

EducationQuest Foundation

College Planning Bulletin

A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students

December 2012

Prepare for the FAFSA with free programs and resources

If you are a senior, you should complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) after January 1. Colleges will use your FAFSA results to determine how much they will award you in federal, state and college-based financial aid. To prepare for the FAFSA, take advantage of the following *free* EducationQuest programs and resources:

Financial Aid Programs

EducationQuest is conducting statewide Financial Aid Programs that explain the types of financial aid, how to complete the FAFSA, how colleges award financial aid, and the student loan process. The programs are free and open to the public. [Click here to find the program nearest you](#). Juniors and seniors and their parents or guardians are encouraged to attend.

FAFSA Webinars

EducationQuest will conduct free webinars on “**How to Complete the FAFSA**” that will cover financial aid basics and how to complete the FAFSA. Webinars are scheduled for:

Wednesday, December 5 - 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/TS7r5Q>

Wednesday, December 19 - 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/QSr92Q>

Monday, January 14 - 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/SsgDSz>

Wednesday, January 16 - 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/XToPN4>

To join the Webinar, click on the link under your desired date. The password is **Presentation**.

If you have questions, call EducationQuest at 800.666.3721 or email info@educationquest.org.

College Funding Estimator

To estimate your FAFSA results now, use the [College Funding Estimator](#) at EducationQuest.org. This program will ask for 2012 income tax information. You may estimate your tax information to complete the *Estimator* but should use your completed 2012 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.

Winning the scholarship game

Follow these tips to increase your chances of earning scholarships:

Don't pay for scholarship searches. Use free resources such as [ScholarshipQuest](#) at [EducationQuest.org](#) with over 2,000 Nebraska-based scholarships. Free national sites include [Fastaid](#), [Scholarship Monkey](#), [ScholarshipExperts.com](#), [School Soup](#), and [Scholarships.com](#).

Visit your guidance counselor often for information about local scholarships.

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

Update your activities, honors, community service 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.

Tailor your essay to the scholarship. Ask an English teacher to read your essay and offer advice on making a big impact. Your essay will need to stand out from other applications.

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

December "To Do" List

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

Seniors:

- Submit college applications.
- Estimate your 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.
- Search for scholarships.
- [Register](#) by December 28 for the January 26 SAT.
- [Register](#) by January 11 for the February 9 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

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