



~~Financial Aid 101~~ **Education Affordability 101**

AGENDA

APRIL 2, 2026 • AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER

Session Time	Augusta/ Capital/Pine	York	Washington
8:00-8:30	BREAKFAST		
8:30 - 8:50	Welcome & Keynote: Mila Tappan & Mary Dyer		
9:00 - 9:50	A. FAFSA Field Guide: From Start to Finish and Beyond Presenters: Sydney McLean & Karin Parsons	B. Maine's First Alford Babies are Graduating from High School! Presenters: Martha Johnston & Mila Tappan	C. Bringing Maine's Personal Finance and Economics Standards to Life Presenters: Maire Pelletier & Mary Dyer
9:50 - 10:05	BREAK		
10:05 - 10:55	D. Finding Funding for College Without the FAFSA Presenters: Floreka Mananga & Jessica Whittier	E. Affording Higher Education: What Families Need to Know Presenters: Nikki Vachon & Mila Tappan	F. You Get What You SAVE For: How ME's 529 Plan Can Unlock More College Choice Presenters: Maire Pelletier & Karin Parsons
11:00 - 12:15	LUNCH BREAK & SCAVENGER HUNT		
12:15 - 1:05	G. Federal Update: Impact of H.R.1 and FAFSA Simplification on Paying for Higher Education Presenters: Mila Tappan & Nikki Vachon	H. Paying for College Across New England and Around the Globe Presenters: Jessica Whittier & Floreka Mananga	I. No Hack\$, Just the Fact\$: Personal Finance Foundations for Students Presenters: Steve Kautz & Sydney McLean
1:05 - 1:30	CLOSING & PRIZES		

Education Affordability 101: Session Descriptions & Presenters

APRIL 2, 2026 • AUGUSTA CIVIC CENTER

Welcome & Keynote

Presenters: Mila Tappan & Mary Dyer

Join us as we kick off FAME's 20th Annual Training! We'll share the goals for the day and highlight what attendees can expect. A brief keynote will spotlight FAME's wide range of resources that support students, families, and educators in accessing and affording higher education. We're excited for a fun and celebratory day!

A. FAFSA Field Guide: From Start to Finish and Beyond

Presenters: Sydney McLean & Karin Parsons

Filing the FAFSA can seem like an overwhelming and daunting task, but with recent changes, it doesn't have to be. In this session, we will cover how to create StudentAid.gov accounts, determine a student's dependency status, identify contributors, and understand what happens after the FAFSA has been submitted. We will also discuss how to make corrections, add schools, and support students through the financial aid appeal process. This session is a concise, comprehensive guide to the steps, decisions, and tools needed to navigate the FAFSA from beginning to end.

B. Maine's First Alford Babies are Graduating from High School!

Presenters: Martha Johnston & Mila Tappan

Maine's first Alford Grant recipients are graduating from high school this May and preparing to take their next steps toward education after high school. A \$500 Alford Grant was invested on behalf of these students in 2008 – the year they were born. Students continuing their education after high school, can now use these funds to help make the next part of their education more affordable. Join us for this session where we'll discuss the Alford Grant including what it is, who has one, the approximate current value, types of education expenses the grant can cover, how to access the money, and more. We'll share resources and the information needed to help support your students and answer their questions about this generous gift.

C. Bringing Maine's Personal Finance and Economics Standards to Life

Presenters: Maire Pelletier and Mary Dyer

In this session, participants will take a practical, hands-on tour of Maine's Learning Results for Personal Finance and Economics and discover how to bring these standards to life in today's classrooms. We'll review key learning expectations across grade levels and explore ready-to-use resources that support effective, engaging instruction. Attendees will walk away with free, high-quality materials—including lesson plans, classroom activities, digital tools, and family engagement resources—all aligned directly to the standards and ready for immediate implementation. The session will also include an overview of FAME's K-12 financial wellness resources, including Invest in ME Reads and Claim Your Future.

D. Finding Funding for College Without the FAFSA

Presenters: Floreka Mananga & Jessica Whittier

Not eligible for the FAFSA? Students still have options—more than you might think.

Join us for an empowering workshop designed to guide you in helping students and families who are seeking alternative pathways to pay for college. Whether they're ineligible for federal aid due to residency status, independent circumstances, or other barriers, this session will connect you with real solutions and the people who can make them happen.

E. Affording Higher Education: What Families Need to Know

Presenters: Nikki Vachon & Mila Tappan

Paying for college doesn't have to be a mystery or a last-minute scramble. Affording higher education is a step-by-step process, and the earlier students and families start, the more options they have. In this session, we'll pull back the curtain on how financial aid is awarded, how to identify schools that fit both academic goals and budgets, and smart strategies to reduce costs. We'll also cover practical borrowing tips so families can understand their options.

F. You Get What you SAVE For: How ME's 529 Plan Can Unlock More College Choice

Presenters: Maire Pelletier & Karin Parsons

Making college affordable can feel like a daunting task for many families. One of the best ways to prepare and expand options for students is to save for education early and consistently. This workshop covers the State of Maine's 529 plan, which many families use to save for education after high school. Families can maximize their savings by taking advantage of the matching grants available to Maine residents. We will also cover other strategies to make education as affordable as possible, such as making saving a family affair and how to shop for schools with affordability in mind.

G. Federal Update: Impact of H.R.1 and FAFSA Simplification on Paying for Higher Education

Presenters: Mila Tappan & Nikki Vachon

This session will provide a deeper understanding of recent federal changes affecting college affordability. We'll break down key provisions of H.R. 1, including updates to PLUS and graduate borrowing limits, loan repayment strategies, and the introduction of Workforce Pell. The session will also highlight recent improvements to the FAFSA, address lingering challenges related to FAFSA Simplification, and offer insight into what to expect in the coming year. Attendees will gain up-to-date information and practical guidance to better support students and families as they navigate the ever-changing landscape of paying for higher education.

H. Paying for College Across New England and Around the Globe

Presenters: Jessica Whittier & Floreka Mananga

This workshop will cover knowledge and tools to guide students considering educational opportunities outside of Maine. Participants will gain a clear understanding of the New England Regional Student Program (Tuition Break) and how it can significantly reduce out-of-state tuition for Maine students pursuing specialized majors at participating New England institutions. The session also explores advising strategies for students interested in international universities and study-abroad programs, including academic planning, cost considerations, and how global experiences can align with postsecondary goals. Leave with updated resources, practical talking points, and guidance to help students make informed, affordable, and meaningful decisions about pursuing education beyond Maine.

I. No Hack\$, Just the Fact\$: Personal Finance Foundations for Students

Presenters: Steve Kautz & Sydney McLean

This session will focus on fundamental pieces of personal finance – specifically for students but with applications for everyone. Budgeting, managing debt, and understanding compound interest are on the agenda as well as plenty of time for Q & A with Steve and Sydney.

FAME's Education Affordability & Financial Wellness Team



Mila Tappan
Education Affordability
Content & Training
Manager



Mary Dyer
Education Affordability &
Financial Wellness
Manager



Steve Kautz
Financial Education
Programs Specialist



Floreka Managa
New Mainer
Specialist



Sydney McLean
Education Affordability
& Financial Wellness
Counselor



Karin Parsons
Education Affordability
& Financial Wellness
Counselor



Maire Pelletier
Education Affordability
& Financial Wellness
Counselor



Nikki Vachon
Education Affordability
& Financial Wellness
Counselor



Jessica Whittier
Education Affordability
& Financial Wellness
Counselor