



IowaCollegeAid.gov
Your Financial Aid Connection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Heather Doe
877-272-4456
515-725-3417 direct
515-975-6769 cell
heather.doe@iowa.gov

February is Financial Aid Awareness Month in Iowa
Completing the FAFSA is Key to College Access

Des Moines, IA, February 8, 2012 –In recognition of Financial Aid Awareness Month, the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) wants to ensure all college-bound students know about the wealth of financial resources at their disposal when it comes to financing a college education. Governor Terry Branstad proclaimed February as Financial Aid Awareness Month to heighten awareness of the availability of financial aid for Iowa students.

Financial Aid Awareness month is a reminder for students and parents to begin applying for financial aid for the 2012-13 academic year. “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.”

To start the financial aid process, students can complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.gov. The FAFSA determines eligibility for federal, state, and, in some cases, institutional aid.

The FAFSA must be completed and received by the federal processing center **no later than July 1, 2012** (earlier priority filing deadlines exist for certain programs) to be eligible for many of Iowa’s state-funded scholarships and grants. However, most colleges and universities have earlier filing deadlines, so students should check with their college of choice to determine its priority deadline for financial aid.

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To take advantage of all state-administered financial aid opportunities, Iowa students need to complete the Iowa Financial Aid Application in addition to the FAFSA. While the application can be accessed at www.IHaveAPlanIowa.gov, students who complete a FAFSA online and indicate Iowa residency will be offered a link on their FAFSA confirmation page which will direct them to the Iowa Financial Aid Application and pre-populate their demographic information.

In 2011, the State of Iowa, through the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, assisted nearly 26,000 Iowa students through state-funded financial aid programs totaling over \$59 million. 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 nearly \$60.0 million annually, administers the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP), provides borrowers with assistance to avoid the serious consequences of default, 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 used to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa's students and families. More information is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.