



## 2025 Student Advising Program Report

In 2025, changes at the U.S. Department of Education caused significant confusion and uncertainty for many low-income students who were on the path to and through college. Fortunately, Scholarship Foundation Student Advisors are experts at adapting to policy changes and assisting students with making decisions that impact their education. And although there were challenges, advisors put students first and approached their work with compassion, care, empathy, and honesty, ensuring students had the information they needed.

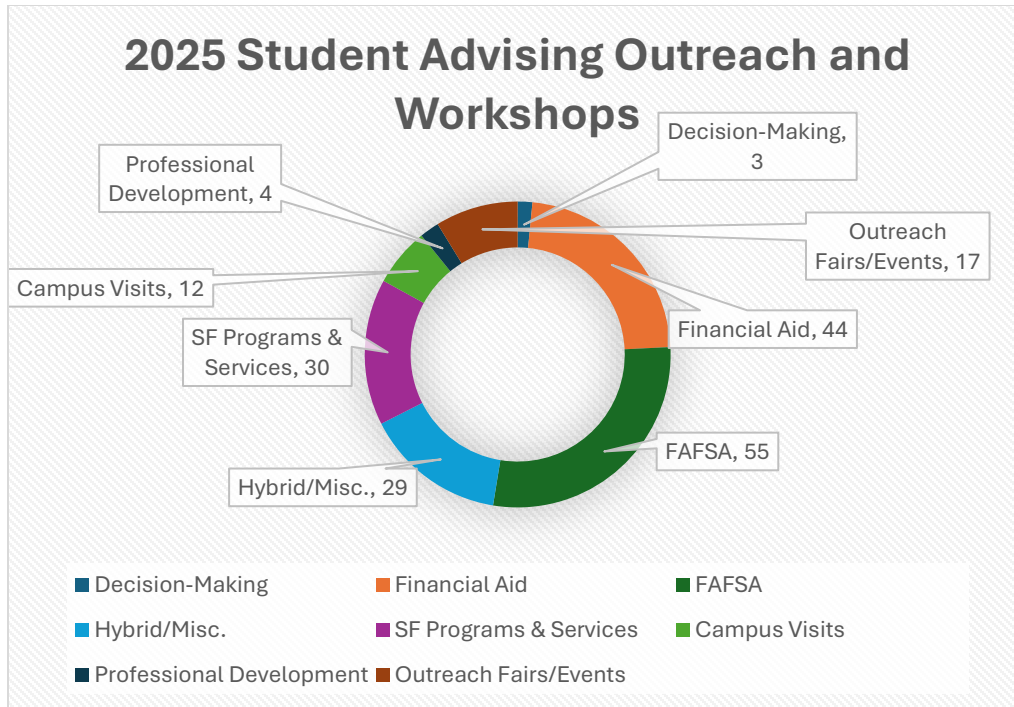
Relationship-focused advising continued to be incredibly important; in a world increasingly influenced by AI, the Foundation's advising team prioritized real connection and care, responding to each student based on their unique circumstances, questions, and goals.

- The [five-person student advising team](#) facilitated workshops across St. Louis, throughout Missouri, and beyond. Through these workshops and outreach efforts (*Financial Aid Basics*, *FAFSA*, *Decision-Making: Using Financial Aid Offer Letters to Assess Affordability*), advisors connected with students and their families, as well as other professionals (school counselors, college access advisors) working directly with students. Advisors educated participants about financial aid, FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), and affordability.
  - In total, advisors completed **190** outreach events, reaching **5,150** individuals.
  - Advisors provided training and education to **76** professionals through **4** workshops.
- Student advisors reached **1,306** individual students, as well as their family members, for a total of **6,941** interactions. This is an average of 5.3 *interactions per student*, speaking to the depth of student-advisor relationships and support.

In total, the advising team supported **6,532<sup>1</sup> individuals in 2025**, listening to hopes and fears; validating worries and excitement; and providing technical information, valuable resources, and individualized support.

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals may attend multiple workshops or events, as well as engage with an advisor for individual advising in addition to attending a workshop or event, so there may be duplication.



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Workshops/Events	162	97	60	104	177	199	190
# of Individuals Advised <sup>2</sup>	1,453	1,460	774	1,024	1,147	1,258	1,306
Total # of Individuals Served <sup>3</sup>	6,899	4,049	1,966	3,346	5,950	6,309	6,532

### Persistence Advising

The advising team provides persistence advising, which is year-to-year support, for Foundation scholars. In most cases, an advisor’s relationship with a student begins before freshman year with the drafting of a Scholar Success Plan. New students complete this plan with their advisors, laying a foundation for a relationship that could last years as they matriculate toward graduation. As advisors and students work together over the years, their relationships are supported regularly by phone calls, texts, emails, and in-person visits by the advising team that take place intermittently on select Missouri college campuses where our students live during the school year.

<sup>2</sup> These are individual students and/or their family members who met with an advisor and is an unduplicated count.

<sup>3</sup> These are total number of individuals supported through both individual interactions, as well as workshops and community outreach, including training to other professionals. This number may include some duplication.

## **Flourish**

Participation in the Foundation's mental health program, Flourish, increased by nearly 20% in 2025. Forty-three students attended **591** therapy sessions, with the Foundation reimbursing a total of **\$85,750** to therapists. As the number of mental health providers serving students through Flourish grew in 2025, so did student awareness of this invaluable program.

## **Looking Ahead**

With 2026 well-underway, advisors continue to provide timely and empathetic advising to students. The 2026-27 FAFSA was improved and simplified, though certain issues and inequities in access to it remain in place. Looking ahead, advisors are directing efforts towards the following objectives:

- Focus on relationships with Foundation students through connection at campus visits, intentional and regular check-ins, and affinity groups (Black students, LGBTQIA+ students).
- Continue to deepen understanding of Flourish and provide regular reminders to students.
- Review and complete a comprehensive update of existing workshop curricula.

## **Conclusion**

Whether they are fielding a question via a quick text message, offering advice over the phone, or providing support via Zoom, student advisors at the Foundation provide reliable support to students as they navigate the journey to and through college. From providing accompaniment to financial aid offices and supporting students through various collegiate concerns to cheering students' important milestones and successes, advisors are focused on students' needs. In all these moments, meaningful relationships between students and advisors are built over time out of compassion, honesty, and trust. And while advisors are there to support them, students teach advisors so very much, leaving a lasting impression and informing the program's evolution and growth.

Data alone could never tell the full story; the reality of student-advisor relationships is far more nuanced and vibrant than numbers are able to capture. However, the data *does* reinforce how critically important the work of advising is. As the landscape of college affordability and financial aid continues to change, students have questions and concerns. Advisors provide answers to those questions, address concerns, and place top priority on helping students reach their goals. These relationships, built on connection, mutual respect, and care, are the bedrock of the Foundation's approach to advising students.