

EducationQuest College Planning Bulletin

A monthly college-planning guide for Nebraska high school students

December 2009

Attend a Financial Aid Program to learn how to pay for college

EducationQuest is conducting statewide financial aid programs that explain the types of financial aid, how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), how colleges award financial aid, and the student loan process. The programs are free and open to the public. To find the program nearest you, visit

EducationQuest.org/fap.asp.

Check out our financial aid videos!

Another way to learn about paying for college is by viewing the [Guide to College Funding video](#) at **EducationQuest.org**. The video features a family going through the financial aid process. To learn about completing the FAFSA, view [The FAFSA Made Easy](#).

How to estimate your FAFSA results

If you're a college-bound senior, you will soon complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Colleges will use your FAFSA results to determine how much they will award you in financial aid.

To estimate your FAFSA results now, use the [College Funding Estimator](#) at **EducationQuest.org**. The program will ask for 2009 income tax information. You may estimate your tax information to complete the Estimator but should use your completed 2009 tax returns when you submit the actual FAFSA.

Seniors...have you submitted your college applications?

If you haven't submitted your admission applications yet, it's time to get serious! Contact your top college choices to determine application deadlines and procedures. Ask if the admission application is also the application for college-based scholarships. If not, ask about the scholarship application process.

Learn money management skills and earn a chance to win a \$500 scholarship!

EducationQuest encourages you to visit [Financial Literacy Online](#) - a free online learning center that will teach you the basics of personal money management. EducationQuest is partnering with NSLP to administer monthly drawings in which Nebraska high school juniors and seniors who complete a *Financial Literacy Online* course can win one of 26 \$500 college scholarships!

Continued

To enter, you must successfully complete at least one course on *Financial Literacy Online* between November 1, 2009 and May 31, 2010. Students who complete more than one course will receive additional entries for each course successfully completed. Course topics include Budgeting, Contracts, Identity Theft and Financing Education.

Winners will be chosen monthly. An announcement will be delivered to the winners and to the high schools they attend.

There is no purchase necessary. Simply visit www.nslpflonline.org/nebraska, register and begin taking courses.

Winning the scholarship game

Follow these tips to increase your chances of earning scholarships:

Don't pay for scholarship searches. Free scholarship search sites are available on the Internet including [ScholarshipQuest](#) at **EducationQuest.org** which has over 2,000 state and local scholarships.

Visit your guidance counselor weekly for information about local scholarships.

Get organized. Place scholarship applications in deadline order and prioritize each award. Local awards and college-specific applications deserve top priority because you're more likely to earn them.

Continually update your activities, honors and volunteer or paid jobs using the [Activities Resume](#) at **EducationQuest.org**.

Earn the best possible ACT/SAT scores by taking the exam in the spring of your junior year and again in the fall of your senior year.

Use quality references such as a teacher, coach or counselor. Encourage them to write specific examples of your leadership skills. Give them advance notice and a specific deadline.

Get an early start on essays. Describe your interests, hopes for the future, and leadership abilities.

Pay close attention to grammar, spelling and neatness. Ask at least two people to proofread your application.

December “To Do” List

Complete these tasks during December to stay on the right college planning track.

Seniors:

- Submit college applications.
- Estimate FAFSA results using the *College Funding Estimator* at **EducationQuest.org**.
- Attend the Financial Aid Program in your area.
- Continue to apply for scholarships.

Juniors

- Attend the Financial Aid Program in your area.
- Research college choices.
- Search for scholarships.
- Register by December 15 for the January 23 SAT.
- Register by January 5 for the February 6 ACT.

For free help with college planning, contact EducationQuest Foundation:

Kearney

308-234-6310
800-666-3721

Lincoln

402-475-5222
800-303-3745

Omaha

402-391-4033
888-357-6300

EducationQuest.org

EducationQuest Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization with a mission to improve access to higher education in Nebraska.