

COLLEGE PLANNING/FINANCIAL AID

EducationQuest has new and enhanced college and career planning features:

Activities Resume: www.educationquest.org/activities-resume/

College Funding Estimator: www.educationquest.org/college-funding-estimator/

College Profiles: www.educationquest.org/college-profiles/

ScholarshipQuest: www.educationquest.org/scholarshipquest/

Reality Check: www.educationquest.org/realitycheck/ A new tool that lets students estimate how much they will have to earn to support their future desired lifestyle.

A REPRESENTATIVE FROM EDUCATIONQUEST WILL BE AT METRO COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN FREMONT ON JANUARY 27; FEBRUARY 10, 24; MARCH 16, 23 TO ASSIST PARENTS WITH THE FAFSA FORM. CALL EDUCATIONQUEST FOR AN APPOINTMENT AT 402-391-4033.

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY EDUCATIONQUEST

Preparation key to applying for financial aid

Preparation is the key to successfully completing and filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is the application for state, federal and college-specific financial aid. Even if you don't think you'll qualify for need-based financial aid, you should complete the FAFSA to qualify for low-interest student and parent loans.

Check out these *free* FAFSA tools and resources

Visit the "Completing the FAFSA" section at www.educationquest.org where you'll find:

- **FAFSA Checklist** – This resource helps a student determine his or her dependency status and then provides a list of required documents for the FAFSA.
- **College Funding Estimator** – Families can use this tool to estimate their FAFSA results.
- **FAFSA Tutorial** – The updated tutorial provides user-friendly clarification of each FAFSA question. Families can easily access the tutorial while completing the FAFSA.
- **"Guide to College Funding" Video** – This video uses a typical family to explain the financial aid process, the types of financial aid, and when to apply.

Follow these steps to complete the FAFSA:

Complete and file the FAFSA

Complete and file the FAFSA at fafsa.gov. The colleges you list on the application will receive the results.

Request a PIN

Request a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for you and one for a parent at pin.ed.gov. The PIN is your signature for the electronic FAFSA and is used to track your financial aid application.

Complete your taxes early as the FAFSA requires current tax information. Approximately two weeks after you and your parents electronically file your tax forms, your IRS data will be available to retrieve and transfer into your FAFSA. See the “[Paying for College](#)” section at EducationQuest.org for more details about IRS Data Retrieval.

Gather these student and parent items:

- 2011 federal income tax forms and, if applicable, Schedule K-1 (Form 1065)
- 2011 W-2 forms
- Student’s driver’s license number
- Social Security numbers
- Birth dates
- Date parents were married, separated, divorced or widowed
- Current cash, savings and checking account balances
- Current investment values (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, CDs, etc.) excluding your home and retirement accounts
- Value of business (if more than 100 employees)
- Value of investment farm (Do not include the value of a family farm that you or your parents live on and operate.)
- 2011 child support (paid and/or received)
- 2011 Workers’ Compensation
- Other untaxed income in 2011 such as housing/food/ living allowances for military and clergy
- Alien Registration Number for eligible non-citizens

Be prepared to answer the following FAFSA question:

Did you or anyone in your household receive any of the following federal benefits?

- Supplemental Security Income
- Food Stamps
- TANF
- Free or Reduced Price Lunch
- WIC

If you’re filing the FAFSA for the first time and would like *free* personal help, call the EducationQuest location nearest you to set up an appointment. Call the Kearney office at 800-666-3721, Lincoln at 800-303-3745 or Omaha at 888-357-6300. Call *now* as appointments for January and February are quickly filling up.

What happens after you submit the FAFSA?

If you’re a college-bound senior, you and your parents may have already submitted the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) – or will soon do so. Here’s what will happen next:

Expect your SAR and Award Notification

You will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) after you submit the FAFSA. This acknowledges that your form was processed and can be used to make corrections to your FAFSA. You'll need the PIN you used to file the FAFSA to make corrections online.

The colleges you listed on the FAFSA will send you a financial aid award notification (by mail or email) detailing the assistance they're offering. They may offer a combination of scholarships, grants, work-study and student loans.

Compare award notifications

Compare award notifications from the colleges. Calculate your out-of-pocket expenses for each school to get the whole financial picture. Use the *Award Letter Comparison Calculator* at **EducationQuest.org** to determine which school offers the best financial aid package. Respond to each notification keeping in mind that most students accept all award packages until they make their final college selection.

Keep looking for scholarships! Many local, state and national scholarships have deadlines in March, April and May.

Know How to Go Nebraska: www.knowhow2gonebraska.org

COLLEGE BOUND NEBRASKA PROGRAM

If you are a Nebraska resident who meets admission requirements for the University of Nebraska, and if you are eligible for the Federal Pell Grant, you can attend the University of Nebraska and pay NO tuition. This fall, the program has been expanded to cover students who are just beyond PELL eligibility – eligibility varies depending upon a number of factors, as a general rule a student from a typical family of four with one child going to college, having a family income of \$50,000 or less, will meet the guidelines for Collegebound Nebraska funding. There is no scholarship application beyond the FAFSA form. Visit www.collegeboundnebraska.com, for information.

NEBRASKA STATE COLLEGE SYSTEM PROGRAMS

NCSC Advantage – This program guarantees that first-time freshmen who receive federal Pell grants will pay no tuition at one of the state colleges. Applicants must be a Nebraska resident, a Federal Pell Grant recipient and a first-time freshman. Apply online at: www.nscs.edu Click on the STUDENTS button and then NSCS Advantage.

Priority deadline is June 1.