

Free FAFSA Preparation Workshop



Thank you for your interest in the New York Cares FAFSA Prep Program. With your commitment, you and your mobile teammates will be able to help families at 50 schools and community centers throughout New York City complete their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) in time to access and make informed decisions about financial aid packages and college acceptances.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the time commitment of the project?

FAFSA Prep is a committed project that meets for 3 hours a week, once a week, for 6-8 weeks. You select your FAFSA Prep Mobile Team that will either meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays (6:00 – 9:00 p.m. or 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.), or on Saturdays (11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.). You can preview the mobile team schedule at the end of this document. You will receive your official schedule including dates, locations, and site contacts once you sign up for training.

When will I begin volunteering and how long will it last?

You and your FAFSA Prep Mobile Team will begin meeting real students and families on or after October 3, 2017, based on the day you choose to volunteer. All teams will have finished their projects by December 2, 2017, with a few one-time workshops scheduled in December.

Wait. Doesn't FAFSA (and FAFSA Prep) season start in January?

Why is this program happening from October until early-December?

Since 2016, the FAFSA activates on October 1. This is an initiative by the Federal Student Aid administration to give students a better idea of their federal (and in some cases, state) eligibilities and amounts for student financial aid. It also should allow for families to receive their financial aid awards from the colleges to which they have been accepted, thus giving them more time to make critical financial decisions.

Where will my FAFSA Preparation Mobile Team travel to?

Our FAFSA Prep workshop locations are pre-grouped by day and borough(s), then assigned to a corresponding Mobile Team. Each week, you and your team will visit a different school or community center. You can preview the team group dates for each mobile team at the end of this document. Once you sign up for training, you will have access to team sign-ups. When you sign up for your Mobile Team, you will be able to preview your team's specific itinerary.

Do I have to attend training to be a FAFSA Prep volunteer?

If you are new to the College Financial Aid (FAFSA) Prep program, you must attend our comprehensive training hosted by our partner, the Options Institute. At this training, you will learn valuable financial aid information and instructions for helping families complete the FAFSA and supplemental financial aid applications.



Do I need to be a financial aid expert to volunteer?

No. Many of our successful Team Leaders and volunteers joined FAFSA Prep with little or no financial aid experience – reading and basic computer skills are all you need to get started. Our comprehensive training session will give you all the financial aid knowledge you will need.

How will the FAFSA be filed?

Families will work with volunteers to complete and submit the FAFSA forms electronically.

What will families need to have/complete before attending a FAFSA session?

Students and parents will need to have individual FSA IDs each. The FSA ID replaced the Federal Student Aid PIN on May 10, 2015. It's a username and password that families must use to log in and complete their FAFSA.

Who will supervise me at each location?

The FAFSA Prep program is team-based, like all other New York Cares volunteer programs. Trained New York Cares Team Leaders will be at the sites to help you along the way. Each site will also have staff members present who are knowledgeable about filing the FAFSA.

Am I legally responsible as a preparer for a student's FAFSA?

No. Volunteers will not be held legally responsible for preparing each FAFSA. Students and families will do the physical completing of the application. You will be present to walk them through the process and answer any basic questions that arise. The students and families, not volunteers, are responsible for the final product. Your name will not appear on the application.

Who are the students and families? How do they get chosen?

All schools or community centers participating in the FAFSA Prep program work with communities with under-served, under-privileged New York City high school students. New York Cares partners with the school or community center, and each individual location recruits their students and families to participate in the program.

How many students or families will I work with?

You will work with approximately 1–5 families each session.

Can I contact the students or families outside of the project time?

New York Cares policy prohibits volunteer and client interaction outside of the project. If you want to contact your student or the family outside of the FAFSA Prep program, talk with your team leader and site representative.

Do I need any particular language skills to volunteer?

No. If you speak a language besides English, let us know and we will make note of it.

What if I have to miss a session for work or vacation?

We know our volunteers lead very busy lives, and we are extremely grateful for your commitment to the program. The success of this program means low-income families get the financial aid they need to send their teens to college. This program reaches the most in-need families thanks to the commitment of volunteers like you. If you have concerns about potential absences, please speak to your Team Leader at your earliest convenience.



2017–2018 FAFSA Prep Mobile Team Schedule

You will sign up for your Mobile Team. Select a team block, grouped by borough(s) and day. Your team will meet for the dates in the borough(s) listed in your team block.

	Weekday Evenings (6:00 PM – 9:00 PM or 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM)			Saturdays (11:00 AM – 2:00 PM)
	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Saturdays
Queens	Oct 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 Nov 14, 21, 28			Oct 14, 21, 28 Nov 4, 18 Dec 2
Manhattan & Bronx		Oct 4, 11, 18, 25 Nov 1, 8, 15, 29	Oct 5, 12, 19, 26 Nov 2, 9, 16, 30	Oct 14, 21, 28 Nov 4, 18 Dec 2
Brooklyn		Oct 4, 11, 18, 25 Nov 1, 8, 15, 29		Oct 14, 21, 28 Nov 4, 18 Dec 2
Manhattan & Brooklyn			Oct 5, 12, 19, 26 Nov 2, 9, 16, 30	Oct 14, 21, 28 Nov 4, 18 Dec 2