



MASFAP MONITOR

January 2025 Volume 2025, Issue 1



Val's Voice

**Val Jensen, MASFAP President
Deputy Director of Student Financial Services,
Washington University**



Rising Together in 2025

As financial aid professionals, we stand at the intersection of education and opportunity, serving as champions for students as they navigate the complexities of higher education funding. This role, while rewarding, comes with its unique challenges. From staying ahead of ever-changing regulatory requirements to addressing the financial concerns of a diverse student population, our field demands constant adaptability, innovation, and resilience.

The past year has tested our collective resolve. Economic uncertainties, evolving policies, and shifts in enrollment trends have stretched resources and posed difficult questions. Yet, in these challenges, MASFAP members have demonstrated unparalleled resilience. By collaborating, sharing best practices, and leaning into

professional development opportunities, our community continues to meet obstacles head-on, ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed. As we enter 2025, I am looking forward to engaging with many of you in the various activities we have planned to support both students and our membership.

Once again, MASFAP's Early Awareness Committee has partnered with the University of Missouri and MOCAN to host MASFAP's 2nd Annual FAFSA Week of Action. This promises to be a powerful start to the new year. The week-long initiative, scheduled for January 19-25, will bring together aid

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MASFAP Annual Conference

professionals from across the state to provide real-time assistance to students and families looking to complete a FAFSA. The week will culminate with in-person FAFSA workshops held at various institutions across the state on Saturday, January 25.

MASFAP thrives because of the dedication of its members. As we embark on a new year, we encourage you to deepen your involvement by volunteering for one of MASFAP's committees. Whether your passion lies in professional development, legislative advocacy, or member engagement, there's a place for you to make a difference. Serving on a committee not only enriches our association but also provides invaluable opportunities for networking and personal growth. If you have not yet volunteered for a committee, there is still time to get involved by visiting the MASFAP website and completing the volunteer form.

As we move forward into 2025, let's carry the spirit of resilience and collaboration that defines MASFAP. By working together, sharing our knowledge, and supporting one another, we can overcome any challenge and continue to transform lives through education. Here's to a successful and impactful year ahead!

All my best,

Val Jensen

Monitor Submission Policy

Articles may be submitted by any person, company or organization for consideration by the MASFAP Monitor staff and are subject to approval prior to publishing in the newsletter. In general, submissions are made by members of the organization. The author's name should be included in the submission. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit the content of any article or information submitted.

Articles will be edited for accuracy, quality and appropriate length. Submissions may be limited to one article per Monitor, per person, company, or organization, depending on space.

Articles are intended to be informational and for the benefit of MASFAP members, not for company promotion or advertising.

If the author is unavailable or a resolution can't be reached, the editor will refer it to the committee chairperson and President for a decision about publication.

The MASFAP Monitor is brought to you by the Communications Committee.

Submissions for the next MASFAP Monitor are due April 10, 2025.



Financial Aid Survivors Group—Join Us! 😊😊



Financial Aid Survivors is a group of retired and former financial aid folks who a few years ago decided to meet twice a year in Columbia to renew friendship and memories. When we get together one topic that is not discussed is financial aid. Conversation is centered around grandkids, travels and recent concerts. For me, I was pleasantly surprised how fast financial aid was put in my rear view mirror. As a group, none of us miss the campus politics associated with delivering a successful financial aid program. With that said, what we didn't want to lose is the friendship we developed through the years with former colleagues. Currently we maintain an email distribution list to announce scheduled luncheons. We also message folks through Facebook. So far, our group has been formed by word-of-mouth. We hope this article will reach folks that would like to reconnect with former colleagues. At our last luncheon we decided to call ourselves Financial Aid Survivors. This group depended on each other to work through the maze of Dear Colleague Letters along with the interpretation of rules and regulations. We all survived with the help of each other! If you have any interest in renewing friendships please join us. Our next luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7 at 11 am at Midway Golf located at 5500 W Van Horn Tavern Road in Columbia. Those that want to be included on our email distribution list, contact Tony Georges at tonyg_siu@yahoo.com or message me through Facebook.

RECENT CHANGES

What's Happening



Anna Plattner, Grand River

Technical School: In January, I took a refreshing getaway to Tulum, Mexico with friends. It was the perfect escape, filled with stunning beaches, vibrant culture, and unforgettable moments soaking up the sun and local vibes.



Missouri Southern State University: We have a new Scholarship and Outreach Counselor in our office at Missouri Southern. Her name is Amber Myers. Amber worked in our office for 2 years as a student worker and graduated in December with her BSBA in Management & Human Resource Management. As a recent graduate, she'll be a great resource for helping our students navigate the scholarship process!

MASFAP Happenings and Tidbits

Julie Finn, College Ave: I have a new office assistant - her name is Willow and she's ADORABLE!



University of Missouri Columbia: Mizzou Student Financial Aid office was awarded the MU SAC Salutes award. This award is given twice a year to departments that stand out in customer service and dedication to the University's mission.

Melissa Findley, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation: My son Andrew graduated from Drury University in Springfield, Missouri in December.



MASFAP On the Move



**SAY
CHEESE!**



Dan Dick, Washington University: I went to the Florida Keys over the new year!



Anna Plattner, Grand River Technical School: My son got engaged and we will be having a wedding this coming November.

HAPPENINGS

Sarah Williamson, North Central Missouri College: NCMC Associate Director of Financial Aid, Sarah Williamson, earned her Masters in Business Administration from WGU in December 2024.



Mizzou Financial Aid Advisor, Esrom Griffin welcomed daughter Emory in October!



Valerie Jensen, Washington University: Dena Norris, Alex Miller and I went to the Dominican Republic for some much-needed R&R in November.



DHEWD You Know...??

Submitted by Amy Hedrick, MDHEWD

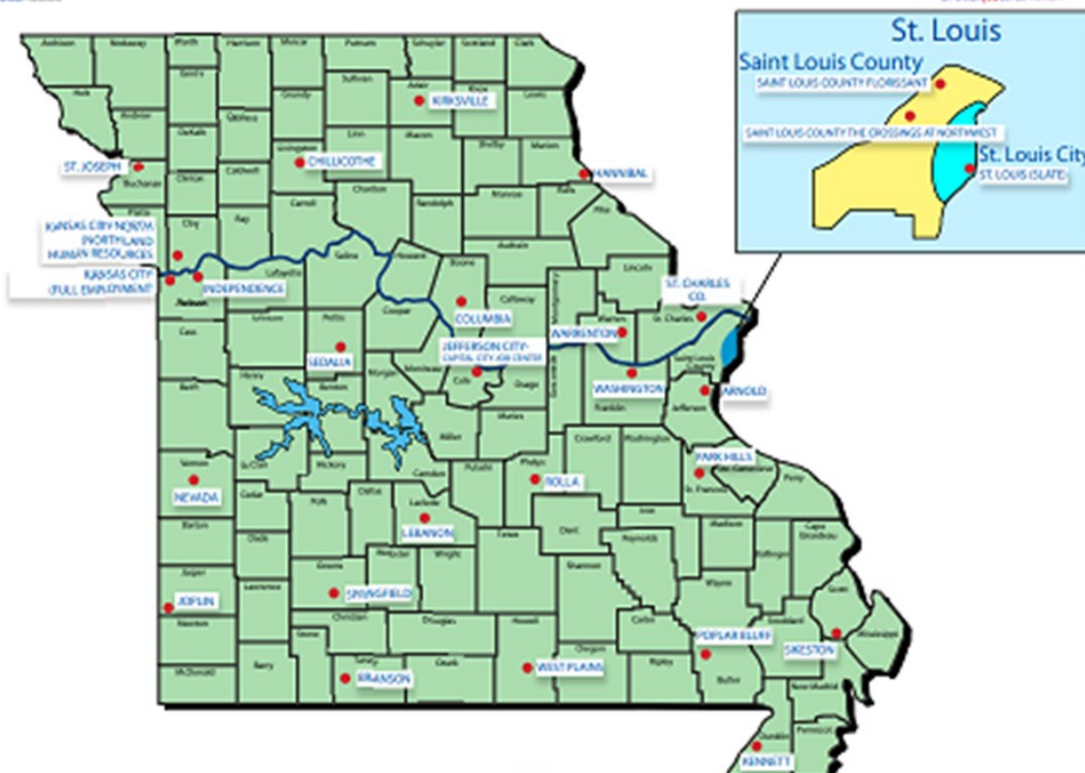
Our Office of Workforce Development (OWD) operates 22 full-service job centers across the state that offer **free services** to all Missourians, including students! While many people are aware that job centers assist with writing resumes, preparing for interviews, and searching for jobs, they also offer many more employment-related services that can benefit your students. Our job centers offer:

- Assistance with accessing federal financial aid grants and student loans, including help with filing a FAFSA®.
- Assistance with accessing other sources of governmental financial aid, such as WIOA; emergency support, such as the Quest Grant; and regional and local grants.
- Referrals to supportive services, such as SNAP, MO HealthNet, and Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Budgeting and financial literacy programs to help them budget money and take control of their finances.
- Basic and essential computer skills, such as using a keyboard and mouse, accessing the internet, creating documents, and saving files.

Find your nearest job center at <https://jobs.mo.gov/job-centers> or call 1-888-728-JOBS (5627).



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Missouri FAFSA Completion Week of Action!



Missouri college access organizations and colleges are coming together to host **Missouri FAFSA Completion Week of Action** from **Sunday, January 19, through Saturday, January 25**. We need your help spreading the word to students and families!

Missouri FAFSA Completion Week of Action

- **Sunday and Tuesday (January 19 or 21), 3–4 p.m. CT:**

Attend a brief Zoom session hosted by the Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation. This presentation, *Preparing to File the FAFSA for Students and Families*, offers an overview, helpful tips, and a clear explanation of what to expect during and after the process. Register here: [Zoom Registration Link](#).

- **Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (January 21–23), 6–8 p.m. CT:**

Mizzou, the MASFAP Early Awareness Committee, and college financial aid professionals are providing virtual FAFSA assistance. No registration required - join the Zoom link (<https://umsystem.zoom.us/j/93340160567>) and you'll be placed in a private room with a financial aid professional who can answer your questions.

Saturday, January 25:

Eight in-person FAFSA completion events will be hosted 9 a.m.-12 p.m. across Missouri by the MASFAP Early Awareness Committee, MOCAN, and college financial aid offices. Events held at University of Central Missouri, Northwest Missouri State University, Missouri Southern State University, Mizzou, Columbia College, Southeast Missouri State University, Three Rivers College, and Saint Louis University – for updates and more information visit www.mofafsa.org/fafsaday.

- **Journey to College Resource Page:**

Explore FAFSA Frenzy resources at

[FAFSA Information – Journey To College – Realize your potential.](#)

Please help us spread the word so students and families can take advantage of these resources and complete their FAFSA!

2025 MASFAP Board and Committee Updates and Goals



Kimberly Meeker, President-Elect: To soak up all the knowledge and wisdom that I can from Matthew (Past-President) and Val (President) before taking the reins in 2026.

Will Shaffner, Legislative: Working to increase MASFAP's presence in-state with our elected leaders in Jefferson City is one of our top priorities.



Dan Dick, Technology: I am looking forward to getting started with the Technology committee—and would welcome additional volunteers!

Jamie Davis, Professional Development: We are gearing up for an impactful year! Working on several ideas to help strengthen our skills, share knowledge, and grow as professionals. Stay tuned for upcoming events, you won't want to miss them!



Melissa Findley, Communications: Do you like to write? Or do you like to collect information and compile? We are looking for Communications Committee members to help us gather articles and information for the newsletter as well as organize the newsletter. Please volunteer for our committee! Email melissa.findley@moslf.org if you are interested or have questions!



Taylor Grimm, Hannah Smith, and Cherelle Washington, Early Awareness: The Early Awareness Committee is starting the new year off running with FAFSA Day (Saturday, January 25) in conjunction with the FAFSA Week of Action (January 19-25). High school students, current college students, families, and adult learners are all invited to attend FAFSA Day on January 25 from 9 am – 12 p.m. This is a free event on local college campuses to provide one-on-one or small group help with FAFSA completion and submission. This is a great opportunity to get your questions answered! Reminder: The Access Missouri Priority Deadline is February 3rd. See www.mofafsa.org/fafsaday for more information.



Additionally, planning for our ~14 High School Counselor Workshops across the state next fall will begin this Spring.



Check out the Missouri FAFSA Completion Week of Action information on Page 9!

Join a MASFAP Committee! We Need YOU!

- Go to masfap.org
- Link to “Volunteer” under Financial Aid Administrators
- Complete the Volunteer Request Form with the Committee(s) you would like join!



The Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel (MASFAP) is a dynamic association dedicated to serving and advocating for practitioners, users and providers of student financial aid programs.

FAA Spotlight



Spotlight: Julie Crabdree, Mineral Area Community College

What's your title, and describe your role and responsibilities at your institution?

Director of Financial Aid at Mineral Area College (MAC)

How long have you worked at your institution?

5 years, I started right before Covid-19 happened

What has your career path been like?

I spent most of my career working in accounting departments in manufacturer companies. I made a career change 5 years ago when I started working at Mineral Area College working in both financial aid and admissions. In the short time I have been at MAC I have worked in the financial aid department in different positions before becoming the Financial Aid Director.

Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution.

I have the best team! My financial aid office consists of myself, Susie and Lisabeth. I recently was able to hire a part-time employee, Pierre. Most of my team are new to financial aid. I am proud of my team and how hard we work to help our students navigate the confusion of financial aid.

Do you have any mentors in your professional life?

Denise Sebastian our previous Financial Aid Director at MAC

Regina Morris @ Three Rivers Community College

Cassandra Hicks @ Southeast Missouri School of Nursing

I am grateful for all the financial aid directors and employees that are there to help support me with any question I have!

What have been your biggest accomplishments on your team?

It has been constant changes since I became the director. A new financial aid system was implemented which consisted of a lot of manual set-ups during this process. I learned a lot with the implementation of a new system and faced many challenges in how we process aid. We were still working through issues with our new system when the rollout of the 2024-25



FAA Spotlight, Continued

FAFSA Simplification the following year became the next challenge we faced.

Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

I have always lived in Farmington/Park Hills Missouri area. I have been married to Todd for 22 years. I have 2 children Chase who is 15 and Lauren who is 14. We have 1 dog named Rocky who is a 3-year-old reverse brindle boxer.

What do you like to do in your free time?

Read, spend time with my family, and camp

What is the last good movie or Netflix series you watched and enjoyed?

Virgin River (If you are a reader like me, the books are great!)

The Night Agent

The Lioness (Paramount Plus)

I am a sucker for a good Hallmark movie like the Wedding Veil movies.

What kind of music do you listen to and what's the best concert you've been to?

Pretty much anything but mainly country and 80's music.

My favorite concerts were Meatloaf (back in the 90s) and Thomas Rhett because it was my daughter's first concert.



Do you like traveling?

Occasionally but I am more of a homebody

Tell us a fun fact or something few people know about you:

Me and My husband own a racecar (sprint car) that our son drives at local dirt racetracks



New Year's Resolutions



I want to hike 12 trails this year!

Becca Diskin, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation

Talk to my sister more - she lives 5 hours away and we are always both so busy!

Julie Finn, College Ave

To be less online.

Dan Dick, Washington University

Pressure off. Grace on.

Kimberly Meeker, North Central Missouri College

My new year's resolution is to find something in every day that brings me joy.

Val Jensen, Washington University

New Year Resolutions vary by country and saving more money was the number one resolution in the USA. While I didn't choose the number one resolution, mine made the list of top resolutions and that is a healthier lifestyle, both physically and mentally. I would like to have a more balanced 2025. Let's see how this goes with a check-in at the annual conference in November 2025.

Will Shaffner, MOHELA

My New Year's resolution is to declutter and take things back to basic. This includes my hair, so I'm no longer coloring my roots and am going completely gray this year!

Paula Carpenter, Jefferson College

To play more golf.....ready for a 50-degree day to get out and play.

Jamie Davis, University of Missouri Columbia



To grow in embracing life more, and taking more time for myself.

Anna Plattner, Grand River Technical School

Get into weightlifting (and be able to do a lateral raise with more than five pounds)!

Keri Gilbert, Stephens College



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and Amy Hedrick, MDHEWD

Disclaimer:
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