



**MONTANA**  
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

# MUS FAFSA Campaign

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OCHE

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## FAFSA Background

- The updated FAFSA form and process was intended to streamline the application process and promote simplicity and efficiency for students and families nationwide. After an initial delay of the release from the anticipated October date to December 2023, other technical glitches and processing issues have surfaced in early 2024, creating confusion. Consequently, the processing window for higher education institutions has been squeezed, straining the system... and student form completions are down nationwide.
- Montana has not been spared. As of May 2024, roughly 31% of Montana high school seniors had completed the FAFSA, compared to the national average which is approximately 38%. (*Source, NCAN 2024*). While these rates continue to improve, Montana is still -21% YoY, in line with the national average decline.
- In response to these national and statewide challenges, OCHE launched, in very short, order a statewide marketing effort to reach Montana audiences with a geotargeted burst of messaging to amplify their awareness and drive FAFSA completion rates.



# MUS FAFSA campaign summary

**Objective:** A two-month burst campaign with a goal of reminding Montana residents about the federal funds available for post-secondary education in the MUS.

**Target Audience:** Adults 17+ statewide coverage

**Creative:** Messaging emphasis on the variety of funds available to support prospective students in their journey and encouraging them to apply or complete the FAFSA.

**Campaign Goal:** Clicks to the apply button

<https://applymontana.mus.edu/paying-for-school/financial-aid/applying-for-financial-aid.html>

**Media Strategy:** Use a multi-media approach that will provide statewide coverage to blanket the state with a minimum 3x monthly frequency

Paid social will connect with all segments of the audience and encourage engagement

Paid search will reach people who already have baseline awareness of FAFSA and higher ed options and may be closer to making a decision

Streaming audio will act to build awareness with a mix of music and podcasts while allowing us to story tell via audio

Display banner ads will also build awareness over a variety of websites, local news sites, mobile and in-app placements

Digital outdoor bulletins are located on two-freeways near Billings (I-90) and Helena (I-15) and reach a high volume of people to reinforce messaging



# Creative Executions



## Display banners – Across web, mobile, app

Apply Montana | MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Free money for college is only a FAFSA application away.

Now is the time to apply.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Apply Montana | MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Free (yes, free) money for college. Don't miss out.

Submit your FAFSA today.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Apply Montana | MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Secure your tomorrow.

Apply for student financial aid (FAFSA) today.

Free, simple, and fast

[LEARN MORE](#)

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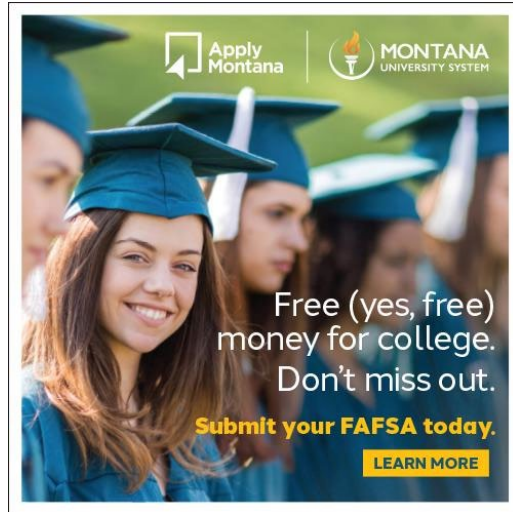
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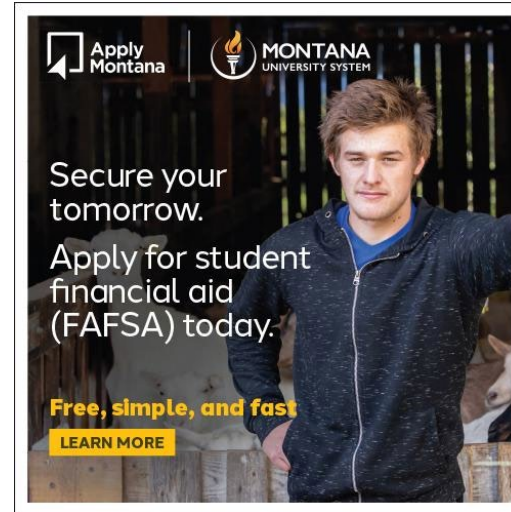


## Streaming Audio – AudioGo (Pandora/iHeart) + Spotify



Graduate

AudioGo 15s Ad  
[Click to Listen](#)



Rural

AudioGo 30s Ad  
[Click to Listen](#)



Student

Spotify 15s Ad  
[Click to Listen](#)



## Paid social ad copy – Facebook + Instagram

	<b>Apply</b>	<b>Your Future</b>
<b>Text</b>	Free money for college is only a FAFSA application away. Now is the time to apply.	Secure your tomorrow. Apply for student financial aid (FAFSA) today. Free, simple, and fast.
<b>Headline</b>	Submit your FAFSA application today	Submit your FAFSA application today



## Paid social mock ups– Facebook + Instagram

Apply Montana  
Sponsored · 🌐

Free money for college is only a FAFSA application away. Now is the time to apply.

**APPLYING TO COLLEGE?**  
Smart

MUS MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM Apply Montana

applymontana.mus.edu  
**Submit your FAFSA application today** [Learn more](#)

Like Comment Share

Instagram

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**APPLYING TO COLLEGE?**  
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[Learn more](#)

applymontana Free money for college is only a FAFSA application away. Now is the time to apply.

Apply  
<https://bit.ly/4aQbf6l>

Apply Montana  
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Secure your tomorrow. Apply for student financial aid (FAFSA) today. Free, simple, and fast.

**DON'T MISS OUT ON**  
Your future

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[Learn more](#)

applymontana Secure your tomorrow. Apply for student financial aid (FAFSA) today. Free, simple, and fast.


Your future  
<https://bit.ly/44dYpfD>





# Paid search mock ups– Google

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 **Montana University System**  
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## You Could Learn for Free - Montana FAFSA Deadline is Near

College, but not on your dime. Learn how FAFSA could help you pay for school. Federal student aid could cover your educational costs at no expense to you. Types: Community Colleges, Trade Schools, State Universities. Career training. One application.

[Training Programs](#) [Resources](#)

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**Montana University System**  
applymontana.mus.edu/

## Funding for Your Education - Federal Aid for Trade School

Don't let price dissuade you from pursuing an education. FAFSA can help you pay your way. Montana wants to cover your education, whether it's traditional or trade. 16 Colleges. Career training.

[Resources](#) · [Contact Us](#) · [Apply now](#)



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**Montana University System**  
applymontana.mus.edu/

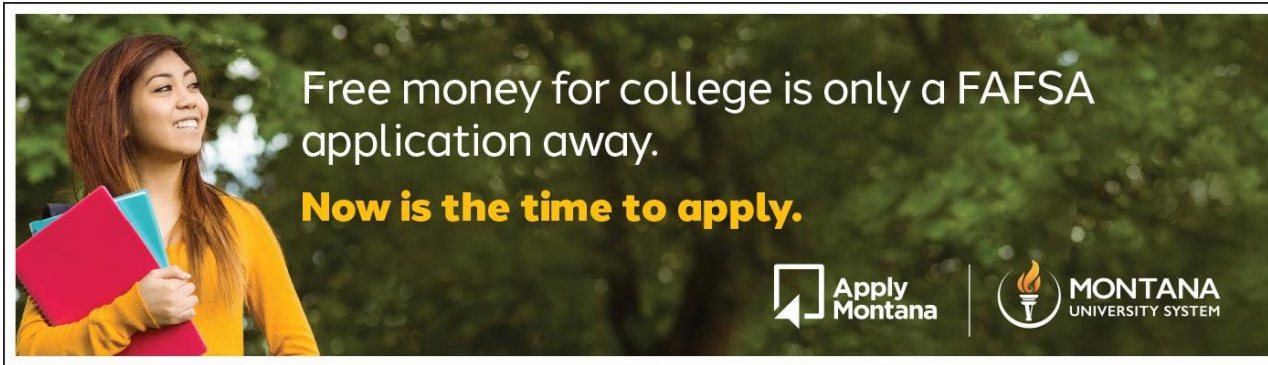
## MT Wants to Invest in You - FAFSA Can Pay for Your School

Montana wants to cover your education, whether it's traditional or trade. Federal student aid could cover your educational costs at no expense to you. Types: Community Colleges, Trade Schools, State Universities. 16 Colleges. One application.

[Apply for FAFSA](#) · [Apply now](#)

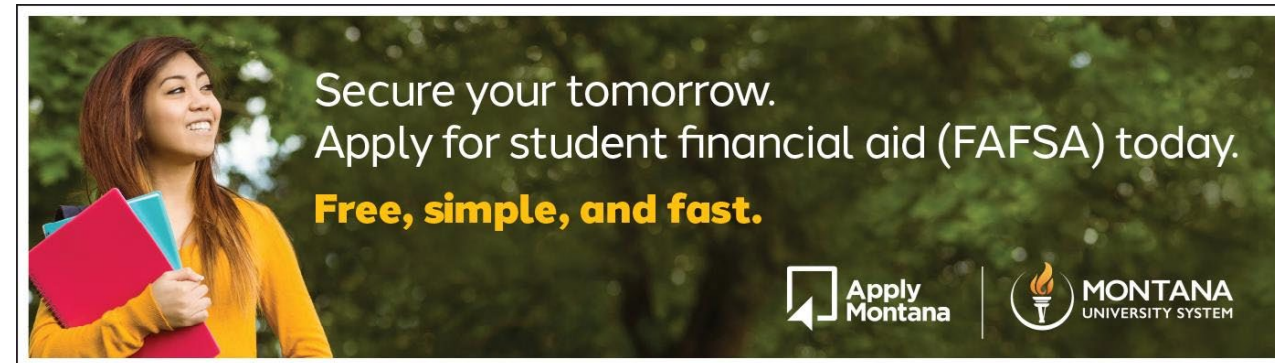
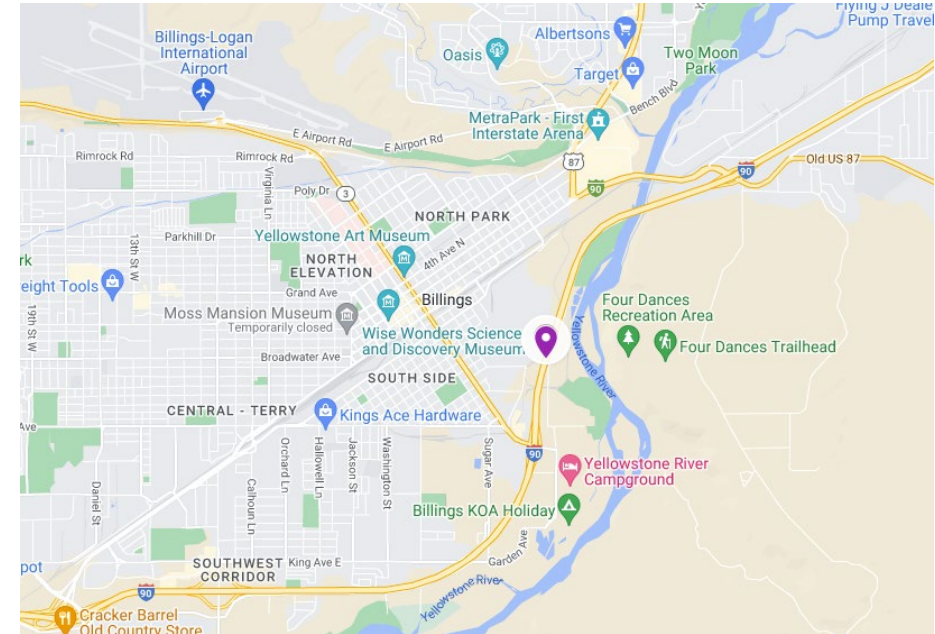


# Digital Out of Home (Billboards)



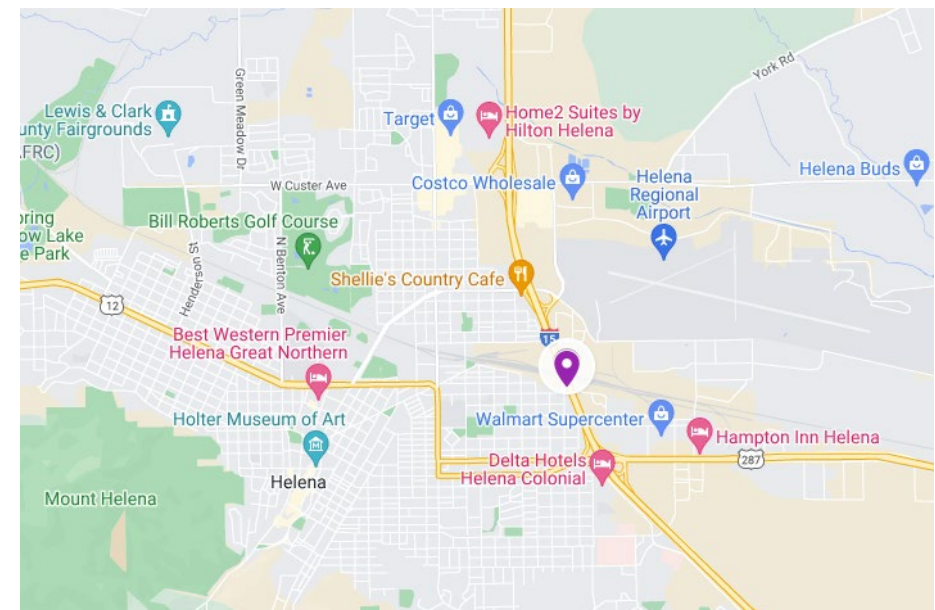
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# Metrics thru 5/9/24 + benchmarks

The campaign is off to a strong start early with our geo-targeting the State and is on pace to meet goals.

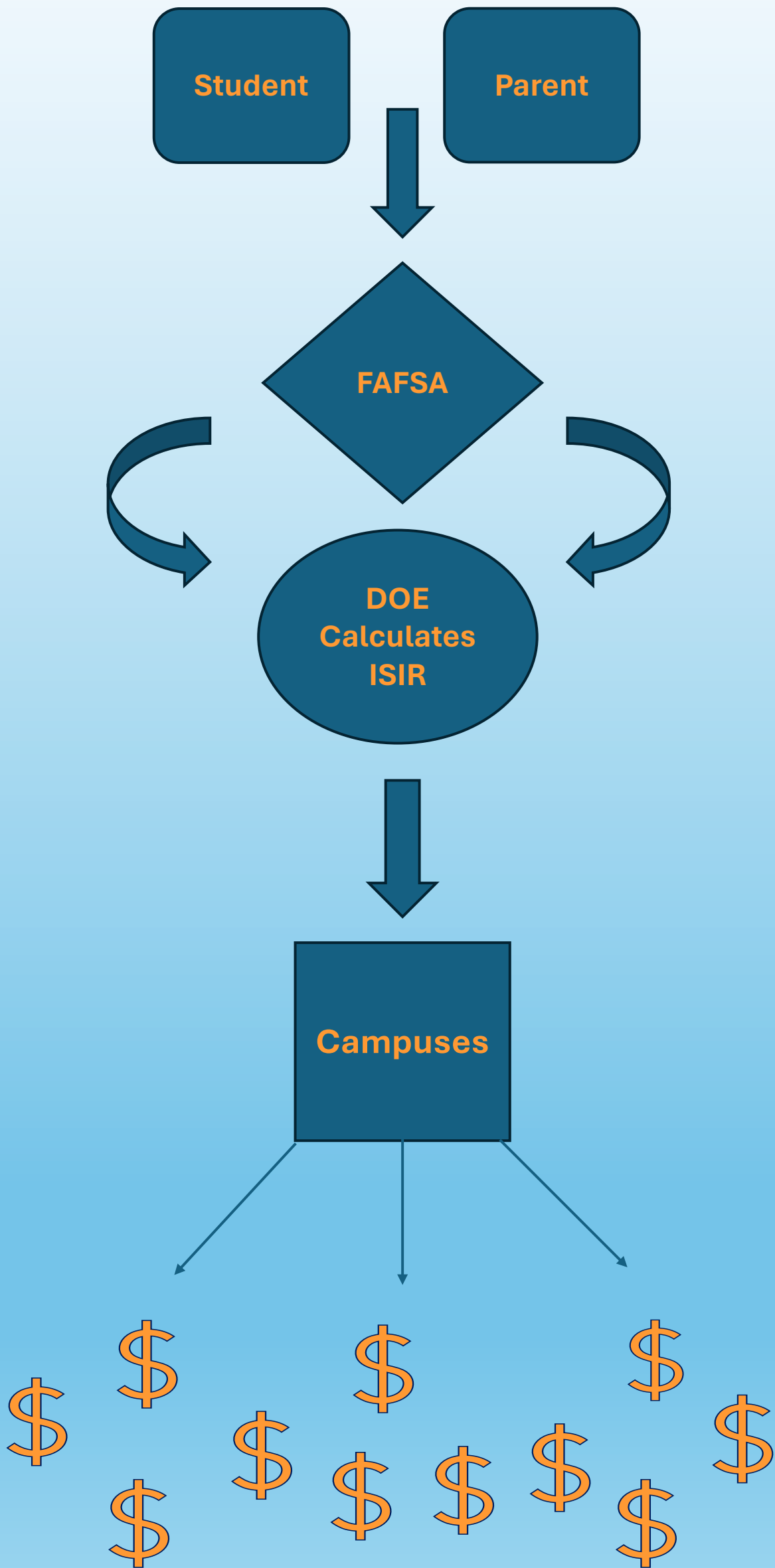
Our primary goal based on spend level is to generate nearly 10 million impressions of this important messaging to the Montanan audience of Adults 17+. We're targeting 3x frequency in each medium.

Platform	Impressions	Companion Banner Impressions	Clicks	CTR	LTR	Video Views	FAFSA button clicks (GA4)	Industry Benchmarks (CTR)	Benchmarks (LTR)
Paid search	11,651	n/a	974	8.36%	n/a	n/a	31	3%	n/a
Paid social	51,125	n/a	1,438	2.81%	n/a	10,126	0	0.5%-0.75%	n/a
Digital banners	1,000,194	n/a	1,019	0.10%	n/a	n/a	4	.03-.08%	n/a
Audio Go	266,602	24,019	185	0.77%	98.5%	n/a	0	.15 - .40%	95%
Spotify	78,604	n/a	80	0.10%	96.5%	n/a	3	0.04%	94.9%

Our initial analytics, ten days into the campaign, are showing strong results with click thru rates exceeding industry benchmarks, indicating a high interest in this message. The campaign has also generated 38 button clicks on the landing page, which are directly attributed to our paid efforts.

Importantly, this campaign is the first domino in a complementary and strategic set of levers to increase awareness and promote financial literacy among Montanans, FAFSA awareness and form completion rates.

- We're amid designing a financial aid tool embedded within the Apply Montana site to support prospective students and their families estimated to rollout in September.
- We're also undertaking a content optimization across the Apply Montana site, with particular attention to simplifying and demystifying financial pages with plain, helpful language.





Thank You