



MASFAP MONITOR

July 2024 Volume 2024, Issue 3



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Matthew's Message

**Matthew Kearney, MASFAP President
Director Student Financial Services, Southeast
Missouri State University**



Dear MASFAP Members,

As we navigate through the summer season, we find ourselves in a position that feels much like a challenging sports match. The final whistle of one academic year has barely blown, and we're already deep into preparation for the next. Our professional struggles mirror those of a determined team facing a tough opponent, including year-end processes, new academic year preparations, and the lingering effects of the FAFSA 'flop out' (rather than roll out)...leaving us with numerous questions and too few answers.

On top of this, we're grappling with ongoing regulatory changes, staffing shortages, and a spotlight on our offices as we steer through the complex world of enrollment trends in higher education. It's a demanding game but, just like any resilient team, we remain steadfast and focused on our "why" – making college a reality for so many deserving students.

Despite the challenges, we've had some significant wins. Recently, we completed a one-day drive-in training opportunity that provided

valuable insights and camaraderie. Looking ahead, we will have more training opportunities over the coming months, all building up to our marquee professional development event of the year – the Fall Conference, set for November 4-6. These opportunities are designed to equip us with the knowledge and skills to tackle the upcoming academic year with confidence and optimism.

In the spirit of teamwork and perseverance, let's continue to support one another. Remember, it's crucial to take a moment to step away, even if only for a short time, to re-center yourself and focus on the things that are most important to you. Just as athletes need rest and recovery, so do we.

Stay positive, stay strong, and let's



Matthew's Message, *continued*

keep pushing forward together. Your hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed, and together, we are making a difference.

With encouragement and support,

Matthew L. Kearney

MASFAP President



**FOR:
OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**WHEN:
November 4-6, 2024**

**WHERE:
Lodge of the Four Seasons**



MASFAP Happenings and Tidbits

RECENT CHANGES

Bridgette Betz, MO S&T: Effective June 1, 2024, Missouri S&T has combined the Student Financial Assistance and Cashiers office into the new Student Financial Services office and I have moved into the new Senior Director role over [at] the new office. I am excited for this new journey!

Alexandria Miller, MOHELA: I am excited to announce [that] I started a new position as the Assistant Director Business Development at MOHELA.

Becca Diskin, MSSU: Missouri Southern State University has a new Administrative Assistant, Karen Holt. We are so happy to have her working in Financial Aid with us.

Derek Bohnsack, Missouri Valley College: We have added Claudia Cruz to our financial aid family as a Financial Aid Advisor. She is a recent MVC graduate and doing a great job!

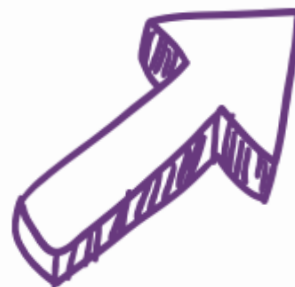
Tony Lubbers, University of Central Missouri: We just returned from a lake trip to Bull Shoals. We also visited Laura Ingalls Wilder grave and museum in Mansfield.

Candace Shea: In June, I transitioned from the Financial Aid industry to assume a CRM role at Columbia College. This change is indeed bittersweet, yet I am enthusiastic about my new position as the Assistant Director of CRM.



Alexandria Miller, MOHELA: Attended nationals for my daughter (Ami) and her dance team. Ami was crowned 2024 Teen Dancer of the Year at Rainbow's National Dance Competition. We also came home with a couple national titles for our amazing group numbers. It was a successful and fun trip!!

Anna Plattner, Grand River Technical School: I was able to attend the MASFAA Leadership Symposium through the MASFAP Bob Burger Award. It was a great conference and I gained so much from it. Thank you MASFAP for making this possible!



MASFAP On the Move—Latest From LDP

In May, MASFAP's LDP group gathered in Jefferson City to learn more about state aid programs from Leroy Wade and to learn more about MASFAP's Legislative Committee with Will Shaffner. Together, they discussed and set a plan for annual advocacy initiatives.



2024 LDP Participants

Carly Blagg – Southeast Missouri State University

Joyous Chambers – Lincoln University

Michele Logue – University of Missouri – KC

Kathy Luther – East Central College

Madeline Shaffer – University of Central Missouri

Hannah Smith – Saint Louis University

Jessica Weir – University of Missouri – Columbia



MASFAP On the Move—Latest From LDP

MASFAP LDP met in Columbia for its April monthly meeting and visited an escape room! It was a great team bonding and problem solving experience!!



Here's a few of the 2024 MASFAP LDP class at NASFAA Milwaukee.



High School Counselor Workshops Announced

Co-Chair Cherelle Washington—Early Awareness

The Early Awareness Committee is excited to announce dates for our Fall MASFAP High School Counselor Workshops to be held across the state. A **HUGE** thank you to the host institutions and EAC committee members.

Truman State University (Kirksville)	September 24
Southeast Missouri State University (Cape Girardeau)	September 25
Missouri Southern State University (Joplin)	September 27
Missouri University of Science & Technology (Rolla)	October 3
Missouri Western State University (St. Joseph)	October 4
Three Rivers College (Poplar Bluff)	October 8
Evangel University (Springfield)	October 10
Stephens College (Columbia)	October 17
Missouri State University (West Plains)	October 18
Hannibal-LaGrange University (Hannibal)	October 22
State Fair Community College (Sedalia)	October 24
North Central Missouri College (Trenton)	TBA
(Kansas City)	TBD
(St. Louis)	TBD

Student and Family FAFSA Support in Missouri—MOCAN

As we make one final push to complete 24-25 FAFSAs, MOCAN has compiled a list of the support available across the state in one place. On mofafsa.org/summer, there is a calendar of the daily help available, both virtual and in-person, as well as an inquiry from where students can ask questions and get support from an advisor. Please share this information with your students who have not completed their FAFSA so they can find the help they need!

MOCAN is hosting weekly virtual FAFSA help hours on Mondays from 10 am - 12 pm and Wednesdays from 5 pm - 7 pm. No appointment is needed - just visit mofafsa.org/fafsazoom for the link.

Finally, MOCAN is hosting a FAFSA completion event this summer at Three Rivers Community College Poplar Bluff on July 24th from 10 am - 2 pm. More details will be on mofafsa.org/summer as the events are finalized. Please share these resources with newly admitted and returning students who need support. It has been a long year of FAFSA work, but we know there are still students who need help. Let's get them across the finish line and successfully enrolled for the fall.



MASFAP Recognized With the Gold Star Award

2024 NASFAA Awards Announced in Milwaukee

NASFAA's [Gold Star Award](#) recognizes innovative ideas in the financial aid arena at any level, targeted toward any constituency. This award is open to individuals working at NASFAA member institutions; member institutions; regional associations; and state associations. In 2024, the award was presented to:

- **Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel (MASFAP), for their FAFSA Week of Action.**

The MASFAP Week of Action was initiated to increase awareness of the need to file the FAFSA, to provide support remotely to students and families as they try to complete the FAFSA, and to serve as a supplement to the in-person “FAFSA Frenzy” events taking place across the state of Missouri. This week-long effort, held in early January over four evenings, aimed to make the FAFSA completion process more accessible and manageable for everyone involved.



MASFAP's Emily Haynam and Matthew Kearney with Hellen and Justin from NASFAA. Emily collaborated with her MASFAP peers to spearhead MASFAP's Week of Action in January 2024.



Conference Charity Competition Coming Soon!

Dear MASFAP Colleagues,

We are thrilled to announce that MASFAP will be partnering with [Feeding Missouri](#) as this year's conference charity to help address food insecurity among college students!



About Feeding Missouri: Feeding Missouri is a coalition of the six Missouri food banks dedicated to providing hunger relief across every county in the state. Collectively, they distribute over 120 million pounds of food each year through a network of more than 1,500 community feeding programs. Many higher education institutions already collaborate with the food banks under Feeding Missouri, supporting regional, local, and on-campus pantries that aid our college students. These food banks include Second Harvest Community Food Bank, Harvesters Community Food Network, Central Missouri Food Bank, St. Louis Area Foodbank, Ozarks Food Harvest, and Southeast Missouri Food Bank. Funds raised for Feeding Missouri will directly support the higher education institution partners of these food banks, impacting students on our campuses!

Charity Competition: We're starting early this year with an exciting new competition! In partnership with Feeding Missouri, we will be launching a donation website this fall ahead of the conference. (More details to come!) We are also creating flyers that you can share with your colleagues across your campuses to support this effort!

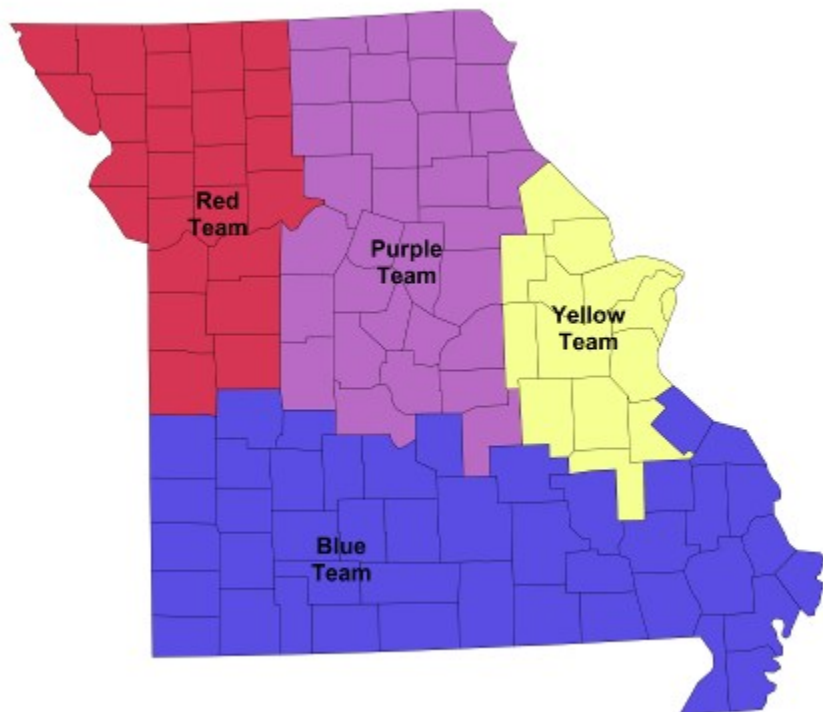
Teams: Each MASFAP institution will be assigned to one of four color teams.

Objective: These teams will compete in fundraising efforts starting in the fall and leading up to the conclusion of the fall conference.

Goal: Our primary goal is to raise funds to support college students facing food insecurity across the state.

Incentive: We will have incentives for the winning schools... stay tuned!

Every donation, no matter the size, will make a difference in students' lives. Let's come together and make a significant impact in supporting students across our state!



DEI Committee Update



By Ethan Miller, Southeast Missouri State University and MASFAP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair

On behalf of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Ad-hoc Committee, I am very excited to share some updates on our activities this year!

Firstly, we are pleased to announce that we have booked Brandi L. Miller, IASFAA President (2022-23), to join us at our upcoming conference in November. Brandi will be delivering a compelling presentation on the importance of representation within our field for our DEI general session. Her insights promise to be enlightening and thought-provoking, offering valuable perspectives that align with our committee's goals of fostering inclusivity and diversity within financial aid practices.

Additionally, our committee has been actively preparing for our interest session at the conference. We are currently engaged in discussions to finalize the content and format that will best serve the needs and interests of our membership. We are dedicated to creating a session that addresses current challenges and opportunities in diversity, equity, and inclusion within financial aid, ensuring it resonates with the interests and needs of our membership.

Furthermore, we are excited to inform you that we are collaborating with various speakers to host DEI-related webinars in the near future! These webinars will serve as platforms for ongoing education and dialogue on topics ranging from cultural competence to inclusive practices in financial aid administration. We look forward to sharing more details with you soon.

As always, we encourage your active participation and feedback. Your insights are crucial in guiding our efforts to create a more inclusive environment within MASFAP and beyond.

We look forward to seeing you at the conference (and the webinars!) and engaging in meaningful discussions on these important topics.

Take care of yourself and each other.



FAA Spotlight



Spotlight: Kathy Luther

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

I am the Associate Director of Financial Aid. I advise students and families with any financial help they need. I process loans, state aid, and work with the Federal Work Study program.

How long have you worked at your institution?

I have been with East Central College since July 19, 2021

What has your career path been like?

I have been in education for a while; before I came to ECC I worked as the Registrar at Owensville High School. I worked with the seniors on meeting A Plus requirements and completing FAFSAs, I really enjoyed the aspect of financial aid and all the inner workings of it. I came to ECC as a student service specialist but as soon as a position opened in financial aid, I jumped on the opportunity and here I am and love it.

Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution.

We are a small group of 5, including our director, who believes in her team and invests so much into us with professional development every chance she gets. She also embraces change so be jealous because she has been a blessing during this year, and I know for many years to come. Her calming nature has been so welcoming, and she has taken this year on with such a positive energy we know we got this. Thank you, **Stacy Bogier**. Our team includes myself the Associate Director, 2 Financial Aid Advisors and a Processor. Since we are small, and all either new to ECC or Financial Aid, we have had to rely on and support each other and let me stress, this team does just that, they SUPPORT.

Do you have any mentors in your professional life?

My mentor for my financial aid career is Heather Kleekamp – Director, State Technical College When she was as at ECC she took me under her wing and showed me the ropes and never lost faith in my ability as a Financial Aid Advisor and was one of my biggest supporters when I applied for the Associate Director Position. She is my voice of reason and will pick up the phone every time I call without judgment and always with help, and more times than I can count a good laugh or cry. Thank you, HEATHER!

What have been your biggest accomplishments on your team?

My biggest accomplishment is being the best version of me. The few years I have been in financial aid, I have grown so much and love to share all the information I have gained from MASFAP Leadership and all the conferences. This year I have held many hats on our team, and I have been able to train new coworkers as I stepped into new responsibilities. With these new responsibilities I have been able to execute new processes and keep researching



FAA Spotlight, Continued

on how to implement more to assist our department to be sufficient and knowledgeable for our students and their families.

Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

I am a single mom of 2. I have a daughter who is in higher education as well, she works at the University of Arkansas as an Assistant Director of Greek Life, she will be getting married in April of 2025. My son is a student at UMKC, he is in his last year of Pharmacy School, Dr. Luther, what a great sound! Fun fact about these two, Ravyn my daughter was born 2-11 and my son, Jacob was born 11-2. They got sibling tattoos with these dates 2-11-2, they did try to include mom, but she chickened out. I have a puppy as well; his name is Spencer, after Spencer Reed from Criminal Minds because he is an absolute Genius.

What do you like to do in your free time?

First and foremost, I love to hang out with my kids when they have time but when I am not with them, I enjoy a good walk, or you can find me out Line dancing.

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

Just finished the third season of Bridgerton and Queen Charlotte, but Criminal Minds or Bones is always on repeat I enjoy a good criminal show.

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

I listen to everything, but mostly talk radio, and I would rather see a musical at the Fox than a concert. I am really looking forward to seeing Hamilton again this August.

Do you like traveling?

Love to travel, the beach is normally my go to but hoping to mark off a bucket list item with my son Jacob and go on an Alaska Cruise next year. It will be my survived the wedding and celebrate his major accomplishment trip so if anyone has been hit me up



FAFSA Mission-Mini Grants in 70 Missouri Counties



By Melissa Findley, Executive Director, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation

Missouri Scholarship and Loan Foundation recently awarded over \$90,000 in funding to support more than 110 community events hosted by local colleges, universities, high schools, and nonprofit organizations across 70 Missouri counties through our FAFSA Completion Mission-Mini Grants program.

We released information about this this funding opportunity in Fall 2023 and depleted the initial budget. We then opened another round after the MSLF Board approved more funding in Spring 2024. The goal of our FAFSA

Completion Mission-Mini Grants program is to boost FAFSA completion rates in Missouri by supporting community events that provide educational resources and tools to help high school counselors, students, and families. View the press release from MOHELA about this initiative in Missouri [here](#).



*Map by location of where grant funds have been sent. The green checks are the initial funding and blue checks represent the second round of funding. (left)

MASFAA Mentoring Program—Apply Now!



The MASFAA Mentoring program will bring together leaders of the past, present, and future in once-monthly virtual meetings that are focused on a wide range of topics around professional development. Mentor/mentee meetings will provide structured opportunities for mentees to engage with mentors on professional topics on a more individualized level. Meetings will be held virtually to ensure the greatest accessibility for participants culminating in a capstone event focused on leadership and engagement.

Are you interested in participating in this incredible leadership opportunity? Applications for our 2024-2025 cohort are being accepted now through July 17th. Apply by completing our Google Application [here](#).

Updates from MDHEWD

Submitted by: Paula Clay, MDHEWD

Access Missouri Deadlines

In addition to extending the deadline for Access Missouri to June 1, the SAI cutoff was raised to \$20,000. An announcement was sent on July 2 via the e-distribution list.

Journey to College Day

Journey to College Day is July 23, 2024, contact Paula to register at Paula.Clay@dhewd.mo.gov.

Missouri Resources for Adult Learners:

Webinar

Tuesday, July 16, 10 AM

[Register for Zoom Webinar](#)



Resources and access funding available to Adult Learners in Missouri:

- State Funding (grants and scholarships)
- Job Center Services
- MSLF Resources

Who should attend:

- Employers: talent management, HR professionals
- Higher education: admissions and financial aid
- Community organizations working with adults

Presenters:

- Erik Anderson, Director- Financial Assistance, MDHEWD
- Jerri Bowles, Job Center Services, MDHEWD
- Melissa Findley, Executive Director, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation

MARK YOUR
Calendar



Something You Can't Get Through Your Workday Without

Coffee, coffee, coffee! (If you get the Gilmore Girls reference here, let's be friends!)

Taylor Grimm, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation

One word - COFFEE!!!!

Shawn McCaw, Washington University

COFFEE!! 😊

Hannah Masters, Cottey College

My Coffee...and I drink decaf!!

Sarah Edwards, Citizens

COFFEE! I do not care if it is 8 AM or 3 PM, I'm going to be holding (or looking for) my giant thermos.

Ethan Miller, Southeast Missouri State University



Coffee and Diet Coke.

Alexandria Miller, MOHELA

Diet Coke!

Derek Bohnsack, Missouri Valley College

My comfort water bottle.

Cherelle Washington, MOCAN

I cannot get through the work day without snacks! I have a drawer full of different things, just in case.

Becca Diskin, Missouri Southern State University

Something I cannot get through my day without....Laughter. I can't imagine a day without it!

Paula Carpenter, Jefferson College

I cannot get through my work day without interacting with my staff. They are a riot and make work fun!

Tony Lubbers, University of Central Missouri

Chocolate.

Anna Plattner, Grand River Technical School

Something I cannot get through my workday without? The camaraderie and good working relationship with my co-workers!

Lynda Bjorklun, Stephens College



My morning coffee and my Microsoft Outlook daily reminders!

Marla Fernandez, Truman State University



FAA Spotlight



Spotlight: Hannah Smith

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

I am the Assistant Director of New Students in the Office of Student Financial Services at Saint Louis University (SLU). I lead a team of two coordinators and a counselor that assist new and prospective students in navigating the financial aid process. We serve as liaisons between Admission and Student Financial Services and help families understand how they can finance a SLU education. We also conduct outreach efforts in the Saint Louis community by offering Financial Aid 101 and FAFSA Presentations to better prepare high school students for college.

How long have you worked at your institution?

I just celebrated three years at SLU on July 1!

What has your career path been like?

I started my professional career as an Admission Counselor at my alma mater, The University of Tulsa, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After spending 5 years in Admission, life brought me to Saint Louis where I transitioned into Financial Aid. I started at SLU as New Student Coordinator and feel grateful for the opportunity to have become Assistant Director and build out the New Student team during my time at SLU.

Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution.

Our team at SLU is truly special! We are an office of about 30 that encompasses Counseling and Outreach, Operations, Student Accounts and Cashiering for our campus community of 15,000 students. We stay connected through regular lunch meet-ups, happy hours, and posts in our "Life Share" or "Pet Share" channels in Teams. We can truly rely on each other to serve students well and keep each other sane – even through the mess that has been FAFSA Simplification.

Do you have any mentors in your professional life?

I feel lucky to have been able to work with a great team of folks that serve as role models professionally and personally. Financial Aid is unique in its spirit of collaboration and community and I look forward to forging more connections with leaders in our profession.

What have been your biggest accomplishments on your team?

I am constantly amazed at the amount of work our team takes on and tackles. We push each other to work hard and think creatively in order to serve our students better. I am so proud of our work together over the last year to learn, adapt to, and master all intricacies of FAFSA simplification. We are not through it, but we've come a long way and that is something to be proud of!

Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

I was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas as the youngest of four



FAA Spotlight, Continued



children. I take great pride in being raised in a family of educators, who instilled the love and value of education from an early age. I moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma to attend The University of Tulsa, where I studied Psychology, Marketing, and Women's and Gender Studies. I enjoyed 5 years post-grad in Tulsa until moving to Saint Louis with my partner Stephen in March 2021. We settled in Maplewood for three years until buying a house in South City in January. Our two dogs, Rue (Carolina Dog) and Rey (Great Dane), especially love the fenced-in backyard and close proximity to Christy Park.

What do you like to do in your free time?

My evenings and weekends are spent frequenting our favorite vintage or antique stores (highly recommend Green Shag Market or The Future Antiques), enjoying shows at The Muny or Fox, catching a Blues or Cardinals game, or watching Stephen play Australian Rules Football. I also serve in Young Professionals organizations for Home Sweet Home STL and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

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

Having just finished binging all seasons of *Vanderpump Rules*, the natural next show to watch is *Love Island USA* (iykyk). Between seasons of *The Bachelor/Bachelorette*, you can catch me watching anything about a cult (*Wild Wild Country* and *Love Has Won* both high recommendations), latest Netflix drops (*Bridgerton*, *The Crown*, *Dead to Me*), or *The Office (US)* for the 102nd time.

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

I listen to a bit of everything and tend to jump around based on mood from pop music to yacht rock to Broadway showtunes. The best concert I've been to was Sara Bareilles – she played to a crowd of about 100 in a tiny venue in Lawrence, Kansas in 2011. She is one of the few artists that is better live than recorded!

I'm usually listening to podcasts on my commute or while doing chores around the house. Some of my favorites are *Armchair Expert*, *We're Here to Help*, and *Nobody's Listening, Right?*

Do you like traveling?

I do! Some of the most memorable have been traveling to Ireland with my sister, exploring National Parks with family (Arches, Canyonlands, and most recently Great Smoky Mountains), and seeing some of my favorite musicals on Broadway. Even though I love getting out of town and exploring new places, we have enjoyed being tourists in our own city since moving to Saint Louis and exploring all the city has to offer right in our backyard.

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

While most of my time in front of a crowd these days revolves around the FAFSA and Aid, I grew up performing in choirs and theatre productions. Some of my favorites include getting to don a Swedish accent in *You Can't Take It With You* and slapping Cinderella as the evil stepsister in *Into The Woods*.



Next MASFAP Newsletter Mid-July



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.

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 October 10, 2024.

SUBMIT



2024 Executive Board / Committee Chairs



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