

**Financial Aid Process**  
**11<sup>th</sup> Grade TAA Activity**  
**Estimated time: 20-30 Minutes**

**Georgia Teachers-As-Advisors Framework**

Goal 10-1.3 - Use accurate, current, and unbiased career information from the local, state, and national levels during the career exploration and planning process

a. Locate and utilize career information that includes occupational, education and training, employment, and economic information.

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to locate financial aid resources available on GACollege411
- Students will understand the importance of APPLYING for financial aid by examining the myths surrounding financial aid

**Materials:**

- “Financial Aid Information” handout front and back with Myths on the back
- Board or flip chart

**Activity:**

1. *Say:* Good morning. Welcome to advisement. Today we are going to do a reminder list for financial aid, so when the time comes, you will be prepared. Remember you will need to fill-out federal forms beginning in January of your senior year not before. The primary form called the FAFSA that will qualify you for HOPE and federal aid. *Write this on the board. Free Application for Federal Student Aid called the FAFSA [fafsa].* Some colleges require additional forms earlier so you should check with your selected schools. It is important you know when and where these forms need to be---if not, it could cost you money! *Distribute the handout. Remember from our last session on financial aid you learned, GACollege411 should be your primary source for information.* I hope you have introduced your family to GACollege411. The FINANCIAL AID tab (*referenced on the handout by the red arrow*) will provide you and your parents the following information and resources: *Allow time for students to read the list or read along with you.*
  - Financial Aid 101-questions regarding the financial aid process
  - HOPE Scholarship and Grant-Information about the HOPE Program in Georgia
  - Financial Aid Glossary-a list of financial aid-related terms and definitions
  - Financial Aid Calculator-a tool to assist parents and students budget for postsecondary education
  - Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA)-federal form necessary to receive federal and some state aid
  - CSS Profile-financial aid forms necessary for selected schools (mostly private colleges and universities)
  - A Scholarship search and calculator to figure college cost
2. *Say:* Are there any questions? Let’s review some information from the last session on financial aid:
  - a. *Ask:* What do you know about the HOPE scholarship and HOPE grant? Entertain discussion.  
*Say:* The HOPE Scholarship is a program in the State of Georgia that is financed by the Georgia Lottery. If you maintain a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale in academic course work in high school, you will receive the HOPE Scholarship. The HOPE pays for tuition and a separate allowance for books and fees for any public college or university in the state of Georgia. There is a separate award for students who choose a Georgia private university. This is a major reason for you to do your best in high school so you can qualify. It can save you and your family lots of money! Remember, the more education and training you have the more income potential you have---don’t forget that.

Students who choose to go to a technical school can also receive the HOPE grant for certificate and diploma programs.

- b. *Ask:* Do you have to repay grants and scholarship? NO! Grants are gifts of money usually by the institution to which you apply. Generally they are dependent upon financial need.
- c. *Say:* Scholarships are money awarded by schools, philanthropic groups, and businesses based on particular criteria. Generally, these are competitive. Many are determined by your grade point average. Some scholarships, however, have criteria like ethnic background, special talents, or sports. You should begin investigating possible scholarships if you have not started that process. You'll be surprised how many are available. Continue to use the scholarship search on GACollege411 or check with your counselor.
3. *Say:* Flip over on the back of your handout. The myths students and their families tend to have about financial aid are listed here. Let's take a look at what some of us think.
  - a. What's the truth about the idea that your parents make too much to qualify for federal aid? *Let someone read the answer to the first myth.*
  - b. What's the truth about the idea that only students with good grades get financial aid? *Let someone read the answer to the second myth.*
  - c. What's the truth about the idea that only minority students get financial aid? *Let someone read the answer to the third myth.*
  - d. What's the truth about the idea that the form is too hard to fill out? *Let someone read the answer to the last myth.*
4. *Say:* Now when the time comes, be ready. Share this information with your parents so they can be ready. AND remember the more you save the less you will have to borrow. See you next time. Study, Study!!! Your senior year is just around the corner.

## GACollege411

Expand Your Opportunities

Remind students that GACollege411 is the primary tool for financial aid information in Georgia. Check student PORTFOLIOS to determine if they have done any research regarding the financial aid process. They should have explored the HOPE Program and looked at scholarship information. Their next step will be to explore the information regarding the financial aid process. Order information from GACollege411 to supplement financial aid information under "Communications" at the bottom of the homepage of GACollege411.

## Financial Aid Handout Now's the TIME-Get Ready!

*The future belongs to the nation that best educates its citizens—and my fellow Americans, we have everything we need to be that nation.*—President Barack Obama

During your senior year, you will begin the financial aid process. Utilize GACollege411 for all your financial aid information. Be sure you share this information with your family. The picture below represents the financial aid page and the information contained on that page:



The screenshot shows the GACollege411 website's Financial Aid Planning section. The page is titled "Financial Aid Planning" and includes a search bar, navigation tabs for "COLLEGE PLANNING", "FINANCIAL AID PLANNING", and "YOUR PORTFOLIO", and a sub-menu with "Financial Aid 101", "Calculators", "HOPE Program", and "Financial Fitness". The main content area is divided into several sections:

- GEORGIA'S HOPE PROGRAM:** Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) is Georgia's unique scholarship and grant program. It rewards students with financial assistance in degree, diploma, and certificate programs at eligible Georgia postsecondary institutions. [Learn more about HOPE](#).
  - HOPE Scholarship
  - HOPE Grant
  - HOPE GED Grant
- FINANCIAL AID 101:** Do you want to go to college, but don't think you can afford it? Does the vast array of options for college seem like a confusing puzzle? You CAN afford to go to college, and by researching your options, you can build success. [Financial Aid 101](#)
- FINANCIAL AID CALCULATORS:** Determine your cost of college, college savings, loans and scholarship amounts. [Financial Aid Calculators](#)
- FIND SCHOLARSHIPS:** Here's a quick and painless way of locating scholarships and other financial aid you might be eligible for. [Find Scholarships](#)
- BUILD YOUR FINANCIAL PLAN:** Get a grip on your financial future by building a plan for you. [Build Your Financial Plan](#)
- FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS:** Access many of the applications you will need for Scholarships, Grants, and Loans as well as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). [Start Applying](#)
- FINANCIAL FITNESS:** Managing YOUR money is a life skill that will help you meet financial obligations, avoid serious debt and use credit wisely. [Financial Fitness](#)

Callout boxes on the page highlight the following features:

- Learn about HOPE:** Points to the HOPE Program sub-menu item.
- Critical Terminology:** Points to the "Sign In" button.
- Calculators and Scholarship Search:** Points to the "Financial Aid Calculators" and "Find Scholarships" links.
- Build a Plan:** Points to the "Build Your Financial Plan" link.
- Applications:** Points to the "Start Applying" link.
- Manage your \$:** Points to the "Financial Fitness" link.

### Steps to financial aid:

- ✓ Apply online using [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- ✓ Check deadlines. Be aware of your state's and your school's application deadlines. While there is no deadline for applying for federal student aid, you should apply as early as possible after January 1 of each year that you will attend college. Some state and school aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.
- ✓ Collect the information you need to complete the FAFSA:
  - Your Social Security number and your parents' Social Security numbers;
  - Your driver's license number, if you have one;
  - Your alien registration number, if you are not a U.S. citizen; and
  - Your federal tax returns and income information
- ✓ Check your FAFSA. After you complete the FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). Review the information carefully and make any necessary corrections.

- ✓ Respond immediately to any request from your school for additional information.

## Myths about Financial Aid

“I’m not going to bother filling out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* because...”

**“...my parents make too much money, so I won’t qualify for aid.”**

**Reality:** There is no income cut-off to qualify for federal student aid. Many factors besides income—from the size of your family to the age of your older parent—are taken into account. Your eligibility is determined by a complicated mathematical formula, not by your parents’ income alone. And remember: when you fill out the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA), you’re also automatically applying for funds from your state, like HOPE, and possibly from your school as well. Don’t make assumptions about what you’ll get—fill out the application and find out.

**“...only students with good grades get financial aid.”**

**Reality:** While a high grade point average will help a student get into a good school and may help with academic scholarships, most of the federal student aid programs do not take a student’s grades into consideration. Provided a student maintains satisfactory academic progress in his or her program of study, federal student aid will help a student with an average academic record complete his or her education.

**“...you have to be a minority to get financial aid.”**

**Reality:** Funds from federal student aid programs are awarded on the basis of financial need, **not** on the basis of race. The FAFSA doesn’t even collect this kind of information about an applicant.

**“...the form is too hard to fill out.”**

**Reality:** The FAFSA is easier than ever, especially if you fill it out online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) or GACollege411. There are detailed instructions for every question, and the form walks you through step by step, asking only the questions that apply to you. If you need help, you can access real-time, private online chat with a customer service representative. If you’re filling out the paper FAFSA, you can get help from a high school counselor, from the financial aid office at the school you plan to attend, or from our toll-free number: 1-800-4-FED-AID. And remember, the FAFSA and all these sources of advice are FREE.



Share this information with your families!