

Important message from VASFAA (Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators)

Good morning, VASFAA!

Through a colleague in SC, I have recently been made aware of a new company called "Frank FAFSA" (feel free to Google them). They seem to be gaining popularity and have gotten some endorsements from CNBC, Reuters, Fox News, and The New York Times, among others.

This company is offering to assist students and families with the completion of the FAFSA, claiming to have greatly simplified the FAFSA filing process. Their website disclaimer, quite condescendingly, states, "We are not affiliated with the US Department of education. You can file the FAFSA for free with Frank in under 4 minutes, or you can file the FAFSA for free by using the paper or electronic forms available at www.fafsa.ed.gov<<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>>" (the URL to the actual FAFSA site is not clickable/hyperlinked). They do not charge for this particular service. However, they do offer students and families assistance with negotiating "aid appeals" in order to lower their EFC and "claim their financial aid." If the "negotiation" is successful, FRANK charges a one-time fee of \$500. We are assuming that is \$500 per year if families use their services across award years.

Colleagues in other states say that they are receiving calls from parents who have stated, "I gave FRANK my FAFSA information" or "I filed the FAFSA through FRANK instead of the government" and are now concerned, after they realize what they've done.

I wanted to bring this to the attention of VASFAA, as many of you are in the process of counseling students and informing them on how to complete their FAFSA. Please be sure you are reiterating that the most direct and absolutely free way to file is to complete the application directly through the Department of Education.

Thank you and have a nice weekend!

Biz

Biz Daniel

VASFAA President