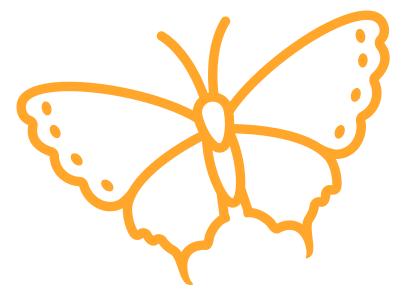
# Supporting Students with Diverse Immigration Statuses



# **Grounding Ourselves**

- Your story is important
- Acknowledge your awareness/knowledge level
- Lean into growth
- This topic is hard



# **Key Takeaway Points**

- Let's be proactive, not reactive
- Dial in on LOCAL, STATE resources
- Equip your students and community with legal aid, knowledge (know your rights), and resources for making a legal plan
- Continue to foster an undocu-friendly atmosphere
- Students should not give up on their post-secondary dreams and plans...
  - But they and their support team might need to get more creative!
  - Self-disclosure within the safety of your counseling department really matters



# Self-Disclosing Safely

# Why Is It Important?

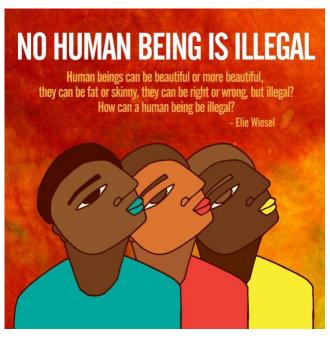
- Self-disclosure is important in order to maximize resources and time for your students, regardless of what postsecondary path they're pursuing
- People who immigrate to the U.S. may have varied immigration statuses (or lack thereof) and/or be in a "mixed status" family... this may impact their financial aid process
- The earlier you know, the timelier the resources and help will be (for example, they won't miss any financial aid deadlines)

# How Can It Be Done Safely?

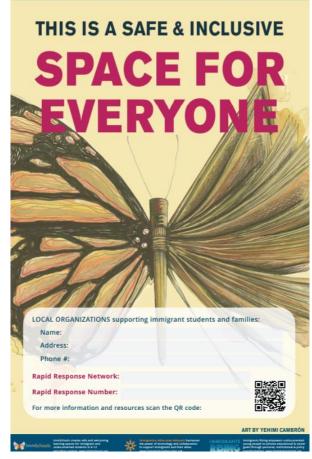
- Educators can **never** ask a student or family what their immigration status is
- But once students self-disclose, counselors should feel like they can bring it up respectfully and when appropriate as needed for the college process
- If you suspect there might be an immigration concern, use open-ended questions like, "Is there anything else you want to share what me that might allow me to help you in your process?"
- Avoid writing emails with sensitive information at all times, but especially *before* a student or family has given permission to spread the information to others regarding their status
- Share information with only staff that need to know (e.g. a fellow school counselor if you need a thought partner) and do it in person!
- Do not keep a written list anywhere of student statuses when it includes first/last names + status in the same place. Major no!

# Any Ways to Make Self-Disclosure Easier?

- Students need to feel safe and supported in an authentic way by their counselors and trusted adults. It's OK if you don't know everything, but you must make sure they know you're on their side and with them on this journey.
- Set the scene visual cues of your allyship matter too!



Favianna Rodriguez 2013



Poster by ImmSchools.org

# Model Openness and Inclusivity

- Talking about immigration especially around the college app process should be something educators are open about
- Our instinct is to protect our students and therefore be "very discreet" to the point sometimes of avoiding the topic directly, but this does not serve students applying to college
- The earlier we talk about it, especially counselors, the more resources we'll have when helping students apply to college
- Peruse resources like these on statistics by state + access to financial aid and show them to your students
   too!
  - Higher Education Immigration Portal
  - The Education Trust comprehensive tool
- Include resources about Tuition Equity, MASFA, and MassEducate in all your student and family-facing resources

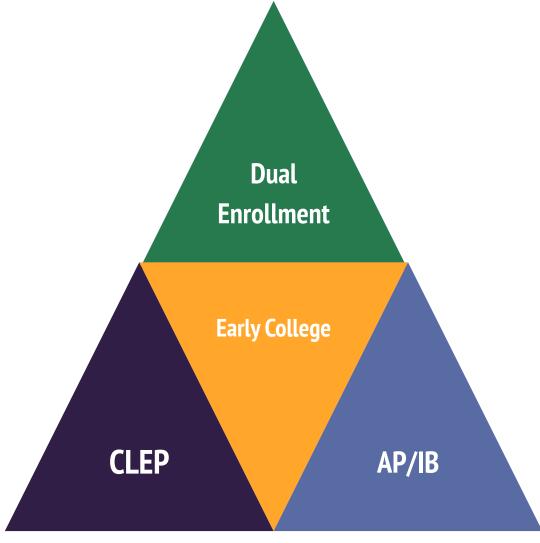
# On the Legal Side

Resource	How to Use
LUCE Immigrant Justice Network of MA	Resources and information regarding ICE presence in MA Downloadable wallet cards for families Make these available by the stack in your offices
MIRA Coalition	Legal Aid Resources in their Provider Directory A good local <u>Policy Updates page</u> Back-to school resources for students and families
Immigrants Rising	National org with certain California-specific resources Use for: scholarship search, robust career info for undocumented students, and other printouts and resources
<u>ImmSchools</u>	A wonderful new immigrant-led org with great toolkits for educational organizations (more on the education, pedagogy side)



# Admissions Counseling

While in High School



## **Ask Your Students**



What are your interests? What makes you happy?



Have you thought about your future career? Is there a college program or other program that will help you prepare?



Does your ideal career path need a work permit? Do you have one? If not, have you considered going to a legal screening to see if there are any options for you? Are there ways for you to become <u>self-employed</u> for your chosen career?



What about financial support? Have you been working and saving? How can you maximize that money? Will you have support from others? If not – there may be private scholarships you can apply for!

## **Tactical Information**

- Institutional aid (financial aid from the colleges) may be available. Policies vary from school to school, but some
  may give students merit awards.
  - Vetting for "undocufriendly colleges" is now more important than ever. Assemble a task force in your counseling office. Build a network of other counselors to reach out to.
- If a school is "undocufriendly" and in Massachusetts, students can still be honest about their immigration status. We can be less sure about other states. Colleges are still prohibited from releasing information unless under court order. Information is still protected by FERPA (A federal act).
- Connect with someone in the admissions office/scholarship office who works with multicultural students. Advise your students to not get discouraged if someone at a college doesn't know the answer... it's very common!
- Students might be considered "domestic" for admissions and "international" for financial aid at colleges.

# Sample Roadmap for Students "I have a GPA of 3.8 or higher. What are my options?"



3.8-4.0 = Great job! This is a great GPA! Your essay, showing interest in colleges, and interview become VERY important. Is your application telling your story of who you are (including and NOT including your immigration status\*\*\*)?



4.0+ = The biggest hurdle here is making sure you and your family ASK questions! Being a first-generation student AND an immigrant is tough. What's important to you? BUT ALSO, take risks!



Read the "undocufriendly college" lists and ask your counselor if they know of colleges that often help undocumented students with "need-based aid" scholarships.

# Sample Roadmap for Students "My GPA is 3.0-3.7. What are my options?"

- Think about applying to colleges at all levels, and colleges that give "merit aid" scholarships.
- Can you live at home? If so, saving \$ on room and board can make a difference.
- Do you have relatives in other parts of the state or country?
  - E.g. California, smaller private colleges that give good merit aid.
  - Note: at this time, it is recommended that undocumented students not travel unless necessary.
- Spend time getting feedback on your college applications and your essay. \*\*You could be a good candidate for strategic undermatching\*\*

# Sample Roadmap for Students "My GPA isn't very high. What are my options?"



YOU CAN STILL MAKE YOUR GOALS A REALITY!



College is GREAT!
And also, there
are so many types
of college
degrees:
certificates, 2year programs, 4year programs!



This is true regardless of GPA: but always think about this question: WHAT ARE MY CAREER ASPIRATIONS? What are my skills? What are my interests?



2-4 year programs in MA: "If you're a high school completer"and not eligible for the FAFSA, fill out the MASFA! There are also other options like: DUET. **Endicott Van Loan** School, Franklin **Cummings** Institute of Technology, Quincy College, **UMASS Online** 



If you have a work permit: Think about vocational programs, career and technical apprenticeships. Example: Year up



If you're thinking about career education, did you know that if you don't have a work permit, you can still work as an "independent contractor"?

# Scholarship Resources – National

Resource	How to Use
MALDEF's Scholarship Resource Guide	A great, inclusive list of scholarships that do not require citizenship status to apply. <a href="https://www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resource-guide/">https://www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resource-guide/</a>
Dreamer's Roadmap App	http://dreamersroadmap.org/
Immigrants Rising's Scholarship Resource Guide	https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/list-of-scholarships- and-fellowships/

# Scholarship Resources – Local

Resource	How to Use
DREAM.US & UMASS BOSTON	<ul> <li>UMass Boston and Salem State University are partner colleges with Dream.US. This means if a student receives this scholarship, their tuition and fees will be fully covered. Requirements:</li> <li>Came to the U.S. before November 1, 2018</li> <li>Came to the U.S. before the age of 16</li> <li>Graduate from a U.S. high school or equivalent high school equivalency before fall semester</li> <li>Graduate with a GPA of 2.5 or better on a 4.0 scale in high school; for college students, must have a GPA of 2.5 or better</li> <li>Eligible for in-state tuition at UMass Boston</li> <li>Have significant unmet financial need</li> </ul>
Bunker Hill Scholarships	Open to all students, regardless of immigration status. The Immigrant Assistance Scholarship is specific for students who have a 2.5 GPA and are not eligible to receive federal financial aid (FAFSA) because of their immigration status. Students who are on F-1 visas are not eligible. Students will need to create an online portal to apply on the institutional website.
UMASS Boston's Academic Works	UMass Boston has an on-campus scholarship portal called Academic Works. Students can apply to any scholarships that they qualify for. When they receive the scholarship, the money will be put towards tuition. If the student already paid for the semester, they will receive a refund check. In other cases, students can use money they receive from scholarships and take summer courses.



# Financial Aid Updates

A focus on mixed-status families

## Statuses Eligible for Federal Financial Aid (In Yellow)

- U.S. National
- Naturalized citizen
- Asylum granted
- Asylum pending
- Refugee (with permanent resident card)
- TPS
- Permanent resident (I-551, I-151, or I-551c, etc.)
- Conditional permanent resident
- "Parolee"

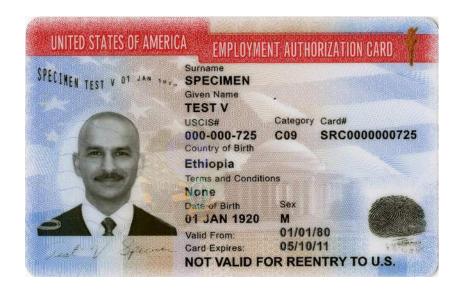
- Processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV) offers humanitarian parole\* and has recently been <u>revoked</u>\*
- Cuban/Haitian Entrants (this designation allows eligibility to many Federal benefit programs)
- U visa
- J and F visas
- T visa
- Other temporary visas
- DACA
- Family-sponsored visas
- VAWA self-petitioner
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status
- Undocumented (a lack of status)

Note: Those within the eligible statuses fall under the category of "eligible non-citizens" for FAFSA eligibility purposes

<sup>\*</sup>Note the role of the Paper I-94 vs the computergenerated Form CBP I-94A

## Differences Between Cards

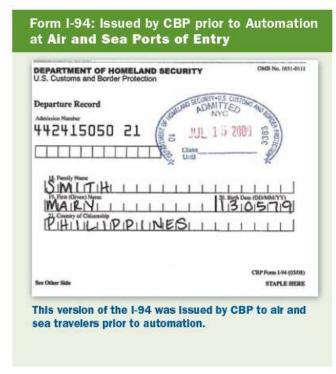




Both these cards give the holder a USCIS#, but only one makes its holder eligible for federal financial aid (the Permanent Resident Card) (USCIS# is otherwise (formerly) called the A# or ARN).

## Become Familiar with the I-94

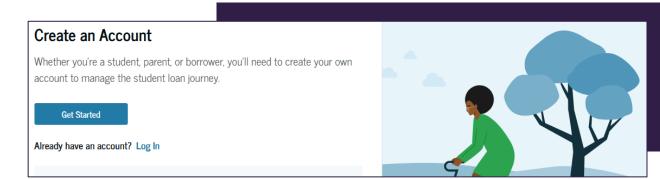
The I-94 Arrival/Departure record comes in electronic form now (some people might still be in possession of a paper version)





# **FSAID**

- FSA ID = username and password for the FAFSA
- Must have an FSA ID to log in to the FAFSA
- Can set up your FSA ID now at studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account
- Must have an email address
- Who needs an FSA ID?
  - Student
  - Every parent listed on the FAFSA
    - If parents filed taxes jointly, only one parent needs one
  - Student's spouse (if applicable) if filed taxes separately or didn't file
- Those without an SSN will answer knowledge-based questions pulled from credit history

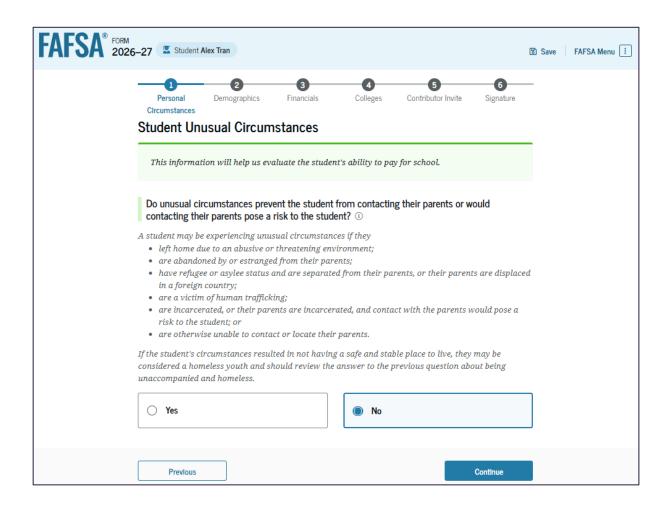


# 24-25 Changes Remaining in Place for 25-26

- Determination of which parent (contributor) must complete the FAFSA in cases of divorce/separation
  - Students will be presented with a series of questions to determine the contributing parent(s) if their biological parents aren't married. First question asks which parent provided the most support in the last 12 months.
  - Who Needs an FSA ID?
- If parents are married and filed taxes jointly, only one parent (contributor) needs an FSA ID along with the student. If not, both parents will need an FSA ID.
- Each contributor needs a unique email address and log-in to provide consent for income information to be brought over from the IRS
- There are questions about student's race and gender but these do not affect eligibility and will not be shared with colleges
- Provisional Independent Student Status
  - Students who believe they have unusual circumstances that exempt them from having to report
    parental data can complete the process with a provisional independent status and have an SAI
    calculated, but colleges will need to review the circumstances

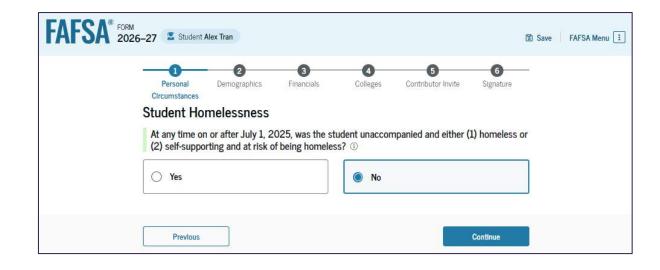
# FAFSA Questions to Note

- The student is asked if unusual circumstances prevent them from contacting their parent(s).
- Answering yes will allow them to submit as a Provisional Independent Student



# **FAFSA Questions to Note**

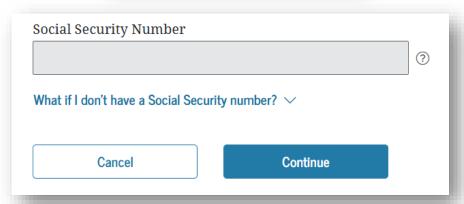
 Question regarding being homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless



### Helping Students from Mixed Status Families

- Preview with families that you are a team! Even if tech glitches arise, there are ways to solve them and they will definitely still be able to fill out a FAFSA.
- Make copies of the <u>Who Needs an FSA ID?</u> MEFA handout so students are clear or who needs an FSA ID, as well as who will be a contributor on their FAFSA via <u>this studentaid.gov graphic.</u> It may lessen undue stress, especially in mixed status families.
- Have handouts at the ready with instructions for how undocumented parents create their FSA ID. If students are coached to create theirs first in school, they can then help their parent(s).
- If a parent doesn't have a Social Security number, as they're creating an FSA ID (AKA studentaid.gov account), they should click on the blue drop-down, which will expand, and then check off: What if I don't have a Social Security number?. Form will be processed even if identity verification isn't immediate!





## Data Protections for FAFSA Information

PRESIDENTS' ON HIGHER EDUCATION

#### PRESIDENTS' ALLIANCE NEW GUIDE!



Not sure how to advise families on how safe it is to fill out the FAFSA? Read this guide for:

- · an overview of what information is shared,
- · under what circumstances, and
- what protections are in place for families' personally identifiable information, or PII.

For answers to other common questions, visit the FAQ page on the Higher Ed Immigration Portal FAFSA Resource Hub.



rerview of existing protections for PII submitted via the FAFSA.

#### How will I know if regulations protecting PII change?

If the Department of Education establishes any new data sharing agreements, these will be published in the <u>System of Records Notices (SORNs)</u>. The Presidents' Alliance is monitoring all active SORNs and will publish a summary of what data sharing they authorize. This will be kept up to date in the future and will be emailed out to our <u>FAFSA Updates listsery</u>.

- Privacy Act System of Record Notice Issuances | U.S. Department of Education
- Resources & Guides Presidents' Alliance

# Spotlight on the CSS Profile

#### **CSS Profile®**

- cssprofile.org
- Required by some colleges and universities
- \$25 for 1st school, \$16 for each additional
- Fee waivers if parent income is \$100k or less or family meets certain other criteria
- Becomes available October 1<sup>st</sup>
- Noncustodial parent submits a separate CSS Profile
- What to Know about the CSS Profile webinar on mefa.org/webinars
- \*\*Special circumstances section is still a \*good place to self-disclose, if college is in MA\*\*



# Paying for College in MA



#### To apply for MA state financial aid, complete the FAFSA ASAP after Oct 1st

### https://www.mass.gov/free-and-affordable-college

- MassEducate: Free community college (tuition & fees and potential book allowance) for all students
- Mass Reconnect: Free community college for adults over 25 years of age
- MASSGrant Plus & MASSGrant Plus Expansion: Free or reduced tuition & fees for low & middle-income students and potential book allowance at community colleges and 4-year public colleges
- **Tuition Equity Law:** Some undocumented students can receive MA state aid and in-state tuition rates by submitting the MASFA (<a href="https://www.mass.edu/tuitionequity/home.asp">https://www.mass.edu/tuitionequity/home.asp</a>)
- MassTransfer: Makes transferring from a MA community college to a 4-year MA public college more affordable
- **Tuition Break:** Reduction on out-of-state tuition costs at New England colleges for certain programs (<a href="https://nebhe.org/">https://nebhe.org/</a>)

  <a href="mailto:mefa.org/paying-college-massachusetts">mefa.org/paying-college-massachusetts</a>



# MassEducate: FREE MA Community College

What Is It?	Requirements		
<ul> <li>For any student with no previously earned bachelor's degree</li> <li>Covers all course-related tuition and fees for eligible courses (does not cover program-specific fees for testing, materials)</li> <li>Offers a stipend of up to \$1,200 per academic year (\$600 per semester) for books and supplies to any student (Pelleligible students receive another \$1,200)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Complete the FAFSA</li> <li>Students not eligible to complete the FAFSA and approved as a "High School Completer" can complete the MASFA and still attend for free</li> <li>Enroll in at least six credits (usually two classes) per semester in an approved program of study leading to an associate degree or certificate</li> <li>Maintain satisfactory academic progress in accordance with college requirements</li> </ul>		

## Massachusetts State Financial Aid Tuition Equity Law

Courtesy of the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)

- Tuition Equity Law notably carves a pathway to in-state tuition rates and state financial aid for certain non-US citizen students, including undocumented students, who have attended high school in Massachusetts for at least three (3) years and earned a high school diploma (or the equivalent) in the Commonwealth
- Students across the Commonwealth will benefit from this expanded access to affordable higher education
- Creation of Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) application allows students to apply for need-based state financial aid
- MASFA launched in January 2024 for the 2023-24 academic year; and March 2024 for 2024-25.
  - Over 500 students completed the 2023-24 MASFA
  - 1375 + applicants were received for 2024-25

# Tuition Equity: High School Completer Status

What Is It?	Requirements
<ul> <li>Extended in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented students.</li> <li>Student has to establish that they are: <ul> <li>A U.S. citizen, lawful immigrant, or permanent resident of the United States</li> </ul> </li> <li>OR <ul> <li>A Massachusetts resident; students will be verified under the status of "High School Completer"; this is NEW terminology under the Tuition Equity Law</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ol> <li>Attend high school in the Commonwealth for no less than 3 years ("High School Completer")</li> <li>Graduate from a high school in the Commonwealth or earn the equivalent</li> <li>Sign and submit a paper affidavit stating their intent to apply for citizenship within 120 days of eligibility. This is a legal requirement</li> </ol>

To apply for MA state aid, students must submit <u>Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid</u> (**MASFA**), the form by which the MA Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) and MA public colleges will acquire household financial information about students

# The Process for MA Aid for Undocumented Students

- Complete the MASFA once for all colleges (create an account first!)
- Fill out and sign the affidavit <u>form</u>. It only needs to be completed once for each college. Can't submit too early. There are TWO VERSIONS (one for high school seniors and one for all other applicants)
- Provide copies of all required documents to get "high school completer status."
   However, documents already submitted to the institution, such as a high school diploma/high school transcript or HS transcript showing attendance in high school for at least 3 years, do not need to be resubmitted if they were already submitted as part of your application for admission
- Each Massachusetts public college and university is responsible for determining and verifying eligibility status for their respective students in accordance with these application procedures. Students will be classified as "eligible" or "ineligible"

# Affidavit (Printable PDF Format Only!)

Note: Colleges will not keep an electronic copy of the student's affidavit to ensure maximum protection for the student record and information. There are only paper copies... but this means we should advise students to also make a copy for themselves before sending it to colleges.

**Tip:** Make copies of the affidavit and keep a stack in your office!

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education Alternative Tuition Equity Eligibility Form and Affidavit

#### FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS ONLY

Pursuant to Section 11 of Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2023 of the Massachusetts General Court, I, (insert full name) have applied for admission at and seek to enroll in a public higher education institution or an eligible private (independent) higher education institution (eligible institution, collectively) in Massachusetts and declare the following:

- I am not a nonimmigrant alien within the meaning of 8 U.S.C. § 204 1101(a)(15)(A) to (S), inclusive<sup>3</sup>: and
- I will have attended, by the time I enroll at an eligible institution, at least 3 academic years of high school in Massachusetts; and
- I expect to graduate from a high school in Massachusetts by the time I enroll at an eligible institution; and
- 4. If currently eligible, I have registered, or I will register for federal Military Selective Service4; and
- I have either
  - a. provided a valid Social Security Number; or
  - provided documentation reflecting the issuance of an individual taxpayer identification number; or
  - c. provided documentation of registration with the selective service, if applicable; or
  - d. applied for citizenship or legal permanent residence or I will apply for citizenship or legal permanent residence in accordance with federal statute or federal regulations within 120 days of my eligibility for such status.

High School Information (List the name of the high school(s) attended as well as dates attended).

High School Name <sup>5</sup>	City	State	From-To (Month/Year)	
	8			

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I understand that an in-state tuition eligibility determination is only relevant if I am applying to, have been admitted to, or am enrolled in a Massachusetts public higher education institution that is part of the Massachusetts public higher education system and specifically identified in M.G.L. c. 15A, Section 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> I understand that some, but not all, Department of Higher Education state financial aid programs may be used at eligible private (independent) higher education institutions in the Commonwealth. To be eligible to participate in Massachusetts state financial aid

# Accessing the Forms

- Overview:

   http://www.mass.gov/info details/massachusetts application-for-state financial-aid-masfa#fill-out the-masfa
- MASFA:
   https://madhestudentxprod.reg
   enteducation.net/signin

#### Fill Out the MASFA

#### Fill out the MASFA and the Tuition Equity Form:

Complete the Tuition Equity form and send it to the Massachusetts colleges of your choice:

- Complete the DHE Tuition Equity Form and Affidavit (High School Seniors)
- Tuition Equity Form and Affidavit (all other applicants)

Complete the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) online.

The MASFA will automatically be sent to the Massachusetts colleges of your choice.



# Free Resources

## Free Resources





Scan the QR code to sign up for MEFA's upcoming FAFSA Festival for one-on-one assistance.



### Connect with MEFA: Emails

Scan the QR code to sign up for MEFA emails for school counselors



#### Don't miss MEFA's guidance!

- Upcoming webinars
- Financial aid tips
- Important deadlines
- Scholarship lists
- Key articles
- And much more





# Thank You!

Questions?
Stay in touch!
Andrea Keenan
akeenan@mefa.org





(800) 449-MEFA (6332)



collegeplanning @mefa.org