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Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara Conducts FAFSA Test at Santa Maria High School

Santa Barbara, CA — Affirming once again its stature as a national leader in the areas of student financial aid and advisory services, the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara successfully conducted testing of the latest Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) with the help of community members and education advocates in Santa Maria on August 12.

Conducted over the course of a four-hour workshop hosted by the Scholarship Foundation at the Santa Maria High School Library, the testing involved 104 seniors, mostly from Santa Maria High, together with parents, siblings, Santa Maria High School counselors, and representatives from the Loyal Teach, Early Academic Outreach, and California Student Opportunity and Access programs. Federal Student Aid officials and a Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, financial aid representative were also on hand. Ninety-four students successfully submitted 2026-27 FAFSA forms during the workshop, and participants reported no major issues with the application process.

“As was the case last year, this testing workshop showcased our organization’s unique capabilities as a provider of financial aid advisory services,” said Foundation President and CEO Melinda Cabrera. “We are grateful for the support of our partners at this event, and especially appreciate the efforts of counselors at Santa Maria High School to ensure such a strong turnout. We are honored to have been selected for this important testing role once again.”

The Scholarship Foundation was the only organization in California and one of just 11 nationwide selected by the U.S. Department of Education to conduct FAFSA testing this year. In 2024, the Foundation was one of only six organizations nationwide selected to conduct FAFSA testing.

Required by virtually all organizations that provide college financial aid, the FAFSA in recent years was released on October 1, but the 2023 and 2024 iterations were delayed until December owing to technical problems, prompting the Department of Education to initiate testing this year and last. This year, the department will revert to its former schedule and release the new FAFSA on October 1.

The Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara is the nation's largest community-based provider of college scholarships, having cumulatively awarded in excess of \$167 million to some 64,000 county students since its founding in 1962. A nonprofit organization, the Scholarship Foundation also provides free financial aid advising services. For additional information, visit www.sbscholarship.org.

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