



# 2026 Federal Student Aid Boot Camp

**Thursday, July 23–Friday, July 24**

Pew Charitable Trusts, Washington, D.C.

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## **Learning Objectives**

- The current costs of college and trends over time
- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Student Aid Index (SAI)
- The Federal Pell Grant Program
- Federal student loans and student loan borrowers
- Student debt
- How debt and default intersect with socioeconomic status, race, type of institution attended, and amount borrowed, and
- The federal student aid repayment programs

## **Moderators**

**MaryEllen McGuire**

President & Founder, PNPI

**Betsy Prueter**

Senior Director of Programming & Chief of Staff, PNPI

# Thursday, July 23

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9:00–10:00 AM ET     **Breakfast & Registration**

10:00–11:00 AM ET     **Welcome + College Cost Overview**

**Speakers:** MaryEllen McGuire, Postsecondary National Policy Institute & Eddy Conroy, National College Attainment Network

11:00–11:15 AM ET: **Break**

11:15 AM–12:45 PM ET     **Applying for Financial Aid**

**Speakers:** Nalia Medina & Jill Desjean, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

*This session will explain what the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is and provide participants with an opportunity to participate in a simulation focused on calculating a student's SAI.*

12:45–1:30 PM ET: **Lunch**

1:30–2:45 PM ET     **Pell & Federal Student Loans**

**Speakers:** Alexandra Hegji, Congressional Research Service & Katie Berger, Lumina Foundation

*This session will provide an overview of the Federal Pell Grant Program and Pell Grant recipients, and review the types of federal student loans that are available and borrower demographics.*

2:45–3:00 PM ET: **Break**

3:00–4:15 PM ET     **The Legislative Process**

**Speakers:** MaryEllen McGuire, PNPI & Emmanuel Guillory, American Council on Education

*During this session, the legislative process will be presented through the eyes of former congressional staff.*

4:15–4:30 PM ET     **Wrap Up**

# Friday, July 24

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9:30–10:00 AM ET      **Breakfast & Registration**

10:00–11:30 AM ET      **Welcome + Student Loan Debt & Default**

**Speaker:** Betsy Prueter, PNPI & Mark Huelsman, The Hope Center

*This panel will provide an overview of student debt, delinquency, and default, including information on borrower debt loads and likelihood of repayment.*

11:30–11:45 AM ET: **Break**

11:45 AM–1:15 PM ET      **Federal Repayment Programs**

**Speakers:** TBD

*This panel will provide an overview of the current federal student loan repayment plans and give participants an opportunity to interact with the the Department of Education's Loan Simulator.*

1:15–2:00 PM ET: **Lunch**

2:00–3:00 PM ET      **Policy Roundtable**

**Speakers:** Alex Ricci, National Council of Higher Education Resources & TBD

3:00–3:10 PM: **Break**

3:10–3:30 PM ET      **Wrap Up & Adjourn**

**Speaker:** Betsy Prueter, PNPI