



IowaCollegeAid.gov
Your Financial Aid Connection

NEWS RELEASE

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Iowa Schools Invited to Apply for FAFSA Completion Project *Completing the FAFSA is Critical Component of Access to Postsecondary Education*

Des Moines, IA, February 13, 2012 – One of the barriers to accessing postsecondary education is a family’s ability to finance college costs. Increases in Iowa’s median household income have not kept pace with rising college costs. Today, those costs consume a larger percentage of household income than they did just ten years ago. Unfortunately, many students in Iowa do not take advantage of all assistance available by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

To increase the number of Iowa high school students completing the FAFSA, the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) encourages Iowa high schools to apply for participation in the FAFSA Completion Project, administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Participating school districts will have access to FAFSA completion data for high school seniors in their district, allowing them to follow up with students who still need to complete the FAFSA.

“Completing the FAFSA is a critical step in helping students on the path to postsecondary education,” explained Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid. “Research indicates that 90 percent of students who complete the FAFSA will enroll in postsecondary education. While nearly 70 percent of high school seniors in Iowa completed the FAFSA last year, we would like to reach even more.”

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education implemented the FAFSA Completion Project to assist local educational agencies and secondary school administrators in determining which of their students had completed a FAFSA for the upcoming school year. The initial pilot program included 20 participants. An additional 80 school districts will be included in the expansion of the FAFSA Completion Project this year.

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School districts in Iowa with more than one high school are invited to apply by March 2, 2012 for participation in the FAFSA Completion Project for the 2012-13 FAFSA processing year. While the project is currently limited to school districts with at least two high schools, the U.S. Department of Education has plans to enable districts with one high school to participate in the near future.

“We do not want the cost of a college education to be a barrier for Iowa students as they plan for their future,” stated Misjak. “By 2018, nearly 62 percent of all jobs in Iowa will require postsecondary education. Iowa Workforce Development has published a list on their [website of 50 top jobs](#) in the state that have both high salaries and are in high demand. Of those jobs, 98 percent require postsecondary education,” said Misjak. “We need to do everything we can to prepare each student for a successful and prosperous future in Iowa.”

Additional information on the FAFSA Completion Program, including technical and evaluation requirements that must be met for participation, is available on the U.S. Department of Education’s Federal Student Aid website at <http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/clcf/FAFSACompletion.html>.

School districts interested in participating must send an email request to Dena Bates at FAFSACompletion@ed.gov by **March 2, 2012**. The email should include “FAFSA Completion Project” in the subject line. The body of the email should include the name of the school district as well as the name, position, email address and phone number(s) of a primary contact.

School districts that submit an email request by the March 2, 2012 deadline will be selected to participate through a standard randomized process. Questions regarding the project should be directed to Dena Bates at FAFSACompletion@ed.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.