



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** ★★ ★

Organize a FAFSA Training Event

A college education is an increasingly expensive investment for students and their families. A completed FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) allows the U.S. Department of Education to determine a potential student's eligibility for federal student aid. Key studies have indicated that FAFSA completion correlates strongly with college enrollment, particularly among low-income populations. You can help members of your community identify resources for college by sharing information on completing a FAFSA. Below are five key steps to organizing and implementing a FAFSA Training Event for MLK Day.

1. Identify a Location

Reach out to the places where potential college students are located—high schools, after school centers offering SAT prep classes, GED centers, or churches. Let these organizations know that you are interested in doing a FAFSA training event and determine if they are interested in partnering with you to host the training. Partners are often able to provide you with a location for the training.

Also, seek their input on the type of event that you might host. Do their constituents need:

- Information on all materials needed to complete the FAFSA
- To sign up for a PIN number (computer needed)
- To Learn about the various types of financial aid available
- To Learn where to go for more information and assistance in completing a FAFSA
- Assistance completing the FAFSA (computer needed)

If the organizations you reach out to—schools, after school programs, GED centers, or churches—are able to host the event, this may also help to determine what services you may offer. The availability of computers at the event site will allow you to expand the offerings at your event.

2. Organize a Team to Plan

Recruit an informed team to help plan and implement the event. A successful group effort requires a motivated team that agrees upon clearly defined tasks, sets reachable goals and acts with inspiration and purpose. To ensure that the team is well informed, gather information about the FAFSA through the following resources:

- www.StudentAid.gov
- www.fafsa.ed.gov
- www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov
- 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3242)
- “Like” [the Federal Student Aid Facebook](#) page and “follow” the [Federal Student Aid Twitter](#) page to ensure you and your team stay up to date on the latest information on Federal Student Aid.

Consider reaching out to the financial aid office at your local college or university. They may be able to engage one or more financial aid officers to assist in training volunteers and/or sharing their expertise with potential college students during your training event. They may also be able to host your event.

Once your planning team has determined the specifics of your project, it is time to determine the supplies and materials you will need to carry out the activities you have planned for your FAFSA Training Event. Solicit funds as well as in-kind donations from team members and/or others including local businesses for the supplies you'll need. The supplies you may need include:

- Resource materials about financial aid. The websites listed above have factsheets that you will want to distribute at your event. Make sure that you order or print enough copies.
- Folders to store all materials
- Writing pads
- Pens
- Refreshments
- Consider seeking the assistance of local office supply stores or printing centers to photocopy materials, or provide writing pads and pens. Ask restaurants, delis, or Parent Teacher Associations if they can provide refreshments. After in-kind donations are reviewed, purchase any remaining supplies or materials you will need prior to the day of service and have them ready to go on MLK Day.
- Remember to incorporate a way to thank your donors, maybe by adding their logos with a thank you message to the bottom of all materials that you produce yourself such as the agenda for the day or additional resources documents.
- Will anyone require accommodations to participate? Will you need a sign language interpreter?

Make sure your planning team meets regularly, especially as MLK Day approaches. Assign concrete tasks for everyone involved to keep the team interested and motivated. Tasks might include:

- Developing and distributing announcements about the event
- Gathering financial aid resources
- Seeking in-kind donations of other supplies
- Putting together resource packets that include information about your organization, Dr. King, and the MLK Day of Service
- Inviting local higher education institutions in your community, state or region to set up booths for students and their parents to visit before and after the planned activities at the event (if the location can accommodate this).
- Identifying other activities planned in your community where your event can also be highlighted such as a college fair, college tour days for prospective students, or a GED graduation event.
- [Post your project](#) on our site so that people in your area can join your efforts as volunteers or participants.

Advertise the event through posters, word-of-mouth, letters to schools or online networks, or announcements in parent/teacher/student association (PTSA) meetings or newsletters. Libraries, schools,

community centers, churches, and grocery stores often have community bulletin boards that are perfect for spreading the word about your event. Your promotion should target both volunteers as well as community members who want to participate in the event.

3. Implement the Service Project/Activities

On the day of the event:

- Make sure project leaders or coordinators are at the site early, ready to greet team members and participants as they arrive.
- Officially welcome everyone and talk about the purpose of the event – learning from each other, moving towards a brighter future, and serving in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Organize volunteers into different work teams. For example, have different people greeting and directing participants, handing out refreshments, responding to questions, conducting the training, distributing materials, and doing a reflection exercise.
- Conduct your training event, offering continuous encouragement to all participants.
- Make time for reflection with participants and volunteers. Talk about the parallels and differences between your effort to expand learning opportunities for all by spreading the word about Federal Student Aid and the mission of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to encourage everyone to live up to the purpose and potential of America.

4. Reflect and Assess

After the project is completed, take some time to reflect and assess with your planning team. Think about what went well and what could be improved.

- Host an official debrief meeting for team members after the service day.
- Examine the goals you set and consider which you met, exceeded, and didn't quite reach.
- Who did your work impact? What did you accomplish?
- Ask everyone for their honest assessment of what went well and how to improve for next time.
- Consider what doing this work on MLK Day, in particular, meant to your community.
- Make a list and plan for necessary follow-up.

5. Share Your Story

We know you might not like to brag, but please do! You may inspire others to organize a FASFA training event once they hear what you accomplished. [Share your service story](#). We're listening and want to know what you did.