universidad una realidad, llena tu solicitud de #ayudafinanciera en nuestro taller de ayuda financiera el [FECHA] a las [HORA] en [UBICACIÓN]. #ILVaALaUniversidad

- Obtén ayuda #gratuita para llenar tu solicitud de #ayudafinanciera en nuestro taller de ayuda financiera. #FAFSA #SolicitudAlternativa

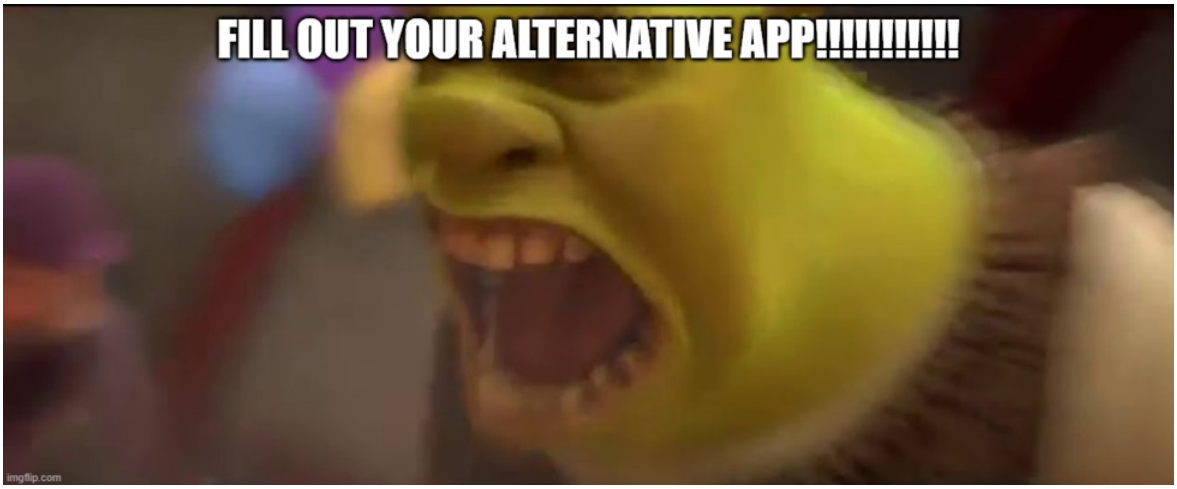
- Estudiantes de escuelas públicas de #IL: no olviden que deben llenar una solicitud de #ayudafinanciera para poder #graduarse. Asiste a nuestro taller #gratuito de ayuda financiera con @ ISACFinaAid para obtener ayuda.

- En #IL, estudiantes indocumentados que califiquen, pueden llenar la Solicitud Alternativa de Ayuda Financiera de Illinois para ser considerados para ayuda estatal.

FAFSA & Alt App Memes

Use these memes to engage your students in a different way. Post them on social media, your school website, email, or print them out. These are some examples that you are welcome to use, or feel free to get creative!





FAFSA & Alt App Memes





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FAFSA & Alt App Memes





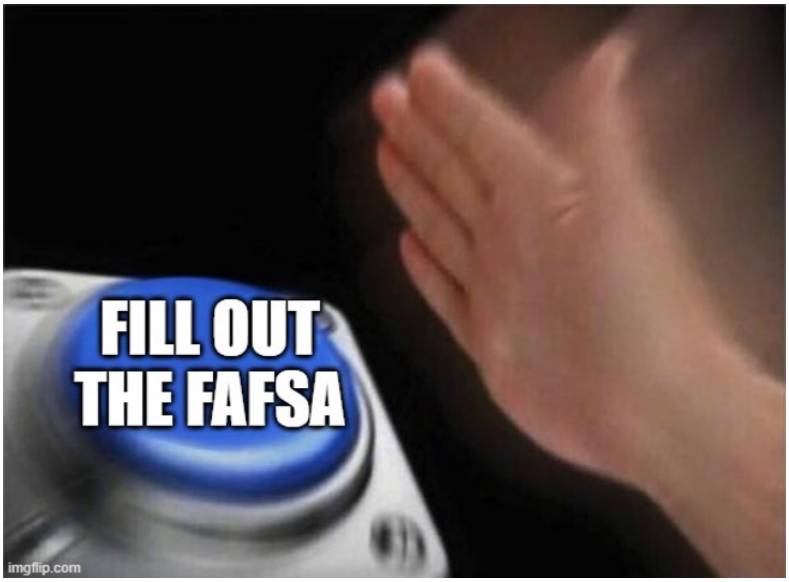
FAFSA & Alt App Memes



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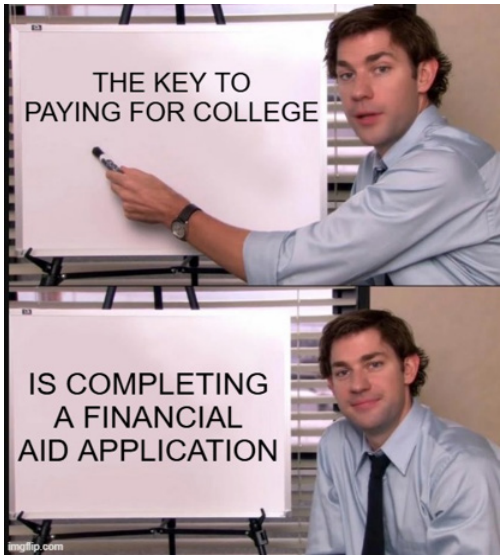


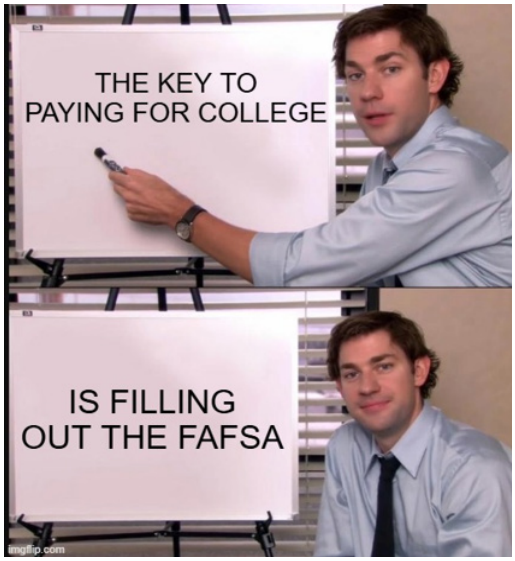
FAFSA & Alt App Memes

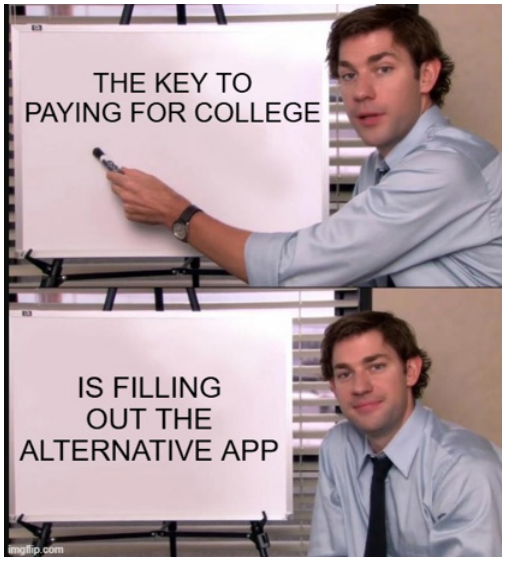




FAFSA & Alt App Memes







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FAFSA & Alt App Memes





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FAFSA & Alt App Memes





FAFSA & Alt App Memes





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Best Practices and Recommendations

To ensure students and families receive the support they need through the financial aid process, consider the following.

- Plan early
- Identify key audiences
  - Students
  - Parents
  - Volunteers, etc.
- Plan your message and communication method for each audience group
- Utilize different communication methods to best fit the needs of your students and families
  - Robocalls
  - Mass emails
  - Flyers, etc.
- Send periodic reminders prior to FAFSA opening date
- Send periodic reminders prior to any financial aid application completion workshops