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**News from NASFAA**

***Financial Aid Training for High School Counselors***

Washington, D.C. (July 2008) – National Training for Counselors and Mentors (NT4CM) is a joint initiative launched last year by the U. S. Department of Education’s Office of Federal Student Aid, NASFAA and the National Coalition of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP) to provide free training, information, resources and tools on federal, state, and local financial aid programs for high school counselors and mentors working with students and their families.

In addition to the free training, NT4CM works to foster an ongoing dialogue with high school counselors and mentors to provide continuing support and updates. This ongoing communication is provided through monthly electronic communications that can be customized by participating states and sent to training attendees. NT4CM also works to foster continuing communication by providing e-mail and telephone contact information that provides counselors and mentors a way to get their questions answered.

“This program provides the perfect avenue for NASFAA to collaborate with others to increase students and families’ early awareness of college and financial aid,” NASFAA President and CEO Dr. Philip Day said. “NT4CM has the potential to dramatically increase college access by providing students and families with accurate and timely information.”

**The Pilot Year**

Seventeen states and Puerto Rico participated in NT4CM in 2007, the program’s pilot year. Participation ranged from partial participation - where states with existing counselor and mentor training programs used pieces of the NT4CM curriculum - to full participation - where states used the entire curriculum developed by NT4CM.

The pilot program was an overwhelming success with two-thirds of participants describing the training as “outstanding” and more than three-fourths of participants describing the material as “outstanding.”

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The program is expanding rapidly. Federal Student Aid, NASFAA, and NCHelp are working to get other groups involved and other states to participate. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) have joined the NT4CM steering committee this year.

NASFAA and others are working to expand the program to all 50 states in order to provide ongoing training and support for counselors and mentors and to keep them well-informed and up-to-date on federal, state, and local financial aid programs. In addition, the steering committee has plans to expand this program to train middle school counselors to raise students and families' awareness of college and financial aid earlier.

### **NT4CM Resources**

The NT4CM Steering Committee develops and ships materials to NT4CM state coordinators to distribute at the training sessions. These materials include:

- A PowerPoint presentation
- An Instructor Guide
- A Participant Guide
- Handouts and resource lists

In addition, NT4CM provides customizable outreach materials electronically to help states develop information about local and state aid. Training sessions cover federal aid programs (provided by NT4CM) and state aid programs (provided by states with template provided by NT4CM). NT4CM also works with states to provide training session attendees with additional customized resources.

NT4CM provides trainers and coordinators volunteering for the program with comprehensive information on its Web site; [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/trainers](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/trainers). The site provides a downloadable version of the PowerPoint presentation and Instructor Guide, customizable outreach materials and a Train the Trainers Webinar.

In addition, NTC4M provides comprehensive information for counselors and mentors participating in the training through its Web site; [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/NT4CM](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/NT4CM). The site provides general information, including a fact sheet and FAQs, registration information, links to participating state sites, a downloadable participant guide, and links to resources.

### **Get Involved with NT4CM**

Getting involved with NT4CM is more than volunteering; it is an investment to make financial aid administrators' jobs easier by enlisting the help of others to educate students and parents about financial aid programs.

There are two ways to get involved. Get your state and regional financial aid association involved at the state coordination level and/or volunteer to be a trainer at a session in your area.

State coordinators have several responsibilities, including:

- Managing logistics
- Securing trainers, dates, locations
- Determining participation level
- Ordering materials
- Conducting outreach and publicity
- Participating in bi-weekly conference calls with the Steering Committee during planning phase and as needed throughout

To learn more, visit [www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/trainers](http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/trainers). To find out how you can get involved contact Jennifer Martin, NASFAA’s assistant director of professional assessment, training, and regulatory assistance and member of the NT4CM Steering Committee at [martinj@nasfaa.org](mailto:martinj@nasfaa.org).

“NT4CM is a great way to leverage our financial aid knowledge and experience to reach as many students and families as possible and educate them about the benefits of higher education and the financial aid available to them,” Day said. “NASFAA will play an active role in promoting this vital program and encourages state and regional associations to join NASFAA by getting involved.”

By Haley Chitty, Associate Director of Communications, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). Comments may be addressed to the author at [ChittyJ@NASFAA.org](mailto:ChittyJ@NASFAA.org).

*The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is a nonprofit membership organization that represents more than 14,000 financial aid professionals at nearly 3,000 colleges, universities, and career schools across the country. Each year, financial aid professionals help more than 16 million students receive funding for postsecondary education. Based in Washington, D.C., NASFAA is the only national association with a primary focus on student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators. In addition to its member Web site at [www.NASFAA.org](http://www.NASFAA.org), the Association offers a Web site with financial aid information for parents and students at [www.StudentAid.org](http://www.StudentAid.org).*

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[Editor: A photograph of the author is available for download at <http://www.NASFAA.org/Subhomes/MediaCenter/HaleyChittyPhoto-HiRez.jpg>.]