

MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES:

How 22 Cities Helped
High School Students
Complete More FAFSAs
and Get More Financial
Aid Dollars

Wendy Erisman
Patricia Steele

JANUARY 2018

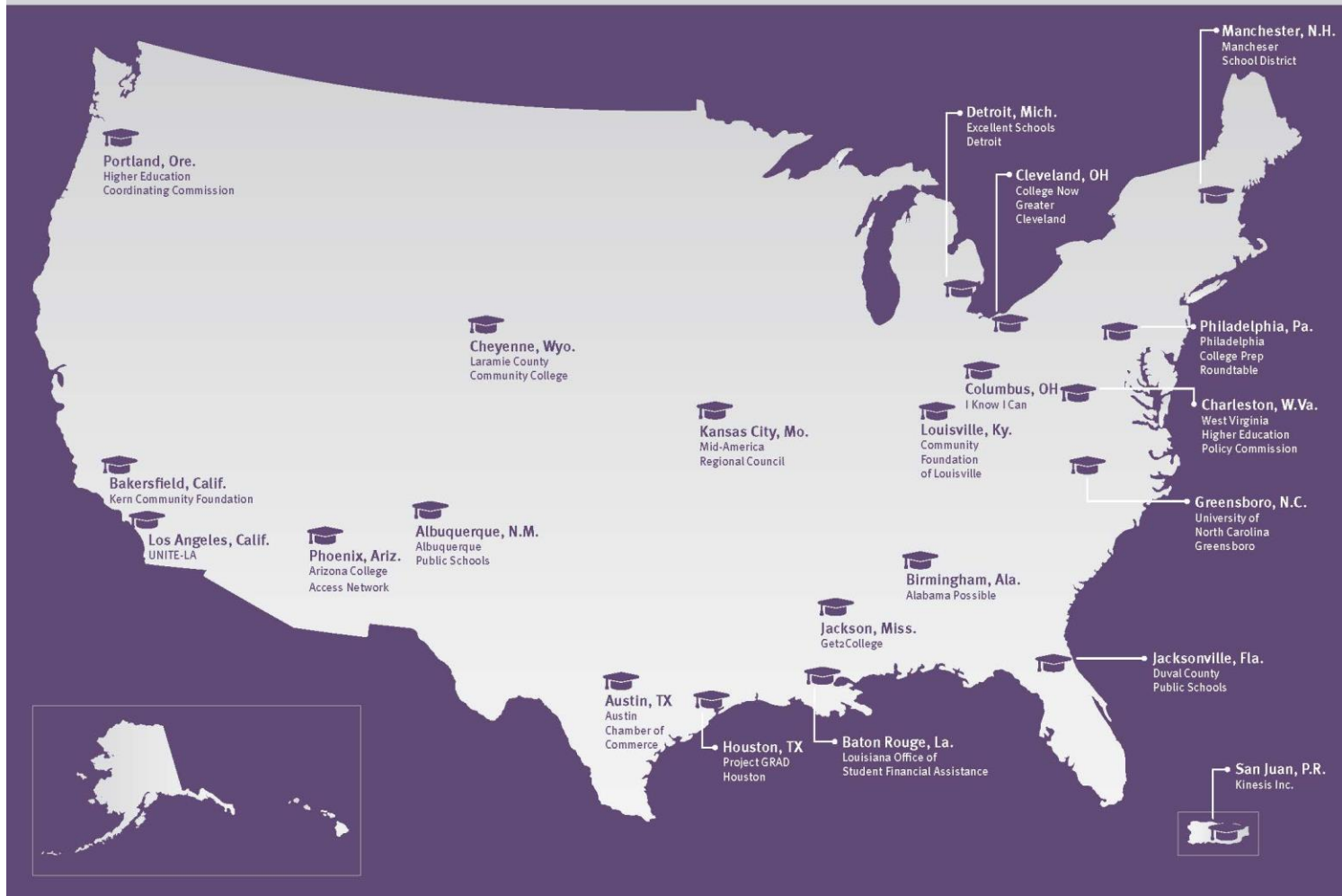


FAFSA Completion Challenge



FAFSA Completion Challenge Cities

THE
KRESGE
FOUNDATION

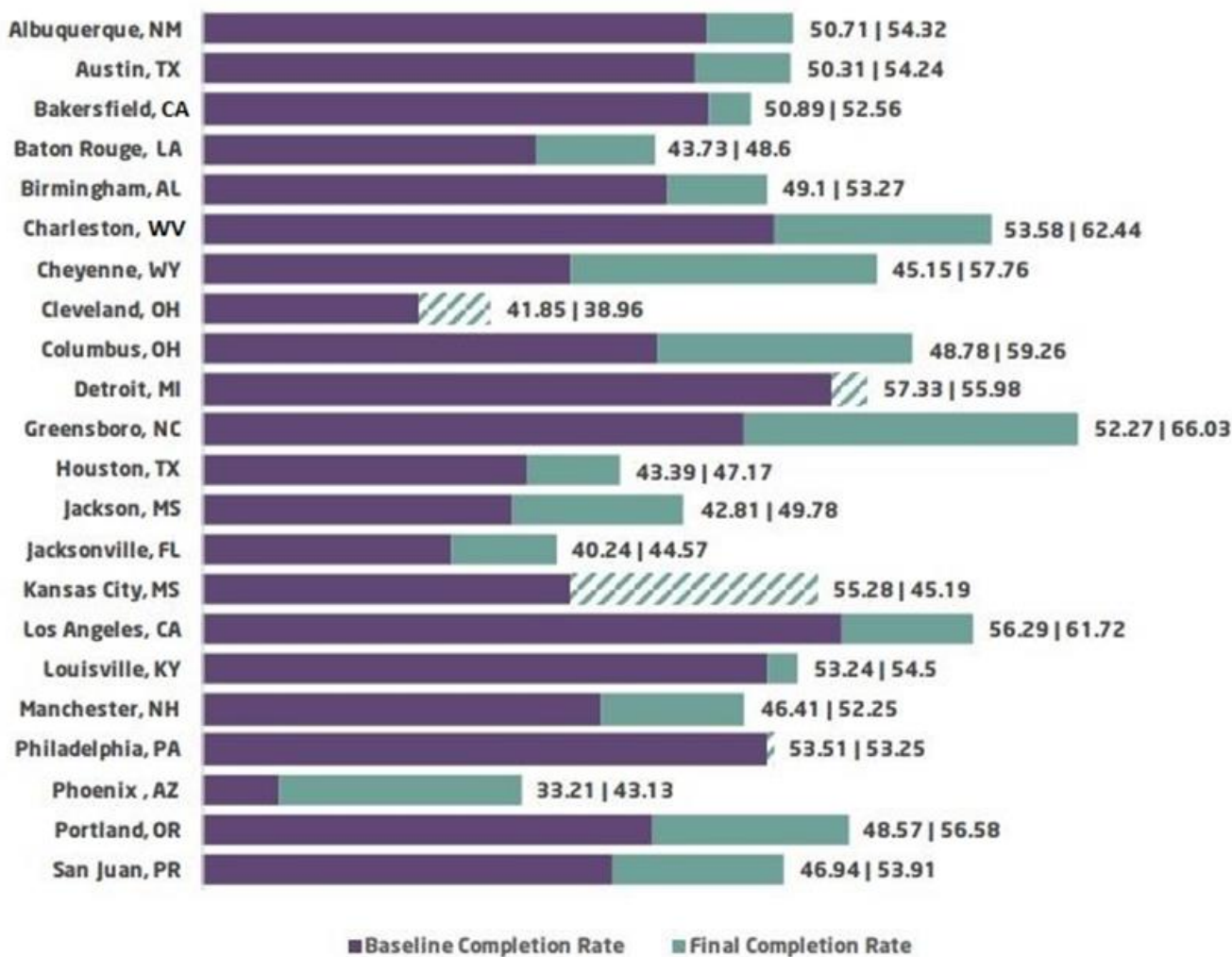


FAFSA Completion Challenge



HIGHER ED INSIGHT

Grantee Cities' FAFSA Completion Rates (%)



FAFSA Completion Challenge



\$75,000

- Greensboro, North Carolina—Greatest increase in FAFSA-completion rate and highest FAFSA-completion rate

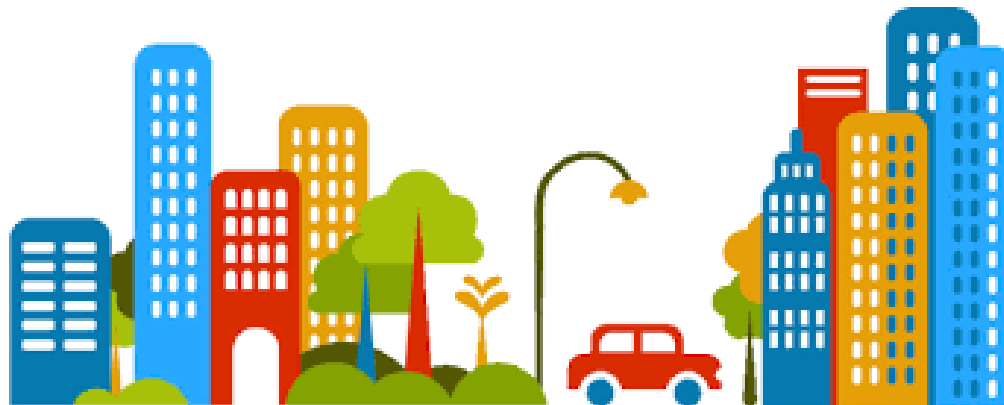
\$50,000

- Cheyenne, Wyoming—Second greatest increase
Charleston, West Virginia—Second highest completion rate

\$25,000

- Columbus, Ohio—Engaging a community ecosystem
- Jackson, Mississippi—Involving higher education
- Los Angeles, California—Overcoming barriers
- Phoenix, Arizona—Taking a strategic approach
- San Juan, Puerto Rico—Creating systems change

Data Sources



Partnerships & Strategies



Partnerships



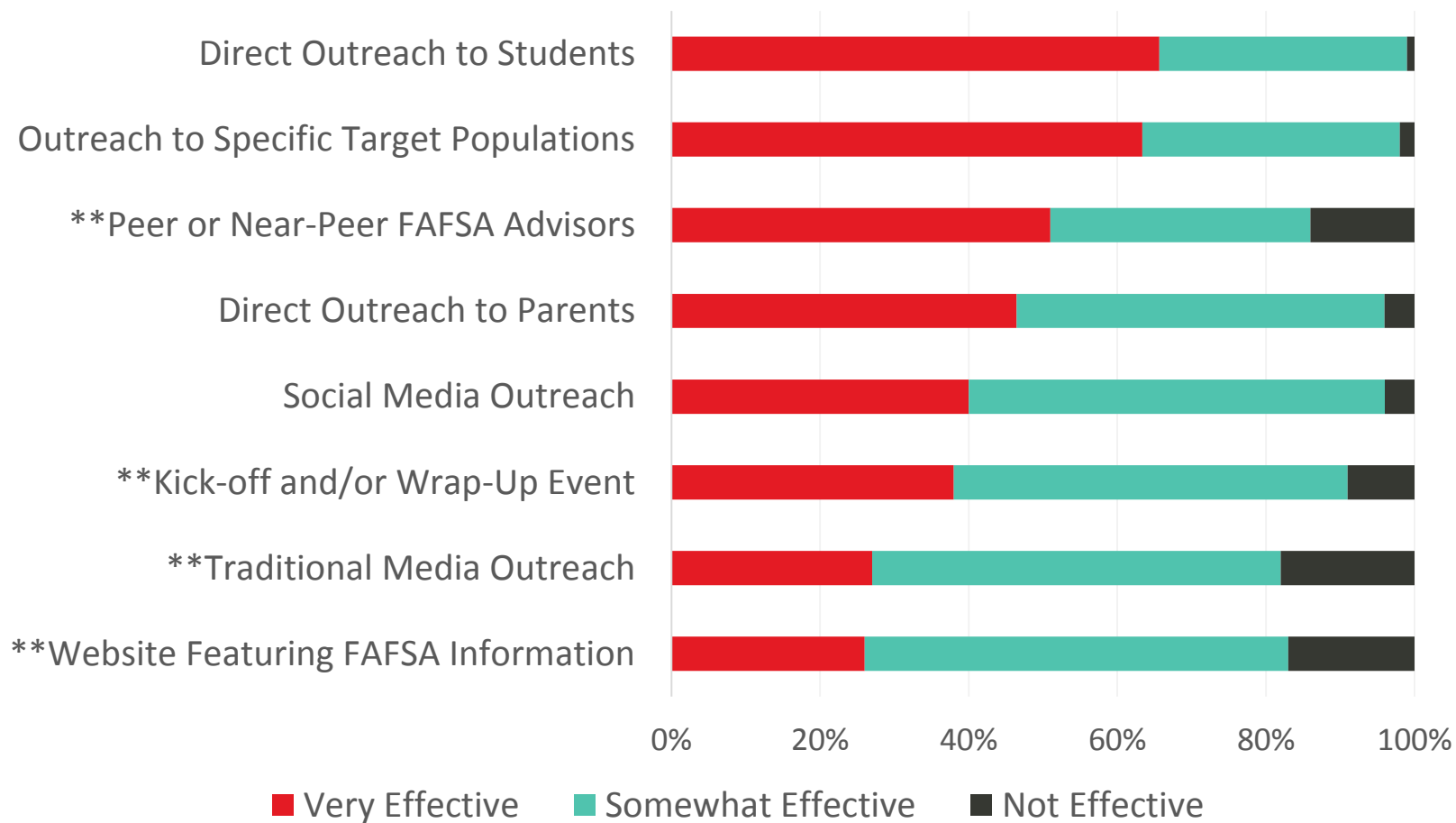
PARTNER TYPE	NUMBER OF CITIES
K-12 School Districts	22
Postsecondary Institutions	22
College Access Organizations	20
State Agencies	17
Local Government	16
Education-Oriented Non-Profits	15
Other Non-Profits	15
Media	15
Business Associations	14
Funders	13
Community Partnerships	12
Individual Businesses	12
College Access Networks	10
Houses of Worship	9

Strategies

	STRATEGIES	NUMBER OF CITIES
OUTREACH	Social Media Outreach	22
	Traditional Media Outreach	22
	Direct Outreach to Students and/or Parents	22
	Peer or Near-Peer FAFSA Advisors	18
	Kick-off and/or Wrap-Up Event	17
	Outreach to Specific Target Populations	16
	Website Featuring FAFSA Information	14
SUPPORT	School-Based FAFSA Events	22
	Community FAFSA Events	22
	Training Counselors and/or Volunteers on FAFSA	21
	FAFSA Completion Toolkit	12
	Community Center for FAFSA Completion	11
	In-Class Curriculum	6
FOLLOW-UP	Individual Follow-Up with Students	20
	Student-Level FAFSA Completion Data	19
	Competitions and/or Incentives	19

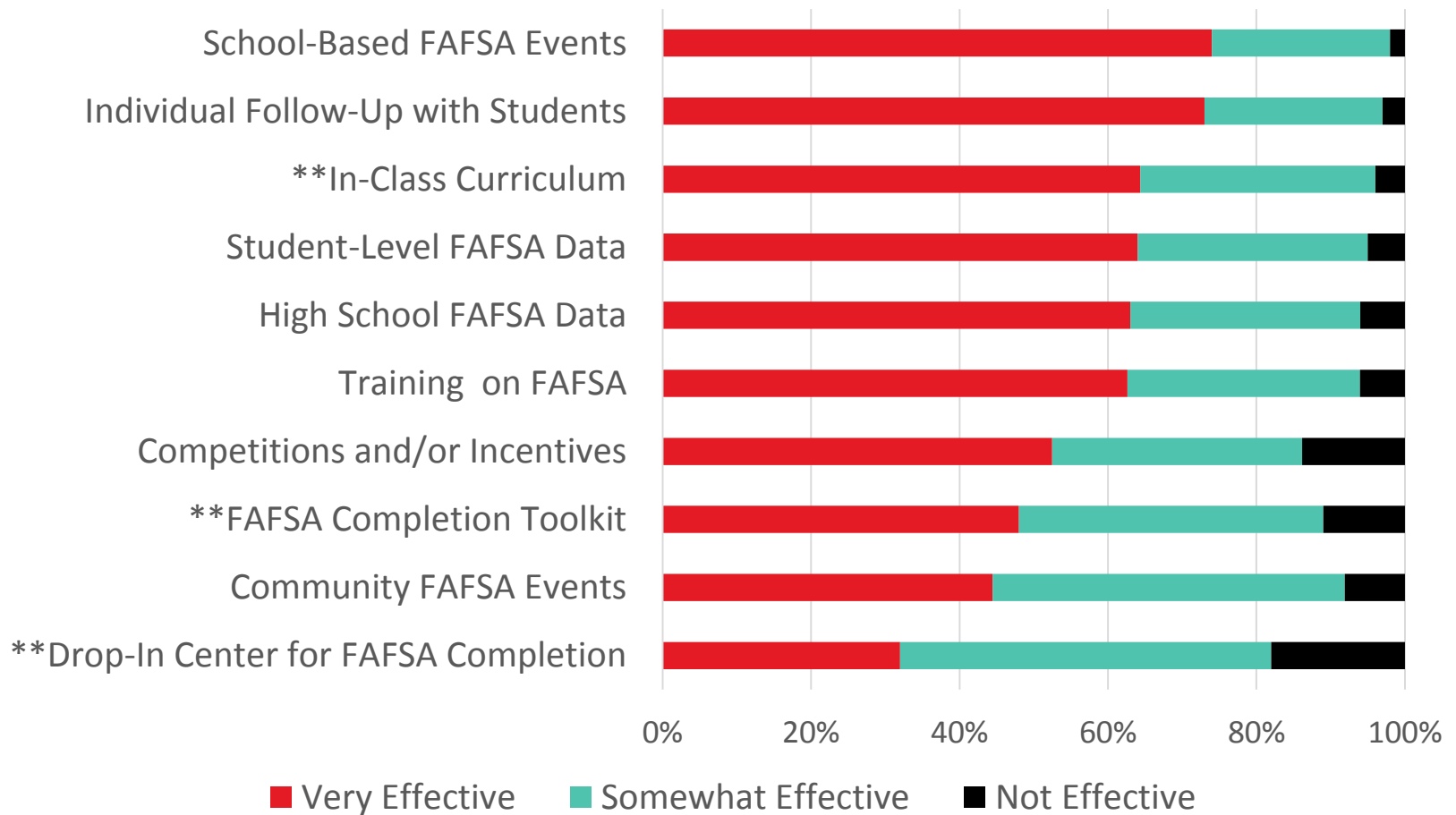
Outreach Strategies

Perceived Effectiveness of Outreach Strategies



Support Strategies

Perceived Effectiveness of Support Strategies



Lessons Learned



Don't re-invent the wheel



Coordination is key

Case Study: Columbus, OH

- Leveraging Partner Resources to Provide One-on-One Support
- Engaging Families through Community Partners



Recommendations

- Leverage your resources by playing to partner strengths
- Identify underserved areas or groups
- Build a community FAFSA calendar
- Coordinate marketing campaigns

Set goals and track progress

Cash for College Data Dashboard

State Overview | By School | By District/County | School Detail | District Detail



Most Alabama high school seniors who file their FAFSA get financial aid to help pay for college – including Pell Grants of up to \$5,920/year. This money can be used for technical and academic programs at both two- and four year colleges and universities. Alabama students left \$43.3 million in grants on the table in 2016. You can see FAFSA completion data for more than 350 Alabama high schools with the dashboard and search tools below.



Case Study: Charleston, WV

- Strategic Communications
- Friendly Competition



Photo courtesy Charleston, WV.

Recommendations

- Set clear goals for the city and each participating school/organization
- Expand access to student-level FAFSA-completion data
- Assist counselors and college access professionals in using data
- Consider setting up a local competition with incentives

Take a tiered approach

FIGURE 7: Funnel diagram showing tiered approach

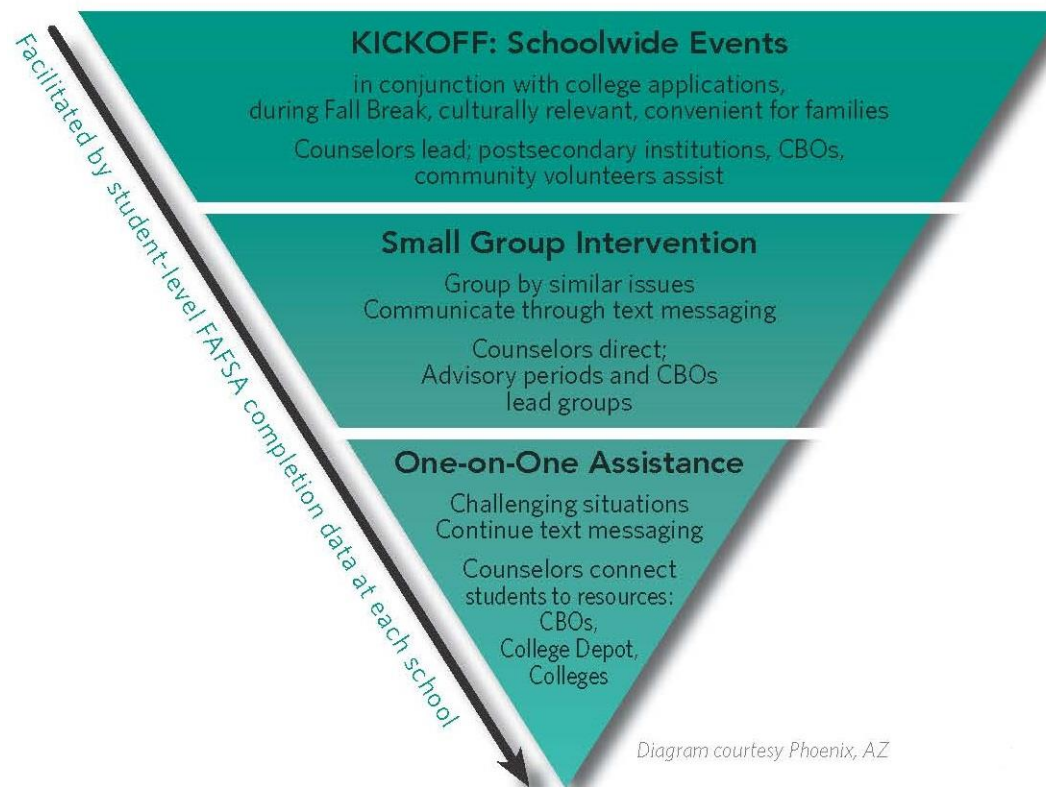


Diagram courtesy Phoenix, AZ

Case Study: Phoenix, AZ

- FAFSA Fiestas
- Targeted Triaged Interventions



Recommendations

- Raise awareness
- Target groups who may need more assistance
- Provide one-on-one support throughout the process
- Follow up to ensure completion

Lessons Learned

One-on-one assistance makes all the difference



Photo courtesy Phoenix, AZ

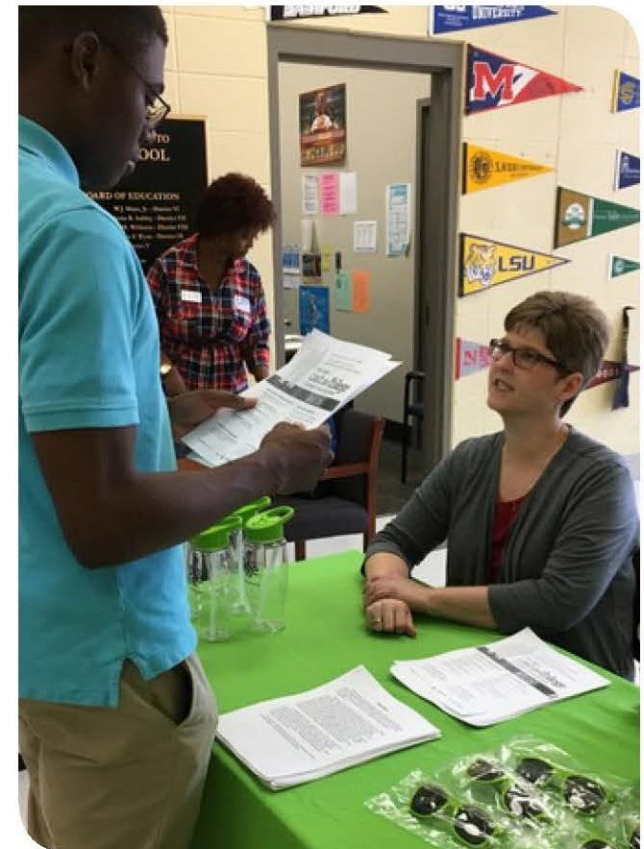


Photo courtesy Birmingham, AL

Case Study: Jackson, MS

- Counselors Are Key
- Partnerships Make It Possible

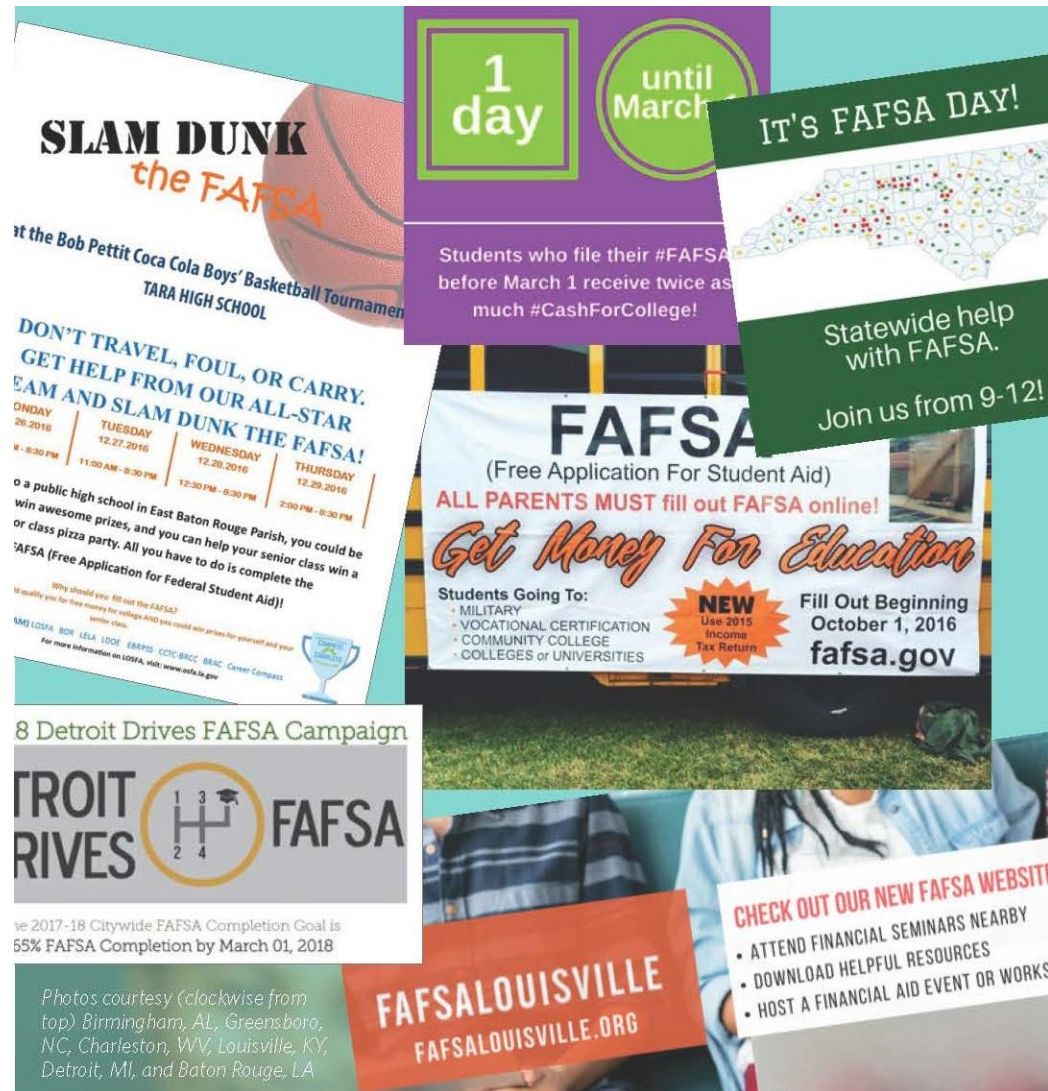


Recommendations

- High schools are essential partners
- Offer training early and often
- Embed financial aid and FAFSA in professional development
- Assemble a toolkit
- Engage and support additional “FAFSA coaches”

Lessons Learned

Outreach matters



Photos courtesy (clockwise from top) Birmingham, AL, Greensboro, NC, Charleston, WV, Louisville, KY, Detroit, MI, and Baton Rouge, LA

Case Study: Baton Rouge, LA



- Peers
- Families
- Community

SLAM DUNK
the FAFSA

A close-up, partial view of a red basketball with black lines, positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Recommendations

- Investigate new outreach methods
 - Text ‘nudges’
 - Social media
- Challenge high school students to come up with innovative strategies
- Figure out where your audience will be and meet them there

Questions?



Full report at:

<https://kresge.org/library/report-money-doesnt-grow-trees>