

Opportunities of a Lifetime

Training Guide

Audience: High school students and their parents, counselors and staff

The 2001 Texas Legislature mandated in Senate Bill 573 a campaign called College for Texans. The College for Texans campaign has the following as its objectives:

- 1) to tell students, their parents and others who influence students about the benefits of higher education and how to prepare for it academically and financially, and
- 2) to motivate students to pursue it.

As stated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 2000, “only 4.9 percent of people in Texas were enrolled in higher education, a lower rate than in California, Illinois, Michigan, New York and many other states. And that percentage is declining. Large gaps exist in higher education participation and success rates within Texas, especially by race/ethnicity, income and region.”

The Campaign states that parents who have no experience with post-secondary education often feel ill equipped to help their children with the college application and financial aid process. Many parents and students have overestimated the costs of enrolling in Texas public higher education institutions and have underestimated the availability of financial aid packages.

This video, available in English and Spanish versions, covers the different types of financial aid, including grants, scholarships, loans and work-study. The steps involved in applying for and receiving a financial aid package are highlighted, as is the importance of meeting deadlines and accuracy in filling out the application forms. The video also has a motivational component: it incorporates the stories of three students who are able to pursue their dreams thanks to financial aid.

The video, in both English and Spanish, and accompanying discussion guide are intended for use with parents, students and other interested parties who may be assisting them in the process of securing financial aid.

Training Module

Suggested session length: one hour (approx.)

Equipment/Supplies Needed: Video/VCR or DVD/Player and projector, computer and data projector, PowerPoint Presentation located on Toolkit Print CD

Handouts: Discussion questions

1. Opening Pre-Discussion

This video, available in English and Spanish versions, covers the different types of financial aid, including grants, scholarships, loans and work-study. The steps involved in applying for and receiving a financial aid package are highlighted, as is the importance of meeting deadlines and accuracy in filling out the application forms. The video also has a motivational component: it incorporates the stories of three students who are able to pursue their dreams thanks to financial aid.

2. View Video "Financial Aid: Opportunities of a Lifetime" (13 minutes)

3. Discussion to follow video (45 minutes)

Use the discussion questions on the attached page.

Relevant materials and web sites are described in the resources section of this notebook.

Discussion Guide

- **What are the most important points for students to remember when applying for a financial aid package?**
- **What is the first step in applying for financial aid? How can the school counselor help?**
- **What is the FAFSA? Does it cost anything to apply for financial aid?**
- **What were some of the surprising things students in the video learned about financial aid? How did the financial aid packages help them in each case?**
- **What are the various types of financial aid? What are the most favorable types of financial aid? Applying early helps students secure more of the grant monies available. When should students apply for financial aid?**
- **Where can students and parents find more information about financial aid?**