



Financial Aid 101

AGENDA

March 21, 2025 • Maple Hill Farm Inn and Conference Center • Hallowell, ME

Session:	Gathering Place	Carriage House	Gallery
8:00 – 8:30	BREAKFAST		
8:30 – 8:50	WELCOME: Mila Tappan & Martha Johnston		
9:00 – 9:50	A. Funding Higher Education Presenter: Jessica Whittier Moderator: Steve Kautz	B. CSS Profile Overview Presenters: Michelle Radley and Mila Tappan	C. StudentAid.gov Account Creation & Troubleshooting Presenters: Floreka Malual and Nikki Vachon
9:50 - 10:05	BREAK		
10:05 - 10:55	D. Scholarship Workshop Presenters: Jessica Whitter and Floreka Malual	E. The Student Aid Index (SAI) Calculation Presenters: Mila Tappan and Michelle Radley	F. FAFSA Demonstration Presenter: Nikki Vachon Moderator: Mary Dyer
11:00 - 12:00	LUNCH BREAK		
12:00 - 1:00	G. FAFSA Pathways for Unique Situations Presenters: Mila Tappan, Michelle Radley, and Nikki Vachon	H. Resources for New Mainers Presenter: Floreka Malual Moderator: Jessica Whittier	I. Building Financial Wellness with Claim Your Future ® Presenters: Mary Dyer and Steve Kautz
1:00 - 1:30	CLOSING AND 🎉 PRIZES! 🎉		

Financial Aid 101: Session Descriptions & Presenters

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A. Funding Higher Education

Presenter: *Jessica Whittier*

Moderator: *Steve Kautz*

In this session we'll explore many of the opportunities available to Maine students when it comes to funding higher education. We'll talk about the broad and varied college specific initiatives available at Maine public and private institutions. We'll also cover state and private sponsored programs that are making Maine one of the most desirable states in the country for students seeking affordable post-secondary attainment.

B. CSS Profile Overview

Presenters: *Michelle Radley and Mila Tappan*

You asked, and we listened! Here is a session dedicated to the CSS Profile. In this session, we'll cover the most common questions we receive about the form, discuss how it differs from the FAFSA, and share what you need to know when working with students. We'll also take a look inside the form and provide targeted tips and general insight on getting the CSS Profile completed.

C. StudentAid.gov Account Creation, Tips & Troubleshooting

Presenters: *Floreka Malual and Nikki Vachon*

A working and matched StudentAid.gov account (often referred to as an FSA ID) is critical to a smooth FAFSA experience. Unfortunately, challenges abound for some students and parents when it comes to these accounts. In this session we'll offer tips to help avoid problems, followed by problem-solving strategies to try when the account cannot be created because the SSN is already in use, has become locked, or the username and password have been forgotten. We'll also cover the process for those contributors who do not have a social security number.

D. Scholarship Workshop

Presenters: *Jessica Whittier and Floreka Malual*

Today's college goers have access to more scholarship opportunities than ever before. Though, staying on top of that scholarship application process can sometimes feel overwhelming. In this session we'll give you a look at what students are experiencing when YOU become the STUDENT and learn to build and work your own scholarship application plan. Try out different scholarship websites, learn about where to find scholarships for different student populations and learn how to best use the Scholarship Information Tracker. You will get a real feel for the challenges students face when applying for scholarships and learn how to support and encourage them. Please bring your computer or smart device along with you for this session.

E. The Student Aid Index (SAI) Calculation

Presenters: *Mila Tappan and Michelle Radley*

Have you ever wondered what really impacts financial aid eligibility? We know income matters but what about assets, family size, number in college, current debt, and other factors? In this interactive session we'll walk through the SAI formula so you can feel confident when sharing with families what counts and what doesn't. We'll also highlight the impact of the transition from the old Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to the SAI on Pell Grant eligibility, financial aid offers, appeals, and more.

F. FAFSA Demonstration

Presenter: *Nikki Vachon*

Moderator: *Mary Dyer*

The FAFSA received a glow up! The process flow has changed, the terminology is different, and questions have evolved. Navigating the site after submission (to find the FAFSA Submission Summary and make corrections) has definitely changed! In this session, we'll walk through the FAFSA and highlight the sections that present the most questions and confusion.

G. FAFSA Pathways for Unique Situations

Presenters: *Mila Tappan, Michelle Radley, and Nikki Vachon*

Some prospective college students are preparing for their higher education journey without family support. They may be homeless, self-supporting, and/or dealing with difficult family circumstances. In this session, we'll discuss the financial aid process for students in these situations, including how to file the FAFSA and communicate their circumstances to the financial aid office. Bring your questions and examples.

H. Resources for New Mainers

Presenter: *Floreka Malual*

Moderator: *Jessica Whittier*

New Mainers are critical to the success of the Maine economy. Unfortunately, many new Mainers face unique challenges when pursuing education and training or attempting to move into the workforce. Some students are not eligible for federal student aid, making it challenging to pay for higher education. We will have an overview from representatives who administer different scholarship programs including Prosperity Maine, USM's Promise Scholarship, and Maine Community Foundation's Adult Learner Scholarship. Join us to learn more about the challenges faced and opportunities available to our new Mainer students.

I. Building Financial Wellness with Claim Your Future®

Presenters: *Mary Dyer and Steve Kautz*

Claim Your Future is a free educational program that encourages students to explore career pathways, financial decision-making, and the potential return on investment of post-secondary education and training. During this session, we'll provide an in-depth overview of both the classroom program and online version, including a step-by-step lesson plan and implementation tips for engaging your students in fun and memorable ways. We'll also provide an update on recent enhancements and ways to teach Claim Your Future using a peer learning model.