



#075-21

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #075-21

DATE: March 26, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **New Service to Assist Virginia Students Applying for Financial Aid**

Earlier this week, [Governor Ralph Northam announced the launch of a new free advising service](#) to assist Virginia students and families applying for financial aid and help address the COVID-19 related decline in completion rates of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

We encourage you to share this new resource with your school counselors and other staff who help advise students on college preparation.

The Virginia College Access Network (VirginiaCAN) and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) have partnered on a statewide effort to offer free, one-on-one FAFSA completion assistance. From **March 22 through June 30, 2021**, students and families use this resource to schedule a virtual meeting and connect with an advisor who can answer questions and walk them through filling out the FAFSA application.

“The launch of this new advising tool comes at a critical time when we must double down on our efforts to support the future success of our students and our Commonwealth,” said Secretary of Education Atif Qarni. “While we have a lot of ground to make up this year, we are committed to helping every Virginia student get the federal student aid they are entitled

to, and that starts with connecting them with the resources they need to complete the FAFSA.”

VirginiaCAN, a non-profit organization with a mission to support and enhance post-high school education access and attainment for Virginians, is the lead organization in the new one-on-one FAFSA advising service. The five college access organizations participating in this effort include the Access College Foundation, ECMC’s The College Place, GReat Aspirations Scholarship Program (GRASP), the Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (VASFAA), and the Virginia College Advising Corps (VCAC).

For more information

For students and families needing more help they can also use the [Federal Student Aid Help Center](#), with options for live chat, email, and phone: 1-800-433-3243.

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- Resource: [Virginia CAN](#)