



A partnership to support more students

Professionally managed chatbots proven to boost FAFSA submissions while saving counselors time

The strongest predictor of college enrollment is the completion of financial aid forms — and students are more likely to pursue higher education when they are aware of the resources available to them. That’s why Assembly Bill 469 requires that all California high school seniors complete either the FAFSA or California Dream Act application.

The top reason why students don’t submit a FAFSA: they simply don’t understand the process and don’t believe they are eligible for financial aid. This means an increased workload for counselors and all school site educators who need to explain what students need to do, then follow up with individual students and parents to ensure applications are actually submitted. With a statewide shortage of counselors — and heavy caseloads to begin with — that’s a big ask. So how can you guide students through FAFSA/CADAA completion, without burning out your counselors and other key student support staff?

Support students with information, empathy, and encouragement

Mainstay’s behaviorally intelligent chatbots are proven to drive action. Along with our college access partners, we’ve helped **more than 600k students** navigate college applications, scholarships, selection decisions, and financial aid. That’s why CSAC has chosen to partner with Mainstay to improve financial aid application completions, while saving counselors time.

From our higher education partners:

- **28%** increase in completed financial aid items within one week of sending a nudge
- **30%** increase in applications (a 40% increase in completed applications from first generation students)
- **16.9%** decrease in FAFSA verification
- **12.2%** increase in loan acceptance

Hundreds of higher education and college access partnerships

5M
people reached,
and counting

200M
timely, relevant
messages sent

11 RCTs
that prove
effectiveness



Overcoming barriers to success

The Urban Education Institute at UTSA partnered with THECB to evolve the use of ADVi, a behaviorally intelligent chatbot powered by Mainstay. By the end of its first year, ADVi **helped 276,643 students** complete their application journey.

77%
took action
because of a
message from
Mainstay

100%
said the chatbot
met or surpassed
their expectations

93%
trusted the
information they
received from ADVi

How we did it

Empathy-first engagement

We build connections that emulate supportive student-counselor relationships. Our bot is friendly, non-judgmental, and seriously devoted to assisting students.

Encouraging nudges

97% of people read every text they receive. Mainstay’s interactive, 2-way text messaging gives students the support they need with personalized messages, timely reminders, and 24/7 answers.

Active listening

Our bot provides insights at scale so you can learn about barriers to application completion and post-graduation career plans so counselors can tailor their programs to your students’ needs.

Empowering every student to succeed

Mainstay's technology is built with a focus on supporting historically resilient populations. We partner with top researchers at Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, Partnership for Ed Advancement, Irrational Labs, and the National Institute for Student Success to ensure we are making a positive impact on the lives of students every day. We use this data to inform our Behavioral Intelligence approach by using empathy, culture, and context to improve outcomes at every stage, for every learner.

Hi Ben! I noticed you haven't filed the FAFSA yet. Please complete your FAFSA by March 2nd to apply for financial aid.



Do i have to fill out the fafsa if my sibling already did it?



Each student needs to do their own FAFSA, but parents will be given the option of transferring their data.



Ok! Thanks :)



See how Mainstay's Student Engagement Platform helps colleges engage in conversations that drive positive student outcomes at scale.

Learn more at mainstay.com

How it works

Students and families can opt in to send and receive text messages from Mainstay. The service will periodically send nudges through SMS to ensure that applications are completed on time, and offer guidance on what needs to be done. In addition, students and parents can get help navigating the process by texting their questions to the service.

Why Mainstay?

A proven, holistic approach

We drive the best results by supporting meaningful and empathetic engagement. Our Behavioral Intelligence approach is designed to help students succeed in college academically, financially and emotionally.

Freedom to focus on what matters

By automatically answering up to 95% of student inquiries about completing financial aid applications and other college processes, Mainstay empowers your counselors to focus on high-value, complex conversations with the students who need them most.

Student support on-demand, 24/7

37% of student inquiries are asked outside of standard business hours. Mainstay empowers you to provide immediate support — day or night — without requiring staff to work longer hours.

Research-backed results

Mainstay delivers measurable results, backed by randomized controlled trials (RCTs), partnerships with behavioral science research organizations, and continual partner feedback.

Our student privacy promise

As stewards of student data, we take security seriously and perform regular security assessments. All data is encrypted at rest and in transit, and is only stored in secure AWS data centers located within the continental U.S.

A commitment to closing the opportunity gap

Our technology is intentionally built to remove barriers to success for historically resilient students. We ensure that students have access to everything they need to succeed with culturally relevant conversations that show students they aren't alone.