



IowaCollegeAid.gov  
Your Financial Aid Connection

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **New Changes to FAFSA Impact Collection of Parental Information** *Dependent students required to include parental information regardless of marital status or gender*

**Des Moines, IA, January 15, 2014** – For Iowans preparing to file for financial aid to fund higher education, the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) would like to inform them of recent changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) that take effect with the 2014-15 form. The FAFSA is a standardized application used to determine eligibility for federal grants, loans and work-study funds from the federal government. In addition, many colleges and states, including Iowa, use FAFSA information when determining eligibility for institutional and state financial aid programs.

The changes to the FAFSA for the 2014-15 academic year have to do with the financial information that dependent students are required to provide for their parent(s). Most traditional-aged, college-bound students are considered dependent and must include financial information for both themselves as well as their parents when completing the FAFSA. Beginning with the 2014-15 FAFSA, dependent students are now required to include income and other financial information from their legal parents (biological or adoptive) regardless of the parents' marital status or gender, if those parents live together. Additionally, the FAFSA will now use terms like "Parent 1 (father/mother/stepparent)" and "Parent 2 (father/mother/stepparent)" instead of gender-specific terms.

"Before this year, the FAFSA was constructed to collect information about both of a dependent student's parents only if the parents were married," explained Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid. "As a result, the FAFSA excluded this information from some families solely because the parents weren't married, even though the families resided in the same household."

Iowa College Aid urges all college-bound students to complete the FAFSA regardless of their financial situations. "Most families are eligible for some form of financial aid, and they need to apply early to meet the priority deadlines associated with different programs," said Misjak.

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The collection of FAFSA information for both of a dependent student's unmarried parents when both parents are living together will not impact the majority of federal student aid applicants. Almost 60 percent of FAFSA filers are independent, and therefore, not impacted by these changes. Another 20 percent, while dependent are not impacted as their parents are married. A portion of the remainder will also not be impacted because the parent with whom the student resides does not live with the student's other legal parent.

Students and families who have questions about applying for financial aid, or are interested in learning more about the resources available for college and career planning can contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456. Additional resources for Iowa families as they plan, prepare and pay for college are available on Iowa College Aid's website, [www.IowaCollegeAid.gov](http://www.IowaCollegeAid.gov).

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***About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission***

*Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy and outreach services to Iowa's students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$68.0 million annually, conducts research and distributes higher education data, and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Through its role, Iowa College Aid also serves as the state-designated administrator of the U.S. Department of Education's College Access Challenge Grant, which is designed to increase the college-going culture in Iowa. Additionally, Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR-UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being utilized to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa's students and families. More information is available at [www.IowaCollegeAid.gov](http://www.IowaCollegeAid.gov).*