

SESSION**7**

How to Plan and Conduct a Financial Aid Awareness Program

Instructor's Notes

Main Objective: Participants will have the resources to conduct a financial aid awareness program for high school juniors and seniors and their parents.

Time Estimate:

Lecture 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

This session will help you to plan and conduct a successful financial aid awareness program at your school.

In this session, we're using the term "financial aid awareness program" to mean an information session for juniors and seniors in high school and their parents. However, freshman and sophomore students who want to attend shouldn't be discouraged. The program is designed to teach them about financial aid in general and, specifically, how to accurately complete the FAFSA.

In your Trainee Guide, please turn to Session 7, page 2.

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PLANNING THE PROGRAM

When planning a financial aid awareness program, you'll need to consider:

» You'll want to read aloud the items on each overhead; they are not given in the text of your guide. In addition, feel free to augment the information with your knowledge and experience. Be sure to watch the time available, however.

- o selecting a facility, (OH 1)
- o scheduling the program, (OH 2)
- o choosing the presenter, (OH 3)

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- Counselors can also get a little help from their friends—the financial aid administrators at local postsecondary schools.

o and publicizing your program. (OH 4)

You'll find Attachment 7A in your Trainee Guide covers these areas.

» Your copy is at the end of the session in this guide.

The attachment and its checklist will be a great help as you get ready for a financial aid awareness program. It covers the nitty-gritty details you need to consider and deal with to put together a successful program. For instance, the best time to schedule this type of program is usually some time between early December and the middle of January.

We aren't going to go over Attachment 7A now. But remember it's here. You'll want refer to it often as you plan a program—it's a valuable planning aid filled with helpful tips and reminders. The checklist at the end is especially useful.

CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM: INVOLVING STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN FINANCIAL AID AWARENESS

What we're going to cover now is the meat of the program you'll be presenting.

Your mission, now that you've chosen to accept it, is to present postsecondary financial aid information in a clear, understandable way.

» Direct participants to Attachment 7B in the Trainee Guide. Your copy is at the end of the session in this guide.

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TG-Attachment 7A

TG-Attachment 7B

Instructor's Notes

The material in Attachment 7B provides you with the information you need to present a two-and-one-half hour financial aid awareness program. The text discusses the information we covered here today in a way that's appropriate for you to use with parents and high school students. There is a section with specific handouts as well as overheads that can be duplicated and used as handouts.

The program is divided into three parts.

- o Part I provides background information about student eligibility requirements for federal aid, an overview of federal student aid programs, and information on other sources of financial aid.
- o Part II familiarizes parents with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, called the FAFSA, by walking through the form. It also explains how postsecondary schools “package” individual students’ financial aid awards. In addition, Part II has information to help students and parents compare financial aid awards from different schools.
- o Part III is reserved for showing the video “School Shopping Tips,” which is designed to help a family select the institution best-suited for the student. It was prepared by ED.

One word about the FAFSA: It's scary to most people. So, you'll want to emphasize a few pieces of common-sense advice throughout the FAFSA portion of the financial aid awareness program:

- o Parents and students should **read and follow the FAFSA instructions carefully.**
- o When the FAFSA says “you” and “your” it always refers to the student.
- o The FAFSA should be completed as a family.

Walk through of the FAFSA

HANDOUTS AND RESOURCES

One key to successful presentations is good handouts. It's important that the participants have the tools and information in front of them to follow along during your presentation.

As mentioned earlier, the overhead masters provided in Attachment 7B are designed to be duplicated onto acetate film and projected during your presentation and/or photocopied and made available to your participants as handouts.

Be sure to have sufficient copies of **all** handouts for **all** audience members.

You might want to distribute handouts as the audience arrives.

If you want to distribute other items during your presentation, have someone available to help you. This way, the audience gets the handouts as needed and won't have extra items to rustle or read during your presentation.

You might want to have other resources on hand that would be helpful to mention in your presentation or to distribute to the participants. If so, be sure to explain what these handouts are and how they can be useful. If appropriate, hold up a copy.

These resources can also make a good reference table "library" for participants to look through at the end of the presentation.

Some examples of resources you might have on hand are:

- o copies of *Funding Your Education*;

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Handouts

Resources

- o a listing of local scholarships with deadlines and contact information;
- o the schedule of upcoming college representative visits to your school;
- o the grants and scholarships offered by or through your state postsecondary education agency; **and**
- o the locations and dates for PSAT, SAT, and/or ACT testing in your area.

Additional Resources

Additional useful publications and other resources are listed in the Counselor's Handbook.

Please open your Counselor's Handbook and turn to Appendix A. A listing of available publications and software begins on page 86.

Let's take a moment to look at some of them.

- o You've already seen *Funding Your Education*.
- o *Higher Education Opportunities for Minorities and Women* lists these opportunities; it also lists more than opportunities for just minorities and women.
- o *AWARE Early Awareness Software* was developed by ED to provide early information to middle school and high school students about postsecondary education opportunities, costs of attendance, and availability of financial aid.
- o *Preparing Your Child for College* is a good resource for parents.

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Other resources

Note to Instructor:
Attachment 7B includes a handout on Federal Student Financial Aid Important Telephone Numbers, Addresses, and Information. It tells how to order the publications listed here.

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- o *Make it Happen!* is aimed at students in grades 8 through 12 and is available for a nominal fee.

REACHING “AT-RISK” STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS

Early intervention is particularly important for “at-risk” students. Several of the just-mentioned resources are aimed at middle school students, students in the first years of secondary school, and parents.

There are additional steps you can take to reach “at-risk” students and their parents. Please turn to pages 72 and 73 in your Counselor’s Handbook. These two pages describe early intervention programs, such as:

- o involving parents by providing evening or weekend information sessions;
- o setting up tutoring or mentoring programs using local college students;
- o providing first-hand information by inviting recent college graduates to talk to students, providing information on college fairs, and organizing tours of campuses for parents and students;
- o providing academic counseling, which is the heart of early intervention; **and**
- o developing cooperative programs with local postsecondary schools.

You now have the basic tools necessary to plan and conduct a successful financial aid awareness program.

Are there any questions about this information before we end this session?

Early intervention programs