

Welcome Back, College Access Practitioners!

We hope this newsletter finds you refreshed and reenergized as we prepare for another amazing academic year!

First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the college access practitioners and high school counselors who journeyed with us last season during an unprecedented financial aid cycle. The tremendous dedication you poured into assisting your students and their families has not gone unnoticed. Since March, Texas students have completed an additional 100,000 FAFSAs, and you played a big part in that success!

At TxCAN, we believe that aligning efforts across the state will help college access providers achieve a greater impact than any one provider could alone. It's this spirit of collaboration and collective action that led TxCAN to come together this summer to support practitioners, students, and families. This summer, with the generous support of the Gates Foundation, Meadows Foundation, and the Emergency FAFSA Funds, TxCAN launched both regional and statewide initiatives to assist the Class of 2024 in completing their FAFSA, aiming for Texas to achieve a 58% FAFSA completion rate.

As of August 2nd, Texas sits at 59% FAFSA Completion. Although we are still behind where we were last year, we feel great about the way Texas rallied this summer. Thank you for giving it your all and returning for another school year to light the way for your students and their families.

At TxCAN we are excited to bring you another year of updates, resources, and professional development opportunities in our upcoming newsletters. Here's to an extraordinary year of learning, growth, and endless inspiration!

Latest FAFSA News

Breaking News: 2025-26 FAFSA To Open December 1

FSA just announced that the 2025-26 FAFSA will be released on **December 1, 2024, with full, end-to-end functionality**. The outreach tools and resources that typically accompany the form will be released in advance and FAFSA processing will occur within one to three days of submission. If realized, this announcement means that the system will be fully functional for all students on December 1, 2024.

Read more [here](#)

New Updates Regarding the FSA ID

At the end of July, the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) announced updates to the FSA ID process. Having not found yet a long-term solution for retrieving financial information from the IRS for those contributors without a Social Security number, FSA indicated that for the "foreseeable future," those contributors will continue to be able to manually enter their data into the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Continuing to waive the identity verification process and allowing immediate access into the FAFSA will carry over into the 2025-26 cycle. These contributors are encouraged to submit the required form and documentation so that their identity can be verified prior to identifying a long-term solution that would require a verified FSA ID to access the FAFSA. FSA in the meantime is working on moving the attestation form online.

Read more [here](#)

2025-26 SAI and Pell Guide

The 2025-26 SAI and Pell Guide is now available. This includes methodology for determining eligibility for federal student aid, and the worksheets and tables used to determine a student's SAI for the 2025-26 Award Year.

Read More [here](#)

Request for Information on 2025-26 FAFSA Supporting Materials

The Department opened a new a Request for Information (RFI) soliciting feedback on ways to improve the "help text" of the 2025-2026 FAFSA® form as well as for the development of supporting materials. The Department also seeks

feedback on ways we can provide additional support to ensure applicants and contributors complete the FAFSA and institutions of higher education and state grant agencies have support for the processing and packaging of student aid. You can read more in our [Electronic Announcement \(EA\)](#), or can review the RFI in [the Federal Register](#). The Department encourages comments from:

- institutions of higher education
- schools and school districts (including school and district leaders)
- state educational agencies
- state higher education agencies
- school counselors and college advisors
- college access organizations
- student support professionals
- students and their families
- stakeholders within the education community; and
- other members of the public.

Comments are due by September 13, 2024 and we encourage all of you to submit comments.

TxCAN Blog Updates

Unlocking Opportunities: The Benefits of Applying to Top College through Questbridge National College Match

Discover the transformative power of QuestBridge's National College Match with insights from Dr. Christian Martell, the Director of Student Recruitment at QuestBridge. This unique college admissions and scholarship application process is tailored for high-achieving students from low-income backgrounds, offering waived application fees, guaranteed scholarships, and personalized support to connect them with top institutions like Duke, Rice, and Princeton. Learn how to refer a deserving student today and help them take a bold step toward achieving their academic dreams!

Read more [here](#)

Activate Student Motivation with Motivate Lab's Values Connection Activity

Discover how Motivate Lab's Values Connection Activity transforms student engagement by connecting personal values with educational goals. Building on the success of their relevance affirmation intervention presented as a finalist at the 2023 TxCAN Pitch Competition, this adaptable activity is now available across advising settings from middle school to postsecondary levels. Learn how this evidence-based approach can help students find meaning and motivation in their academic journey.

Read more [here](#)

Engaging Parents in the College Planning Journey: Effective Communication Strategies

The college planning process can seem overwhelming for parents due to the numerous choices involved. However, parents play a crucial role in their child's postsecondary success by offering insights, advice, and encouragement during challenging times. Counselors and advisors support parents by providing the necessary tools and knowledge for effective college planning. Engaging parents early on is essential for guiding them through this complex process.

Read more [here](#)

Partner Events and Webinars

uAspire Webinars

Learning from the 24-25 FAFSA and Preparing for 25-26

This past year has seen unprecedented FAFSA challenges for students and families as they apply for financial aid, with some still experiencing barriers well into the summer. Even with these challenges persisting, those providing FAFSA support—school counselors, college access and success providers, and others—need to step back and share strategies and best practices to make the 25-26 FAFSA a much better experience for students. Hear from uAspire as they we discuss critical learnings from advising students and training counselors across the country, share the best practices we plan to leverage when the next FAFSA launches, and highlight where we plan to continue to advocate for improvements.

Date & Time: Wednesday August 21, 2024 ,1pm CST | Register [Here](#)

ACT Webinars

Why Host a College Application Event: Insights from ACAC 2023 School of Excellence Awardees

Join ACT for an insightful webinar where you'll discover:

- The importance of hosting a college application event
- Innovative methods to engage and reach students
- Effective ways to remove barriers that prevent students from applying to a postsecondary institution

Date & Time: Friday, August 23, 2024, 11 am CST | Register [Here](#)

College Board Counselor Workshops

This year's workshops will provide timely updates on College Board programs and services so you're ready to support students for the 2024-25 school year.

Topics include:

- Updates and information about the Digital SAT Suite of Assessments, including Big Future and Connections
- AP Program Updates
- Big Future College Planning Resources

Counselor Workshops (For returning counselors and General Updates)

- Tuesday, Aug 27, 2024, 12 pm CST
- Thursday, Sep 5, 2024, 9 am CST
Wednesday, Sep 11, 2024, 11 pm CST
- Thursday, Sep 12, 2024, 9 am CST

Counselor Workshops (New Counselors)

- Thursday, Aug 29, 2024, 1 pm CST
- Tuesday, Sep 10, 2024, 9 am CST

[Register Here](#)

uAspire & TxCAN

Financial Aid Student Support Hub

TxCAN is excited to partner with uAspire to provide free financial aid workshops and live support to help students complete their FAFSA this Fall. As we kick off the school year, students can now take advantage of the live help support to create their FSA IDs.

Please encourage your students to explore our webinar offerings and our resource library which includes checklists, guides, videos, and more to help them confidently navigate the financial aid process.

[TxCAN/uAspire Site for Students and Families](#)

Love what you are reading and enjoying our updates? Share this newsletter with a friend or colleague and have them [sign-up](#) to receive our emails.

About TxCAN

The [Texas College Access Network \(TxCAN\)](#) connects and supports college access initiatives across Texas, to increase college access for all Texas students—especially those from the least advantaged backgrounds. TxCAN is a special initiative of [Educate Texas](#) at [Communities Foundation of Texas](#).

[Learn more about the TxCAN team here](#) and contact us at txcan@cftexas.org.

About The Author

This Newsletter was brought to you by Gina Moraida, Associate RGV FOCUS. She supports TxCAN's work by maintaining digital communication and supporting the work of the TxCAN Director and Deputy Director Associate. Gina has worked in the college access and non-profit world for 10 years. She began her career as a college adviser for the UT Austin Advise Texas program where she provided direct support to over 1,000 students and families in the Rio Grande Valley. Prior to joining Educate Texas, Gina worked at College Advising Corps where she led and supported the development, implementation, and management of mission-critical products and projects designed to support and increase student impact across the nation.

If you would like to connect with Gina, you can email her at gmoraida@cftexas.org.

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