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State of New Jersey
HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY
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DAVID J. SOCOLOW
Executive Director

December 20, 2023

Dear Local Educational Agency Leads and Nonpublic School Administrators,

High school seniors can make better informed decisions about their futures by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA®](#)), which is required to learn about available financial aid from federal and state governments and directly from colleges and universities.

This year, the FAFSA® process opens later than usual (December 31, rather than October 1). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education is delaying the transmission of students' information to state agencies and higher education institutions – potentially for four to six weeks, rather than prior years' typical lag of just a few days after the student completes the application.

In light of these delays, we urge your school's counselors to encourage 12th grade students to fill out their FAFSA® as soon as possible to avoid any uncertainty over the levels of financial aid for which they may be eligible to receive in the 2024-2025 academic year.

As in every year, the outreach team at the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) is available to help students and their families understand how to fill out the FAFSA®. Our webinars – in both English and Spanish – will provide key information students and families need to apply for aid. See details at: <https://www.hesaa.org/Pages/fafsa.aspx>.

Please share this information with your staff who work with high school seniors exploring postsecondary options.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David J. Socolow".

David J. Socolow
Executive Director

New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority