

**Attachment
7A**

**PLANNING A
FINANCIAL AID
AWARENESS
PROGRAM**

Although it might seem simple to plan a financial aid awareness program, there are many aspects that you should consider to have it run as smoothly as possible.

For instance, there are steps you can take to ensure that you have a large and attentive audience. It requires planning well in advance and paying careful attention to detail, but the results will be worth it.

Scheduling the program

The first three steps in planning your financial aid awareness program are to decide on a location (and facility), a date, and a time.

You might be able to have the program in your school's auditorium or cafeteria. But perhaps your school's facilities aren't equipped with the space or the audiovisual equipment you

will need. Or it might be that you are planning a district-wide or regional financial aid awareness program and you need a central location that is easily accessible to parents and students throughout a large geographic area. Also consider spaces within the community that are likely to make families more at ease because they are familiar with them. Examples include places of worship and community centers.

Selecting a location and facility

Here is a list of questions to keep in mind when selecting a location and facility:

1. Is the facility in a convenient location? (Can families who depend on public transportation attend easily?)
2. Is parking adequate?
3. Is the room large enough to comfortably seat the number of people you expect?
4. Is there enough space for participants to spread out their materials and have room to write?
5. Is the room well lit?
6. Can the room's lighting be adjusted when using audiovisual equipment?
7. Is the facility/room accessible to participants with disabilities?
8. Are microphones needed?
9. What are your audiovisual needs?
 - Are they available on-site?
 - Is there an overhead projector?
 - Does it have an extra light bulb?
 - Is there a screen that's at least 8' x 8' (preferably 10' x 10')?
 - Is there a TV?
 - Is there a VCR?
10. Are these items available on-site or must they come from another location?
 - Is there a rental charge or setup fee?
11. Is the temperature of the room adjustable?
12. Are extra chairs available if there is an overflow crowd?
13. Is there a charge for the room?

- Is it within your budget?
- 14. Is the facility/room available for the date(s) you have in mind?
- 15. Are all video materials closed-captioned?
- 16. Do you need any bilingual materials?
- 17. Is child care available for parents who need it?

Once you determine the answers to these questions, you can select your site.

Now that you have a location and facility, it's time to choose a date.

Selecting a date

Usually the period from early December to the middle of January is the prime time for a financial aid program.

- o You don't want to have the program so early in the fall that the participants forget what they learned before they actually complete the

FAFSA (or before the FAFSA is available).

- o You don't want to hold the program so late in the winter that many schools' financial aid deadlines have passed.

After you narrow down the time frame, you need to look carefully for potential conflicts that would prevent people from attending.

For example, planning a financial aid program on the same night as your school's basketball season opener or during the community's winter jazz fest means you probably won't get the large crowd you hope for.

You should consider such things as:

- o Is school in session that day (that is, the date isn't during a vacation break)?
- o Does the date conflict with any holidays, religious observances, or planned school closings?

- o Are school sporting events or other extracurricular activities being held that day?
 - What times do they begin and end?
 - How much of your potential audience would be involved?
- o Are there any major community-wide events occurring on that date?

- o Is the date far enough in advance that you have time to publicize the program and parents have enough time to make plans to come?

You probably won't be able to avoid every possible conflict, but if you find a date when there are no major events affecting your school's population, you are more likely to draw a crowd to your financial aid program.

If you are located in a part of the country that has cold winters, it would be wise also to schedule a "snow date" when you set up the program.

Selecting a time

Once you have a place and date, you need to set times for the program to begin and end.

When setting the time to begin, remember to allow time for parents to get home from work and have some dinner before driving to the program. On the other hand, starting too late in the evening

means almost certain snoring before the session is over.

Set a time for the program to end as well. People usually like to know in advance how long they need to stay. Try to stick to the times you publicize.

Typically, a time range from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. works best. (The financial aid awareness program in Attachment 7B should run about two-and-one-half hours.)

Be sure, however, to consider any special patterns and needs in your area. For instance, in some areas, a weekend program or an afternoon program might be more effective than an evening program.

A checklist to help you keep track of all these planning items can be found at the end of this Attachment. You can photocopy it and use a copy for planning each of your events.

Selecting a presenter

Now that you've decided on the basic logistics, it's time to select a presenter for your program.

You can be the presenter! In Attachment 7B, you will find the information and overheads you need to conduct a two-and-one-half hour financial aid program at your school.

With the information you learned in the high school counselor workshop, you are well prepared to lead a financial aid awareness program for parents and students.

If you want the presenter to be someone other than yourself, brainstorm about possible speakers who have the knowledge and experience to present financial aid information accurately. Look for good public speakers who can hold an audience's attention for more than two hours.

You might consider asking a financial aid administrator from a postsecondary institution near the facility where you'll be having the program.

As an alternative approach, you could have two or more speakers take a team-teaching approach, as the high school counselor workshop did, or use a panel approach. This can provide some variety in financial aid experience. Be careful, however, not to have so many speakers that all the necessary information can't be covered in two and one-half hours. If you have two or more speakers, make sure they coordinate their presentations to avoid covering the same topics.

Announcement and notification

You can't publicize your financial aid awareness program too much! Get the word out as early as possible and in as many ways as possible.

Consider the following:

- o advertisements and/or articles in local newspaper(s);
- o flyers and/or posters in school;

- o announcements on the school's public address system;
 - o advertisements and/or articles in the school newspaper;
 - o a notice in the parent/teacher/student association (PTSA) newsletter;
 - o a direct mailing to parents;
 - o announcements at PTSA meetings;
 - o flyers or posters within the community (for example, at grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations, recreation centers, convenience stores, places of worship, and community centers);
 - o notices to social service agencies; **and**
 - o public service announcements on local TV and radio.
- Think of other publicity sources that might work well in your area or school.

- o For example, some schools send a copy of the FAFSA home with every senior. You might want to staple an announcement about the financial aid awareness program to the front of each FAFSA.

Every announcement should include at least:

- o the key subject points that will be covered in the program, such as giving

- instructions on how to complete the FAFSA;
- o the date and the “snow date”;
- o the location, including the address and room;
- o the time and program length; **and**
- o a telephone number to call for more information.

You might also include the presenter’s name and affiliation, parking instructions, child-care information, and other important details.

Event Planning Checklist

The Event Planning Checklist on the following pages is designed to help you produce a useful financial aid awareness program. The checklist itemizes the considerations just described.

Feel free to use this checklist, adapt it, or create one of your own.

Remember, with good planning, your financial aid awareness program is sure to be a success.

Event Planning Checklist

Event Title		Date		
Time		Date Confirmed	Snow Date	
Facility 1 Name	Facility 2 Name	Facility 3 Name	Facility Selected (Name)	
Contact Name	Address	Telephone	Date Confirmed	
Presenter	Address	Telephone	Date Confirmed	
FACILITY SELECTION	Facility 1	Facility 2	Facility 3	Facility Selected
Available for date desired? Snow date?				
Convenient location? (Public transportation?)				
Adequate parking? Fee?				
How many will room comfortably seat?				
Desks or table tops for audience?				
Lighting - Good? Adjustable?				
Accessible for persons with disabilities?				
Microphone needed? Available?				
Other AV needs available on site? (Overhead projectors and screen? TV and VCR? Other?)				

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Event Planning Checklist				
Room temperature adjustable?				
Extra chairs available?				
Charge for room, facility, or equipment?				
Other considerations? (Bilingual materials? Child care?)				

Event Planning Checklist				
DATE SELECTION	Facility 1	Facility 2	Facility 3	Facility Selected
<i>Selected date(s)?</i>				
<i>Facility available?</i>				
<i>School in session?</i>				
<i>Holidays?</i>				
<i>Conflicting events?</i>				
TIME SELECTION	Facility 1	Facility 2	Facility 3	Facility Selected
<i>Selected time(s)?</i>				
<i>Facility available?</i>				
<i>Convenient for parents?</i>				
LIST OF POTENTIAL PRESENTERS	Asked? Y or N	Accepted? Y or N	Confirmed in writing?	Other notes
1.				
2.				

Attachment 7A—How to Plan and Conduct a Financial Aid Awareness Program

3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Event Planning Checklist			
PUBLICITY	Yes	No	Notes
<i>Ad in local newspaper(s)</i>			
<i>Article in local newspaper(s)</i>			
<i>Flyers/posters in school</i>			
<i>Announcements on school's PA system</i>			
<i>Article in school newspaper</i>			
<i>Ad in school newspaper</i>			
<i>Notice in parent newsletter</i>			
<i>Direct mailer to parents</i>			
<i>PTSA publicity</i>			
<i>Flyers/posters in community</i>			
<i>Notices to social service agencies</i>			
<i>TV/radio ad (public service announcement)</i>			

Other			
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