

EducationQuest
College Planning Bulletin
A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students
February 2012

It's FAFSA Time!

If you're a college-bound senior, you must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to apply for state, federal and college-based financial aid. It's important that you submit the form before your college's FAFSA priority date because financial aid is awarded first-come, first-served. Priority dates usually fall between March 1 and April 1. To learn your college's priority date, contact the college's financial aid office.

Follow these steps to complete the FAFSA:

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

Complete and file the FAFSA

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

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.

Check out these *free* FAFSA tools

Visit the “[FAFSA Tools](#)” section at **EducationQuest.org** where you’ll find:

- **College Funding Estimator** – estimates your FAFSA results
- **FAFSA Demo** – walks you through the FAFSA
- **“FAFSA Made Easy” video** – demonstrates that the FAFSA isn’t as difficult as it seems
- **FAFSA Podcasts** – explain what the FAFSA is and how to apply
- **FAFSA Checklist** – provides a list of items you need to gather before you complete the FAFSA
- **FAFSA Tutorial** – explains each FAFSA question

If you are filing a FAFSA for the first time and would like free personal help, call the EducationQuest location nearest you to make an appointment. Kearney: 308-234-6310 or 800-666-3721; Lincoln: 402-475-5222 or 800-303-3745; Omaha: 402-391-4033 or 888-357-6300.

February “To Do” List

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

Seniors:

- ___ Apply for a Department of Education PIN (one for you and one for a parent) at pin.ed.gov.
- ___ Complete student and parent 2011 tax returns.
- ___ Complete the FAFSA at fafsa.gov.
- ___ Continue to apply for scholarships.

Juniors:

- ___ Register by February 10 for the March 10 SAT.
- ___ Register by March 9 for the April 14 ACT.

For free help with college planning, contact the EducationQuest location nearest you:

Kearney

308-234-6310
800-666-3721

Lincoln

402-475-5222
800-303-3745

Omaha

402-391-4033
888-357-6300

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