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Save the Date!

Financial Aid 101: A Training for Counselors & Advisors

FAME's 4th annual training is scheduled for Friday, October 9, 2009 at the Augusta Civic Center.

This free, day-long training will include sessions for both the new and more experienced counselors. Tentative topics include: Homeless Students and the FAFSA, Status of Federal Loans, How to Help Your Students Receive the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG), and Financial Literacy Programs for All Ages.

Registration information will be available in the fall.

The FAME Educator

For Counselors & Advisors



What's Inside this Edition:

- State of Maine Programs
- ACG (Academic Competitiveness Grant)
- Professional Judgment
- Wednesday Webinars
- Updated Grant Amounts (Pell & MSG)
- Save the Date!

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Dear Counselors,

Greetings!

The snow is melting, spring is here and soon it will be time for graduation! Time passes quickly, so as the 2008-2009 school year comes to an end, consider scheduling your 2009-2010 events. Financial Aid Nights will be here before we know it, so contact us early to secure a date that works for you and your school.

In this edition of The FAME Educator, you will find helpful reminders about application deadlines, special circumstances and FAME's 4th Annual Financial Aid 101.

If you have any questions about the topics in this newsletter or need assistance from FAME, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at adostie@famemaine.com or by phone at 1-800-228-3734.

Angela Dostie

Manager of Outreach & Default Prevention

Deadlines for State Programs Fast Approaching!

Please remind your students that May 1st is almost here, which means that the deadlines for the State of Maine Programs is almost here too.

State of Maine Grant

FAFSA Due: May 1

Byrd Honors Scholarship

FAFSA Due: May 1

Application Due: May 1

Educators for Maine Program

FAFSA Due: May 1

Application Due: May 15

More information and applications can be found on FAME's Web site at www.famemaine.com/education.

ACG: Summary of Recommendations

The U.S. Department of Education recently concluded an evaluation of the Academic Competitiveness Grant, including lessons learned and recommendations for future improvement.

The evaluation showed that only seventy-percent of the students estimated to be eligible were awarded the grant. As a result, the Department has asked states to commit to doubling the number of grant recipients.

To achieve this goal, high school and postsecondary institutions are encouraged to know their states' approved rigorous curricula. In addition, schools are being asked to support efforts to increase awareness of the program.

The Department also recommends that high school guidance and college counselors attend trainings and workshops and suggest improved communication between high school and college counselors.

The full report can be read at <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/acsmartyear1/index.html>.

FAME has conducted several trainings on the ACG program. Copies of the presentations can be found in the training section of our Web site at www.famemaine.com/education.

If you would like more information about the ACG program, please contact Mila Tappan at mtappan@famemaine.com. Mila is FAME's "resident expert" and remains current on policy and legislation affecting the program.

Financial Aid Administrators Encouraged to Use Professional Judgment

In a recent memo to financial aid administrators (FAA), the U.S. Department of Education reminded financial aid administrators of their ability to exercise professional judgment. FAAs may make adjustments to financial data to address circumstances not reflected in a student's FAFSA.

This ability to make adjustments to a FAFSA and possibly lower a student's EFC (expected family contribution) is especially important during these difficult economic times. Unfortunately it is not uncommon for a family to experience a layoff, have a costly medical issue or experience a situation that negatively impacts their ability to contribute toward the cost of the student's college education.

If you have students that have financial or family circumstances not accurately reflected on the FAFSA, please encourage them to contact the FAA at each of the colleges they are considering attending. Each school may handle adjustments differently, so it is important to work with each school individually.

FAME's Training Programs

In an effort to better assist high school and college access counselors, we have been increasing our training opportunities. In the fall we began our newest training program called "FAME's Wednesday Webinars". From 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on the second Wednesday of each month we host a training via Webinar and conference call. The topics vary each month according to the time of year and counselor requests.

In addition, we have been attending state conferences and regional meetings to provide in-person training. If you would like a FAME staff person to attend your regional meeting or workshop, please let us know. We can either present a workshop that we have already created or customize a training especially for your group.

All presentations are posted in the training section of the FAME Web site at www.famemaine.com/education.

If you have a suggestion for a training topic or a Wednesday Webinar, please contact me at adostie@famemaine.com.

Grant Amounts for the 2009-2010 Academic Year

Federal Pell Grants are need-based and the amount of the grant is dependent upon the amount of the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The lower the EFC, the higher the amount of the Pell Grant. For students enrolled full-time in 2009-2010:

Minimum EFC: 0
Maximum EFC: 4617

Minimum Grant: \$976
Maximum Grant: \$5,350

Award amounts will be lower for students enrolled less than full-time.

State of Maine Grants are also need-based. For students enrolled full-time in 2009-2010:

In-State Public: \$1,000
In-State Private: \$1,250

Out of State Public: \$500
Out of State Private: \$1,000

For both the Federal Pell Grant and the Maine State Grant, award amounts will be lower for students enrolled less than full-time. The financial aid office will make the final determination as to a student's eligibility.