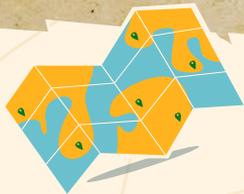# Your Travel Guides:

Jenny Witcofski
Financial Aid Counselor
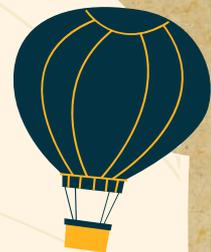Nebraska Methodist College

Susan Stephenson, FAAC®
Higher Education Senior Consultant
Eide Bailly LLP

Session Navigation Map

01
Federal Landmarks
Directions straight from the source. If you need to prove it or cite it, stop here!

02
National Guides & Compas Points
Top travel tips with maps you can read, follow, AND successfully fold back up!

03
Regional Routes & Scenic Overlooks
When the rules are gray, friendly regional guides help you see the terrain.

04
State & Local Pathways
Not all regulations are federal. You need to know your local terrain, too.

05
Other Essential Supplies
Snacks, flashlights, and extra socks: the essentials that can help save the day.

06
Planning Your Trip
Sometimes the map is the same, but travelers take different pathways.

Federal Resources

Statute

HEA

What's in the law. Higher Education Act of 1965 *as amended*. Congress provides authority to agencies.

Regulations

CFR

Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter VI of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Implements the law.

Sub-Regulatory

ED, OPE, FSA

Operational guidance; NOT legally binding, but agency may explains HOW regs are interpreted.

Where to find the federal things

- **Complete Higher Education Act as amended**
  (878-page PDF from govinfo.gov; Government Publishing Office)

- **United States Code** (USC)
  All official statutes of U.S.; multi-volume publication issued every six years

  ⊕ Title 20 - EDUCATION
  (Sections 1 - 10013)

- **Code of Federal Regulations** (CFR)
  All regulations promulgated by executive agencies; updated and issued annually

  CFR Title 34=**Education**, Subtitle B=**Regs of Offices of ED**, Chapter VI=**OPE, ED,** Parts 600–694

		Part / Section
▼ **Title 34** Education		
▼ **Subtitle B** Regulations of the Offices of the Department of Education		100 – 699
▼ **Chapter VI** Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education		600 – 699
▶ **Part 600** Institutional Eligibility Under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as Amended		600.1 – 600.58

- **Federal Register**
  Federal agency rules, proposed rules, notices, and executive orders; issued daily

  Neg Reg → NPRM → Public Comment → Final Regs → July 1 implementation

Deeper Dive into the Federal Register

FSA Knowledge Center Federal Register daily postings

- **2/13/2026:** Comment Request: 2027–2028 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- **2/5/2026:** Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) **NPRM**

  > PUBLICATION DATE: January 30, 2026
  > POSTED DATE: February 05, 2026
  > SUBJECT: Reimagining and Improving Student Education
  > FR TYPE: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)
  > NPRM COMMENT DUE DATE: March 2, 2026

- **12/11/2025:** 2025–2026 Award Year **Deadline Dates** for Reports and Other Records Associated with the FAFSA
  - *Valid ISIR receipt deadline = September 19, 2026*
  - *Verification documents deadline = 120 days after student's last date of enrollment or September 19, 2026*

- **11/23/2025:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) **Information to be Verified** for the 2026–2027 Award Year

Sub-Regulatory Guidance Resources
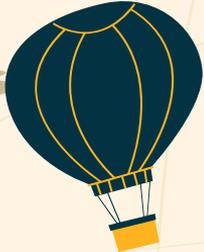
Federal Student Aid Handbook

AVG, nine **Volumes** and several **Appendices**

OPE's Q&A and FAQs pages

Address various aspects of federal student aid.

Dear Colleague Letters (DCLs)

Electronic Announcements (EAs)

The two primary communication types used to convey TIV guidance.

Policy guidance or interpretations of law/regs

Timely, operational, or procedural info

PUBLICATION DATE: January 30, 2026
DCL ID: GEN-26-01
SUBJECT: 2026–27 Federal Pell Grant Maximum and Minimum Award Amounts

SUMMARY: This letter contains the 2026–27 Award Year Federal Pell Grant Program maximum and minimum award amounts.

Dear Colleague:

(GENERAL-26-10) Public Comment Period Open for 2027-28 FAFSA® materials
2026-02-13

POSTED DATE: February 13, 2026
AUTHOR: Federal Student Aid
ELECTRONIC ANNOUNCEMENT ID: GENERAL-26-10
SUBJECT: Public Comment Period Open for 2027–28 FAFSA® materials

(APP-26-01) 2026–27 Federal School Code List of Participating Schools
2026-02-04

(ANN-26-02) Live Internet Webinars – Wednesday Webinar Series, Winter 2026
2026-01-13

(CB-26-01) Deadline for 2026–27 Underuse Penalty Waiver for the Campus-Based Programs Is Feb. 2, 2026
2026-01-26

(ANN-26-01) Online Training Course – One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) Overview
2026-01-06

Knowledge Center

A centralized repository within FSA Partner Connect that provides access to Federal Student Aid resources, including policy guidance, announcements, training materials, and technical documentation.

⭐ **What's New**

(GENERAL-26-10) Public Comment Period Open for 2027-28 FAFSA® materials
FEBRUARY 13, 2026

Comment Request: 2027-2028 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
FEBRUARY 13, 2026

(GENERAL-26-09) Washington's Birthday Federal Holiday Processing and Customer Service Hours
FEBRUARY 12, 2026

William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program
FEBRUARY 10, 2026

Reimagining and Improving Student Education

View All Recent Posts

🔗 **Featured Information**

E-App and Third-Party Servicer Inquiry Form Updates

FAFSA Simplification Information

Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment Information

Prison Education Programs

Disaster Assistance

⚡ **Quick Reference**

FSA Handbook

Knowledge Center FAQs

Federal Student Aid Data Center

Dear Colleague Letters

Electronic Announcements

Foreign School Updates

Operational Guides & Technical References

➢ **COD** Technical Reference
(for 2025-2026 as of May 2025)

➢ **EDConnect** & **EDExpress** Software and User Guides

➢ FAFSA Specifications **Guide**
(for 2026-2027 as of 1.21.2026)

➢ FAFSA **Issue Alerts**

➢ **FISAP** Form & Desk Reference
(Final 2026-2027 form as of 9.26.2025)

➢ **NSLDS** Enrollment Reporting Guide *(new February 2026)*

➢ Student Aid Index (SAI) & Pell Grant Eligibility **Guide**
(for 2026-2027 as of 8.25.2025)

FSA Library

Knowledge Center

Can use sub-regulatory tools to get to statutes

2024-25 FSA Handbook Appendices

Appendix A: Directory of resources for technical info and specialized assistance with managing FSA programs.
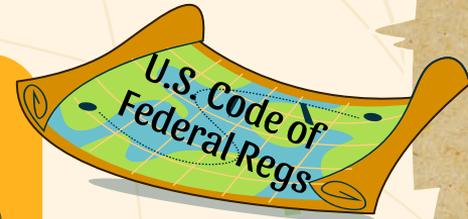
Appendix B: One-stop shop for info on required actions when a student dies.

Appendix C: Description of the FSA Assessments.

Appendix D: Summarizes IRS forms.

Appendix E: Reporting and disclosure requirements..

Appendix F: HEA Table of Contents with cross references between the HEA and the U.S. Code.

U.S. Code of Federal Regs

FSA Handbook

Training & Conditioning

- **Federal Student Aid Training Center**
  Online self-paced training on various learning tracks and systems, plus live and recorded webinars

- **FSA Training Conference**
  Info for current/upcoming federal aid conferences and links to past recordings and presentations

- **Financial Aid Toolkit**

LEARN ABOUT FINANCIAL AID

Understand the basics of federal student aid, the FAFSA® process, and loan repayment.

CONDUCT OUTREACH

Get tips on hosting events; sample financial aid night PowerPoint presentations; and suggested messages for social media, emails, or newsletters.

GET TRAINING

Find training or conference opportunities or curriculum materials for counselors' professional development.

SEARCH TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Search our resource library by content, audience, and topic.

Also: **StudentAid.gov**

FSA **YouTube** Channel

Side treks:

- [Subscribe](#) to daily or weekly **Knowledge Center updates**

- [Subscribe](#) to **eCFR** for changes in ED policy

- Receive **Partner emails** with product updates, upcoming training opportunities, student outreach tips, etc.

- Subscribe to **FSA Tech** Listserv to pose technical questions about FSA systems and software. FSA system developers answer to everyone on list.

- **Help Center** main website; **contact info** for FSA Offices.

02
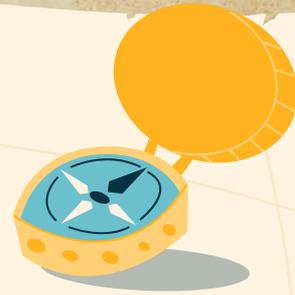
National Guides & Compass Points

Top travel tips, with maps you can read, follow, AND successfully fold back up!

Easier Travel with NASFAA Tools

Compliance & Policy Tools

Climb the highest regulatory peaks with AskRegs, checklists, guides, and monographs.

Advocacy & Research

Guideposts for how to promote programs that remove barriers to access.

News & Engagement

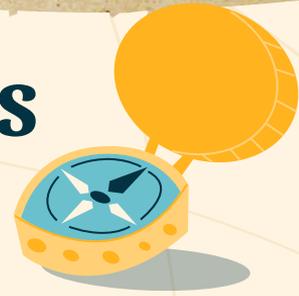Keep on top of the latest higher ed weather forcasts with Daily News, socials, OTC, etc.

Training & Development

From conferences to certifications, this is your learning pathway

Other stuff

Compliance Compass Points

AskRegs: Everyone's favorite! Research regulatory questions and answers, or ask a burning compliance question you have.

Student Aid Reference Desk: Open-access site that compiles aid administration with direct links to federal regs, legislative text and ED guidance.

Monographs: In-depth guidance on tricky regulatory issues, like developing a Cost of Attendance or using PJ in Eligibility Determination and Need Analysis.

**Compiled TIV Regulations**: Major parts of the CFR, with recent changes highlighted.

How-To Guides: Features comprehensive info on specific topics like Subscription-Based Programs or Consumer Info & Disclosure Requirements.

Quick Reference Guides and Reference Sheets: shorter topic-related info sheets with practical directions and best practices.

Self-Study Guides: Extensive topic lessons with exercises and quizzes for training, independent study, or use with Professional Credentials test qualification.

Continued Compliance Tools
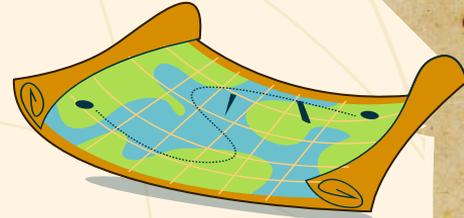
NASFAA's **Compliance Engine** consists of two modules:

- **Self-Evaluation Checklists:** Evaluate programs, create and manage assignments, and set deadlines based on specific goals. Templates have links to regs, spots to track responses, and checkboxes to mark when complete. Free with membership.

- **P&P Compliance Builder**: Guides you, step by step, through the creation of a centralized, accessible policies and procedures manual. Annual subscription required.

Clock-Hour Programs Toolkit: Compiled lists of Student Aid Reference Desk resources and AskRegs questions about clock hours. Both are open-access

Administrative Capability Toolkit: Links to help ensure your institution is compliant with such tenants as being adequately resourced, adhering to the separation of functions, information sharing electronic processes, recordkeeping, and contingency planning.

National Student Aid Profile: Published annually, this resource provides detailed info about each of the federal aid programs authorized under Title IV of the HEA.

News & Engagement Paths

- **Today's News**: Subscribe and read the latest news, events, and trends from a daily morning email.

- "**Off the Cuff**" Podcast

- NASFAA in the News = Recent Press (both online and with Daily News)

- **NASFAA Communities** Slack Channel(s) @ nasfaa.org/communities.

- **Voices of NASFAA** (on LinkedIn):
  - Ask Me Anything (AMA)series: open forums to engage directly with experts in the field.
  - Stories: Specific topic discussions hosted by a variety of FAAs and NASFAA staff.

- **Social Media**
  - **LinkedIn**
  - **Facebook**
  - **X/Twitter**
  - **Instagram**
  - **Bluesky**

Training Trails

- **Webinars**: live and on-demand; package contains at least 12 webinars a year (usually more); includes policy updates and NASFAA business meeting.

- **Annual Conference**: June 29–July 2, 2026, Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, National Harbor, MD (DC adjacent); 60th anniversary celebration.

- **Virtual Conference**: July 13–17, 2026; institutional access to live and on-demand sessions for one price.

- **Leadership & Legislative Conference & Expo**: Save the date for next year — February 21–24, 2027, Washington, DC.

- **Events Calendar**: includes webinar series, regional and state conferences, NASFAA U courses, etc.

- **Executive Leadership Collective**: exclusive professional development opportunity for experienced financial aid leaders.

Training Trails Continued

- **NASFAA U** Online Courses: scheduled, interactive, and instructor-led.

- **Professional Credentials**: Earn recognition for topic-specific content mastery (16 available).
  - *Credential earners **honor roll***

- **Self-Study Guides** available through courses or individually for credential prep.

- NASFAA's accredited **Certified Financial Aid Administrator**® Program awards the FAAC® designation to enhance professional credibility.
  - ***The 100+ Club***: *Special recognition and benefits for those with 100 or more certification points.*
  - *FAAC® Slack Channel, LinkedIn group, coffee chats (coming soon).*

- **R2T4 Specialist**: newer offering and professional designation; must complete NASFAA U Course with a 93% or higher and pass exam.

Advocacy & Research Routes

- **Core Advocacy Principles:**
  - *Increasing access to higher education, including early awareness and outreach*
  - *Simplifying student aid systems*
  - *Encouraging college persistence & completion*
  - *College savings and financial education*
  - *Minimizing student indebtedness and emphasizing grant and work aid*
  - *Supporting the primacy of need-based aid*

- How to **Take Action** and **State Advocacy Toolkit**

- **Advocacy Pipeline**: Brings FAAs to Capitol Hill to present their perspective to lawmakers.

- **Rapid Response Network**: Invitation goes out in August and service lasts a year.

- **Legislative Tracker:** Comprehensive look at legislation introduced in Congress.

- **Policy initiatives**, **task forces**, and **thought groups**

Other cool travel tips

- **Membership directory**: Find colleagues in your state, region, and across the nation.

- **Speaker and Mentor Directory**: Find a mentor for yourself or staff, or someone to speak at a conference, meeting, or high school event.

- **New Aid Administrator Toolkit**: Helps with training and onboarding.

- **Research and Data Sources:** includes annual Student Aid Profile overview of aid programs, benchmarking surveys, and FAA surveys.

- **Diversity Leadership Program** (DLP): NASFAA selects one per region per year to participate and develop as a leader at the state, regional, and national level.

- **Community Resource Library**
  - Documents, plans, templates, and samples organized by topic area (e.g., career development, customer service, compliance) submitted by peers from a variety of institution types and sizes.

Continued cool travel tips

- **Career Center**: Post and explore open positions.

- **Buyer's Guide**: Search associate members' offerings by service

- **Ethics & Values**, includes NASFAA's
  - **Statement of Ethical Principles**
  - **Code of Conduct**

- **College Cost Transparency Initiative** (CCTI): Show your institution's commitment to providing students with clear, transparent, and accurate estimates of costs to attend your school. not strictly NASFAA, but can be accessed from NASFAA site.

- **Implicit Bias Toolkit**: Suggestions on how to build policies and deploy procedures that reduce the operational influence of unconscious bias.

- **Book Reviews**: Written by NASFAA members who evaluate recent books that focus on trending higher ed issues.

- **Volunteer opportunities**: Look for ways to get involved!

03

Regional Routes & Scenic Overlooks

When the rules are gray, friendly regional guides help you see the terrain.

Travel the 8-state Rocky Mountain Region

Training & Events

Conferences and webinars and institutes, oh my!

Leadership Pipeline

Set your course for leadership through mentorship and training.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Explore diverse perspectives for a more equitable future.

Inside RMASFAA

Discover the scenic beauty of this org and find your volunteer pathway!

rmasfaa.org

Three Pillars of Training & Events

Summer Institute

Nationally recognized, intensive, week-long financial aid training bootcamp for all levels.

June 7–12, 2026
Wichita, KS

Annual Conference

Learn from leading experts and federal trainers while making lasting connections with your colleagues.

October 11–14, 2026
Fargo, ND

Resource Hub

The Training Committee is offering free webinars as well as tips, Roundtables, and FAAC® workshops.
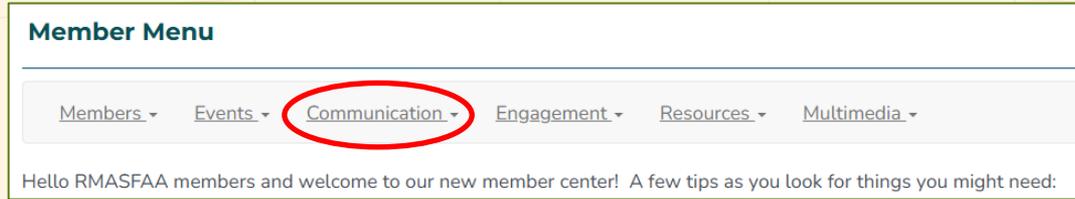
Webinar schedule
CFAA® exam prep courses

Other RMASFAA Connecting Points

- The **Exchange Blog**; *enter your email to subscribe.*
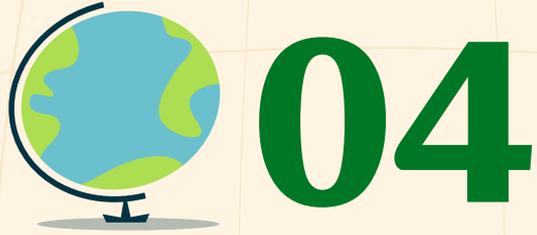
- Subscribe to **RMASFAA's listserv**

  Log in to rmasfaa.org, navigate to Communication tab:

  Member Menu

  Members ▾   Events ▾   Communication ▾   Engagement ▾   Resources ▾   Multimedia ▾

  Hello RMASFAA members and welcome to our new member center! A few tips as you look for things you might need:

  Go to Message Boards and opt in! You can post messages from here, too.

- Slack Channel **#rmasfaa-region**

  Not part of the NASFAA Communities Slack? **Join here**.
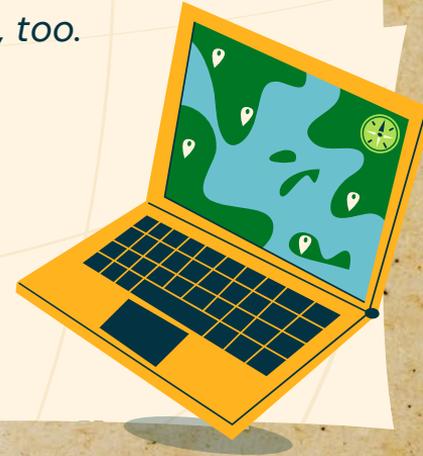
04

State & Local Pathways

Not all regulations are federal.
You need to know your local terrain, too.

Exploring Nebraska's Scenic Byways

- **NeASFAA**
  Subscribe to listserv/newsletter for updates and alerts
  Membership Directory uses a generic login and password

- **EducationQuest**
  Your College Roadmap | To Help Guide You to College
  Resources for professionals: **educationquest.org/professionals/**

- **CCPE**
  Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
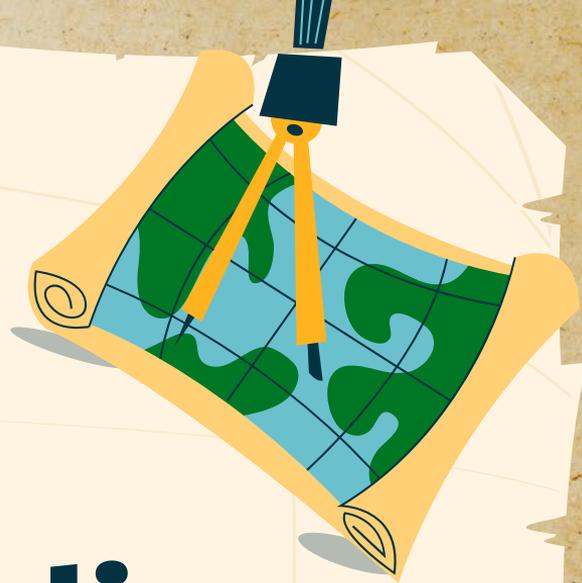 Check out higher ed **reports, data, and dashboards**
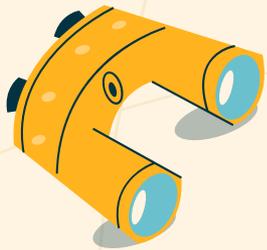
- **NSWERS**
  Nebraska Statewide Workforce & Educational Reporting System
  shows how students move from K–12 to higher ed to jobs

- **NE CTE**
  Nebraska Department of Education Career & Technical
  Education **Resources**

05

Other
Essential Supplies

Snacks, flashlights, and extra socks: the essentials that can help save the day.

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Resources for undocumented students

- **Center for Immigrant and Refugee Advancement** (CIRA): A Nebraska non-profit that provides legal and social services, education rights info, and legal guidance related to student status.

- **Nebraska Appleseed**: A non-profit advocacy and legal organization that supports low-income and undocumented students in navigating college policies and barriers. It maintains one of the most trusted Nebraska-specific scholarship lists for undocumented and DACA students.

- **Nebraska Department of Education Migrant & Latino scholarships.**

- **Nebraska Dream Act (LB 239)** is still in effect (as of January 2026) qualifying undocumented students for in-state tuition at Nebraska public colleges and universities.

- **Empowering Families** is a non-profit community organization in the Panhandle that supports first-generation and immigrant families with scholarship assistance and navigating college and career pathways.

Register for RMASFAA's next webinar:
Best Practices for Supporting Undocumented and Mixed-Status Students;
Thursday, March 26, 1:00-2:30 pm MST/2:00-3:30 pm CST

International Student Resources

- **Education USA** (U.S. Department of State)
  - Provides free, accurate, comprehensive, and current information on choosing schools, how to apply, realistic costs and financing options, including which U.S. institutions offer aid
  - Offers the widely-used *Your 5 Steps to U.S. Study* framework
  - Helps students avoid scams and unaccredited institutions
    - *Also see travel.state.gov for Student Visa info, details on the visa interview, Form I-20, and embassy/consulate process*

- **U.S. Department of Homeland Security** (DHS)
  - Explains F-1 and M-1 visa categories and has a search tool for SEVP-certified schools
  - Provides official guidance on maintaining status, employment, and compliance

- **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services** (USCIS)
  - Info for students and exchange visitors
  - Official guidance on employment eligibility and restrictions

- **eduPASS**
  - Created by Mark Kantrowitz, has broad info about studying in U.S.
  - **Paying for College** section has loan and scholarship info

Higher Education Publications

- **The Chronicle of Higher Education:** A leading national publication covering higher ed policy, leadership, finance, and campus trends with deep reporting and analysis. Paid individual or institutional subscription (limited free articles available).

- **Inside Higher Ed:** A widely read daily news source focused on higher-ed operations, student success, policy, and emerging issues, often more practitioner-focused. Free with optional paid premium newsletters and content.

- **Higher Ed Dive:** A concise, fast-reading news outlet that summarizes major higher-ed developments in finance, regulation, technology, and enrollment. Free (email newsletters and website). Free digital access.

- **The EDU Ledger** (used to be DIVERSE: Issues in Higher Education): A long-standing publication focused on equity, access, student outcomes, and leadership diversity in higher education.

- **University Business:** A practitioner-oriented publication covering higher-ed administration, finance, facilities, HR, compliance, and leadership decision-making. Free digital access.

  - **The Hechinger Report:** A nonprofit, investigative journalism outlet covering education policy and outcomes, including higher-ed affordability and accountability. Free access.

Other Associations & Advocacy Groups

NACE
National Association of Colleges and Employers

NACUBO
National Association of College & University Business Officers

AACRAO
American Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers

SHEEO
State Higher Education Executive Officers Association

AACC
American Association of Community Colleges

NCAN
National College Attainment Network

ACE
American Council on Education

TICAS
The Institute for College Access & Success

WICHE
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

See more higher ed professional associations at **studentaffairs.com**

Audit Resources

Single Audit Compliance Supplement *(for public and nonprofit schools)*
- Issued annually by OMB, this document defines which compliance requirements must be tested for each federal program and where ED has added or emphasized Special Tests and Provisions.
- FA leaders should review the Student Financial Aid Cluster before the audit to better prepare for what auditors will request and review.

Title IV Audit Guides *(for proprietary and foreign schools and third-party servicers)*
- Issued annually by OIG, it provides detailed audit procedures and testing methodology for the other type of IHEs and servicers.

Federal Audit Clearinghouse Search
- The central repository for submitting, processing, and reviewing Single Audit reports of federal grant recipients.
- Look up other schools' audits and Corrective Action Plans to help determine a course of action for your own findings.

Top 10 Audit & Program Review Findings
- Used to be published annually by FSA in school data info, but the last one added was for FY23 and the last Companion Report was in FY22.
- Helpful to follow trends and see where greatest compliance risks are.

Random tools and fun things

User generated resources

- Jeff Pedersen's 2025 Leadership Pipeline Project, a spreadsheet of top resources (rated!) and checklist.

Financial Aid Follies

- Private, informal Facebook Group with 5,000+ members.
- Request to join and answer screening questions.

Finaid-L listserv

- One of the oldest and most widely-used FA listservs for peer-to-peer discussion.
- Hosted through Penn State University's LISTSERV system.
- Subscribe by sending a message to **listserv@lists.psu.edu** with nothing in the subject line and SUBSCRIBE FINAID-L *Your First Name Last Name* in the email body OR send an email to **finaid-l-subscribe-request @lists.psu.edu** with no subject line or message.

Financial Aid Resources, checklist and tips

Splits resources up into type – "core," data & research – then rates them (subjective)

Tool	Description	Value	Resourcefulness	Paid Benefit?
NASFAA AskRegs	A unique benefit for NASFAA members in an updated platform, AskRegs provides a searchable, reliable knowledgebase of answers to financial aid administrators' regulatory questions.	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	You can ask anywhere from basic to high end questions for unusual situations and usually find a match!	Yes
NASFAA Off The Cuff Podcast	General 15-30 minute podcast that delves into developments regarding all functions of Federal Student Aid.	★ ★ ★ ★	A very unbiased podcast, reporting strictly the information and updates.	No
FAFSA Central	FAFSA Central provides timely updates about the form, beta testing, availability of support resources, submission metrics, and more.	★ ★ ★ ★	Able to see daily stats of applications starting, submitted, etc. Can also see FAFSA updates in a general view	No
TEFAQKI	Technical Frequently Asked Questions and Known Issues	★ ★ ★ ★	Very niche areas of problems but very useful for solving seemingly school wide side problems	No
FSA Handbook	Federal Student Aid Handbook. The definitive guide for Title IV compliance	★ ★	Can provide difficult to navigate and based on what you're looking for	No
Free Application for Federal Student Aid	Our jobs revolve around this magical form	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	Over $120 billion in aid each year. All of our problems start here	No
Scholarship Finder	Department of Labor's sponsored scholarship engine. Recommended through Studentaid.gov	★ ★ ★ ★	Generally always up-to-date and very legitimate	No

Tool	Description	Value	Resourcefulness	Paid Benefit?
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems. Compare institutions, retention costs, aid trends, etc.	★ ★ ★ ★	Can be difficult to know what statistic you want	No
College Scorecard	Compare Colleges	★ ★ ★	Useful for knowing your competition for neighbor schools	No

Check out Jeff's spreadsheet on the **RMASFAA Training Resources Hub here.**
Contribute your own content by contacting **training@rmasfaa.org**

Productivity

Tool	Description	Value	Resourcefulness	Paid Benefit?
ChatGPT	Artificial Intelligence Chatbot. Get answers, find inspiration, be more productive.	★★★★★	Helpful for drafting, summarizing, scenario brainstorming, etc.	Depends
Goblin Tools	Collection of small, simple, single-task tools.	★★★★	Helps overwhelming projects become more tactical	No
Gridzzly	Create your own grid paper	★★	Useful but very niche and only called for at minimal times	No
10minutemail	Copy a disposable email to get into websites that require it (i.e. a lot of news sites today)	★★	Niche. Ideal for getting quick news articles without the hassle	No
Wolfram Alpha	Mathematical computation	★★★	Useful for equations you need a refresher on	No

Well-Being

Tool	Description	Value	Resourcefulness	Paid Benefit?
Music Map	Find a music artist related to another one!	★★★	Helpful for getting your music cram sessions!	No
Still Tasty	Is your late-night director food still good in the refrigerator!?	★★★	Don't eat that suspicious food, check first	No
A Soft Murmur	Just need some white noise?	★★★★	Helpful for getting focused without lyrics	No
Sleepy Time	Sleep cycle calculator for days you need to be at your best	★★★★★	Helpful for long days ahead	No
Have I Been Pwned?	Compromised password check	★★★	Helpful to check work emails	No
Harvard	Learn for free from classes at Harvard	★★★★★	Time to learn!	Maybe
Chasms	Visual for applications	★★★★	Help guide people over the phone	No

06

Planning Your Trip
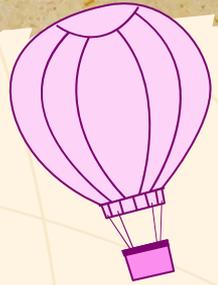
*Sometimes the map is the same,
but travelers take different pathways.*

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Pick Your Pathway

In an R2T4 calc, what is the Date of Determination of withdrawal for an unoffical withdrawal?

1. **Regulatory Pathway:** Code of Federal Regulations [34 CFR 668.22(I)(3)] *Treatment of title IV funds when a student withdraws, Definitions.*

2. **Federal Student Aid Handbook Pathway:** Volume 5, *Withdrawals and the Return of Title IV Funds,* Chapter 1, *General Requirements for Withdrawals and the Return of Title IV Funds,* section on Principles With Unique Applications in the Return of Title IV Aid.

3. **Ask Regs Pathway:** See KA-33439 – How Do You Determine the Date Of the Institution's Determination That the Student Withdrew?

4. **Phone a Friend.** Having connections and asking someone for help is a great start, but be sure to cite the regs if defending something in an audit or updating your P&P! 😊

Pick Your Pathway

I am completely lost as to what is final and what is pending with all the OB3 rules.

1. **Straight from the Sherpa's mouth** (so to speak)**: Federal Register NPRM** published 1/30/2026 for Reimagining & Improving Student Education (RISE).

2. **Department of Education:** Negotiated Rulemaking for Higher Ed 2025 **webpage**.

3. **NASFAA's OB3 Web Center is my go-to:** From the **FSA Changes** tracking doc to webinars to links to regulatory text, I find everything here first.

4. **Playing ostrich:** If I don't know about it, it doesn't exist, right?

Pick Your Pathway

I have two new staff with completely different roles starting the same day. How can I train them?

1. **Send both backpacking to Federal Student Aid's Training Center.** The *FSA Basic Training for New Staff* has it all. They can also do the FSA Fundamentals Series, which consists of an online course followed by an instructor–led virtual workshop.

2. **I'm going the NASFAA Way:** I'm signing them up for NASFAA's New Aid Officer Training Webinar Series of ten webinar recordings that took place in Fall 2025, then registering them for the next NASFAA U Fundamentals of Student Financial Aid Course.

3. **Ridin' the rails to RMASFAA's Summer Institute.** This nationally recognized, intensive week of training will have the perfect level of training, lots of activities, uses NASFAA U materials, and provides great networking opportunities.

4. **I'll do my own training.** This way I can be sure that staff understand not only the regs, but the systems, software, policies, and culture at my institution, too.

Beware of falling off AI cliffs...
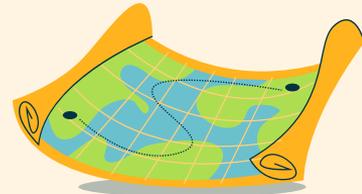
Last, but not least...

Don't get too comfortable in your tent.

Some of the best ways to learn and network
are by volunteering, presenting, and teaching!
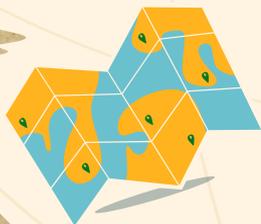
Thanks for attending!

Questions? Contact us!

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