

## FCAN 2025 Advocacy Agenda

FCAN is Florida's collaborative network committed to ensuring all Floridians achieve an education beyond high school and a rewarding career. FCAN promotes policies that will lead Florida to achieve our SAIL to 60 Goal to increase the percentage of Floridians, ages 25-64, with a high-value postsecondary certificate, degree, or training experience to 60% by 2030. Currently, we are at **54.5%**.

Our Seven Conditions for Success provide a lens through which to identify opportunities to achieve Florida's talent goals, such as affordability, multiple pathways to success, and data-informed decision making. As an organization, we are supportive of policies that promote student and community well-being as a means to improving student access and success in postsecondary programs.

Based on timely research and stakeholder engagement, FCAN supports the following policy priorities for 2025 and beyond:

### Support FAFSA Awareness in Financial Literacy Course Curriculum

- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is a form needed to access federal, state, and local financial aid, including grants, institutional aid, and work-study.
  - The perceived cost of degree or credential programs is the #1 reason why students do not pursue post-secondary education – 85% cite cost as a “very important” or “important” factor.
  - FAFSA can help unlock aid for students attending a variety of postsecondary institutions, including **technical colleges and career programs**.
- At the end of the most recent school year, Florida's graduating class of 2024 ranked **47<sup>th</sup>** in FAFSA completion nationwide.
  - In the prior year, Florida left an estimated **\$353 million** in Pell Grants on the table due to low FAFSA completion rates.
- A streamlined FAFSA launched for the 2024-2025 academic year from the federal FAFSA Simplification Act and included changes that make it easier to fill out the form and access aid. Changes include the new IRS Data Retrieval Tool, connecting tax return information to the FAFSA and expanded eligibility requirements, allowing more low-income students to receive aid.
- Adding FAFSA awareness learning objectives into the required high school financial literacy course would expose all high school students to information on the FAFSA form, how to fill it out, what a Pell Grant is, and round out their knowledge on how they can finance their college education. These curricular enhancements, in combination with the free FAFSA resources and strategies offered to schools and counselors through FCAN's annual FAFSA Challenge, will support efforts to achieve universal FAFSA completion.

## Expand Access to the Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG)

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- The FSAG is a need-based state grant program for resident, undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need. Different versions of the FSAG grant exist for students enrolled in a technical college, state college, state university, or private institution. Current grant awards are between \$200 to \$3,260 for eligible students.
- Annual appropriations for the program do not cover all eligible degree-seeking students. During the 2022-2023 academic year, only 61% of eligible applicants attending a public institution received an award, leaving 37,278 students, or nearly **40% of the eligible pool without FSAG aid.**
- In 2022-2023, increasing the appropriation from \$269 million to \$330.5 million, or an additional **\$61.5 million**, would have granted the average award (about \$1,650) to all aid-eligible degree-seeking students at public institutions who did not receive an FSAG award.
- Ensuring all eligible students receive meaningful aid will help additional Florida residents earn their postsecondary degree or credential and contribute to our statewide attainment.

## Continue to Leverage Dual Enrollment Opportunities

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- Dual enrollment (DE) provides an opportunity for students in grade 6-12 to enroll in postsecondary education courses and simultaneously earn credit towards both a high school diploma and a career certificate or associate or baccalaureate degree at a Florida institution.
- **Florida has implemented several incentives** to promote DE participation. In addition to covering tuition for students, incentives include the summer dual enrollment program, the dual enrollment scholarship for private school and home education students, and the dual enrollment educator scholarship that assists public school teachers to obtain the necessary graduate degree needed to teach these courses.
  - However, DE agreements between the secondary and postsecondary partners, which must be reaffirmed annually, frequently fail to adequately compensate parties for DE-related expenses which disincentivizes DE expansion.
  - Public awareness of DE opportunities also varies, leaving many Florida students and families in the dark about this pathway.
- **Simplifying DE funding** can streamline implementation for school districts and postsecondary institutions, minimize current disincentives, and increase transparency and access for students. Florida can also increase public awareness by creating a **statewide marketing campaign**, similar to Get There, widening the reach of existing communication methods.