



IowaCollegeAid.gov
Your Financial Aid Connection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Branstad Declares February as Financial Aid Awareness Month *Completing the FAFSA is a Critical Key to College Access*

Des Moines, IA, February 27, 2014 – Governor Terry Branstad signed a proclamation yesterday declaring February as Financial Aid Awareness Month in Iowa. The month serves to build awareness about the importance of filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and to ensure all college-bound students know about the wealth of financial resources at their disposal when it comes to financing a college education.

“February is a critical time for all Iowa students considering postsecondary education or training,” stated Governor Branstad. “Iowa has a shortage of skilled workers to fill the growing number of jobs in high demand fields in the labor market. The majority of these jobs require education or training beyond high school. In addition to the federal financial aid available, the state also provides more than \$68 million in scholarships, grants and loan forgiveness programs to help Iowans continue their education, which ultimately benefits the entire economy.”

Financial Aid Awareness month is a reminder for students and parents to apply for financial aid for the 2014-15 academic year if they haven’t already done so. “We would like to see every high school senior in Iowa file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA),” stated Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid. “Filing the FAFSA is a key component to increasing educational attainment in the state. Research indicates that 90 percent of students who file the FAFSA enroll in postsecondary education,” explained Misjak. “Most families are eligible for some form of financial aid, but they need to apply early to meet the deadlines associated with different programs.”

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In addition to filing the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.gov, students should also complete the Iowa Financial Aid Application. Completing these two forms will ensure students take advantage of the federal, state, and, in some cases, institutional aid for which they are eligible. Many state of Iowa programs have a March 1 priority deadline, so it is important to file the FAFSA right away (earlier priority filing deadlines exist for certain programs) to be eligible for many of Iowa's state-funded scholarships and grants. However, colleges and universities have their own deadlines, so students should check with their college of choice to determine its priority deadline for financial aid.

Families who have questions about applying for financial aid can contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456. In addition, more information on products and services that help Iowa families plan, prepare and pay for college is available at Iowa College Aid's website, 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.