



IowaCollegeAid.gov

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **State Program Continues to Address Skilled Workforce Shortage in Iowa** *Over 4,300 community college students received funding through the Kibbie Grant*

**Des Moines, IA., September 18, 2013** – The Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) announced today that over 4,300 community college students enrolled in more than 50 high-need programs received funding last year through the Iowa Skilled Workforce Shortage Tuition Grant, also referred to as the Kibbie Grant. The grant, named after former Iowa Senate President Jack Kibbie, has just entered its second year providing assistance to students enrolled in high-demand career education (career-technical) and career option programs at Iowa community colleges.

The Iowa General Assembly appropriated \$5 million during the 2013 session to ensure a second year of the program which provides educational grants for students who pursue programs leading to high demand occupations in the state. Iowa Workforce Development estimates that some 50 percent of all jobs in the state require an associate's degree, certification, or apprenticeship training, but only 33 percent of Iowa workers have such skills.<sup>1</sup>

"Right now, we do not have enough workers with the needed skill levels to fill many of the jobs available in the state," said MJ Dolan, executive director at the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees. "Many of these in-demand jobs require either a certificate or an associate's degree, which can be earned in two years or less at one of Iowa's Community Colleges," explained Dolan. "The Kibbie Grant is a very positive step in closing this skills gap by helping Iowans identify educational programs that will lead to good-paying jobs and providing funding to help them become trained for those jobs."

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<sup>1</sup> Iowa Workforce Development. May, 2012. *Middle-Skill Jobs in Iowa*. Retrieved September 16, 2013, from <http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/pubs/careers/middleskilljobs.pdf>.

“Iowa employers struggle to find applicants with the necessary job skills required for open positions,” stated Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid, the agency responsible for the administration of the program. “The Kibbie Grant provides much needed financial assistance to low-income students so they can attend community college to earn a degree or certificate in a crucial workforce shortage area, helping to resolve the ‘middle skills’ gap.”

The minimum Kibbie Grant award is one-half of the average Iowa community college tuition and mandatory fees per year for up to two years of education. Part-time students may be eligible for prorated amounts. To be eligible, a student must:

- Be an Iowa resident.
- Be enrolled in at least 3 credit hours in a qualified program of study at an Iowa Community College.
- File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on or before July 1 of each year.
- Demonstrate a high level of financial need.

More information about the Kibbie Grant, including the qualified programs of study that were identified by both Iowa Workforce Development and Iowa’s community college presidents, can be found on Iowa College Aid’s website, [www.IowaCollegeAid.gov](http://www.IowaCollegeAid.gov). For more information about other resources available to help families plan, prepare and pay for college, please contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456.

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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, administers the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) program, 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 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).*