



GUK PLAYBOOK PROFILE

Senior Events: FAFSA Frenzy

What

The FAFSA Frenzy strategy falls under GEAR UP 4 Advising which is a holistic approach to student success within three content areas (academic and career planning, college match and fit, and college knowledge).

Free Application Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Frenzy is an event or group/series of events that help families/students understand the importance of completing the FAFSA and provides hands-on assistance in completing the application.

Every GEAR UP Kentucky high school will collaborate with GEAR UP partners to complete one major FAFSA Frenzy event in each academic year, and will work to provide opportunities for families and students to schedule appointments or to participate in smaller events to promote FAFSA completion. To support participation and school support, GEAR UP Kentucky will coordinate a 12-week statewide FAFSA Frenzy email campaign to monitor and highlight progress in FAFSA completion at each GUK high school.

why

The perception for many GUK students is that affording a college education is unattainable. Many chose to opt out of higher education because they and their family simply believe they cannot afford to attend. The GUK proposal intentionally outlines delivery of advising services addressing three topics, college knowledge, college match and fit, and academic and financial planning and names an FAFSA completion increase of 3 percentage points annually cohort to cohort.

Our goal is to deliver a coordinated campaign to increase awareness of available financial aid options to pay for postsecondary education, to provide an overview of the FAFSA, and conduct and/or support FAFSA completions with students and their families through collaborating with the Kentucky Higher Education

research basis

Earning a college credential or degree is increasingly important, both for the economic security of individuals and for the nation's economic development. For many students, financial aid is essential to that effort. Completing the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA) is a key step in the college application process and allows students and families to access federal aid. Moreover, from 2015 to 2016, FAFSA completion rates appeared to have declined in all but a small number of states, and the number of students who started but did not complete FAFSA increased.

(Aldeman, 2016; Warick, 2016).educationnorthwest.org

Assistance Authority (KHEAA), and other partners in the delivery of hands on financial aid/FAFSA Frenzy workshops. The ultimate goal is as many seniors as possible complete the FAFSA to help ensure GUK graduates are financially prepared for postsecondary education.

how

Services and events provided by GUK are free to all senior students and their families. Students can sign up for FAFSA Frenzy events through GUK personnel stationed at the school, online, or through school administration/staff as (as agreed upon by your site team). The FAFSA Frenzy tool kit provides FAFSA Frenzy sign-up sheets to post in GUK school office, counselor's office and library.

Steps to begin FAFSA Frenzy: These steps are recommendations as implementation may differ from district to district. GUK staff should collaborate with your school and partners to discuss the process to see what works best. DPM/CS will send students AND their families information on the steps and procedures for completion prior to October 1, annually. They can do this by the following:

- **All students should receive The College Circuit from KHEAA**
Note: (many students do not have access to these booklets for various reasons: they are usually given to school counselors who sometimes do not distribute them, some schools do not request them because they don't know about them.) This book outlines the steps to completing the FAFSA, FSA ID, information about different types of financial aid, scholarship, how to earn and calculate KEES money, resources such as online and social networking, preparing for college and paying for college. The College Circuit can be distributed during classroom and advising sessions, and plainly displayed distribution in the GUK office, library and counselor offices. This publication can also be used as a reference guide during our GUK FAFSA Frenzy Events.
- **Use multiple communication strategies to raise awareness about the importance of FAFSA completion and where students and families can get FAFSA help.** FAFSA Frenzy toolkit is located on MS Team Advising Channel to support the following possible strategies:
 - FAQ about FAFSA insert in the student enrollment forms that is sent home to all seniors at the beginning of the school year (student demographic sheet)
 - Text updates sent to parents and families (if applicable)
 - Google Classroom weekly announcements with links to FAFSA and resources (GEAR UP personnel) in that school.
 - TV monitors that roll announcements in cafeteria or hallways or daily PA announcements.
 - Pennants/flyers throughout school and especially where seniors are mostly likely to be (lunchroom, bathrooms, cafeteria, senior hallway.
 - Flyers mailed or sent home with students.
 - Message on the school marquee, and utilize your GEAR UP advising bulletin board to highlight FAFSA Frenzy.
 - One-call, media release, and website/social media announcement (tool-kit includes scripts and templates).

research basis

*A college education provides a life of options, rather than of limitations. Provide your students with these opportunities by making your high school a place where college is the next step for everyone. When students have school, parental and community support, college becomes the norm: **higher education is the expectation rather than the exception.** A college-going culture helps all students set and achieve high goals and generates other important values such as appreciation of academic success, desire to succeed, and ambition to be a lifelong learner. (collegeboard.org 2020)*

- Visible FAFSA signage and promotional items (tool-kit includes adhesive wall vinyl, backdrop prop, and GEAR UP swag)..
- School events - Set up at table or station at school sporting events and hand out information.
- Staff collaborate with KHEAA to create virtual events if in person frenzies are not an option.
- Staff conduct one to one asynchronous FAFSA completions in a virtual format in addition to the Frenzy event.

who

All Priority Service Cohort students and families are encouraged to participate in the FAFSA Frenzy Events and financial aid advising.

To participate, students must be a senior and one parent/legal guardian must have an FSA ID. Note: Some students will qualify as independent, meaning they will not need a parent or guardian FSA ID to complete their FAFSA application.

when

October 1st of each year is the opening day for FAFSA submission. The recommended timeline for FAFSA Frenzy Kickoff Events is October through November, with smaller events continuing through March. Smaller events or appointments with staff could occur continuously as set by the DPM/C.

The FAFSA Frenzy Friday email campaign will begin the first Friday in October and continue for 12 weeks, with the final communication occurring the first Friday in January.

where

FAFSA Frenzy Events will occur in each GUK district: Possible locations:

- School library
- School cafeteria
- School media room
- School gymnasium
- Any school location that can accommodate a large number of people and supply computer access and privacy
- Off-sight location such as a public library if facilities are not best for hosting at school
- Virtual synchronous: ZOOM, MS Teams, Google Meet, etc.
- Virtual Asynchronous: YouTube, email exchange, text etc.

partners

GUK District Program Manager/Coordinators may include the following people in a successful FAFSA Frenzy event (not an exhaustive or required list): GUK staff (if available), high school counselors, AmeriCorps College Coaches, KHEAA rep., local Kentucky Community Technical College System financial aid rep and/or Family Resource Youth Service Center staff. In addition, we highly recommend any kickoff event to include the regional KHEAA outreach counselor, if possible. Keep in mind the more staff you have

present, the more FAFSA's can be completed. However, if the KHEAA counselor cannot be there, you should proceed with the event regardless.

implementation timeline

when	what	GUK staff responsibilities
Summer - August	Pre-planning for FAFSA Frenzy Events.	Confirm event dates, time, and locations with school counselors and KHEAA reps. Propose your event to your school site team and adjust as needed.
August – May	Communication/promotion to GUK students and families. Planning with School Site Team.	GUK District Program Managers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote FAFSA and FAFSA Frenzy Events utilizing FAFSA Frenzy toolkit • Set school completion goal and share with students. • Place signage and continue media/school announcements. Make certain to include in your October QAEP and complete necessary use of funds for food request 30 days prior to the event. Create checklist for tool kit and order food/supplies.
October	FAFSA Frenzy Kickoff events begin Statewide FAFSA Frenzy Friday email campaign/contest begins	The GUK DPM will have secured a location and time for hosting the event. They will confirm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location large enough to accommodate the number of attendees signed-up to attend - Computer access - Attendance of partners - Purchase and delivery of food (if evening in-person event) - Information and instructions are available for completion - If virtual FAFSA Frenzy is only option, proceed accordingly. <p>DPM/C/CCC will check weekly reports on FAFSA completion and follow up with students on incomplete applications</p>
October - May	FAFSA Frenzy Events occur. FAFSA completion and incomplete data	GUK District Program Managers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check weekly reports on FAFSA completion and follow up with students on incomplete applications. • Continue financial aid and FAFSA advising • Plan and execute smaller events and scheduled appointments with students and families.

February 28	Statewide FAFSA Frenzy Friday email campaign/contest begins	
March	FAFSA Frenzy school winners announced; prizes delivered	
May	Collect final data of FAFSA completion	Reward for the school who has the greatest percentage of FAFSA completion increase year to year.

how we will measure success

FAFSA Completion: GUK’s goal is an annual increase of 3% in FAFSA completion from the end of the prior school year to the end of the current school year, with an overall goal of 73% FAFSA completion in project year 7. During PY2, the GUK FAFSA completion rate was 58%. If we meet our goal of an increase by three percentage points every year, we will be on target to meet or exceed our goal by the end of the grant.

Student Participation: While GUK works toward assisting every senior in completing a FAFSA, the minimum participation target for each large/kickoff FAFSA Frenzy event is 15 students, with smaller events or appointments that follow being targeted, as needed, to provide one-on-one assistance to fewer numbers of students/families

Family Engagement/Participation: The overall goal of 40% of Priority Service Cohort families participate in at least one GUK senior year event each year (FAFSA Frenzy, College Application Campaign, and/or GEAR UP Go Day.

Student and family participation is documented by sign-in sheets for in-person events.

All participants will be asked to complete an online feedback form during every FAFSA Frenzy Event.