



IowaCollegeAid.gov
Your Financial Aid Connection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Branstad Proclaims February as Financial Aid Awareness Month *Apply Early To Maximize Financial Aid Eligibility*

Des Moines, IA, February 11, 2011 – To help heighten awareness of the availability of financial aid for students, Governor Terry Branstad has proclaimed February as Financial Aid Awareness Month. One of the Governor’s goals is to provide Iowans with the best education in the world. “Employers say they need a better prepared, better trained work force,” said the governor. “A majority of the fastest growing jobs in Iowa require some type of formal training program or postsecondary education. Iowa’s young people deserve every opportunity for a successful future, and the state’s commitment to college aid programs is helping them to reach their educational goals.”

Financial Aid Awareness month is a reminder for students and parents to begin applying for financial aid for the 2011-12 academic year. To start this process, all students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which is available online at www.fafsa.gov. The FAFSA determines eligibility for federal, state, and, in some cases, institutional aid. “Parents and students need to apply for financial aid early to take advantage of all opportunities available,” said Karen Misjak, executive director of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission. “Most families are eligible for some form of financial aid, but they need to apply early to meet priority deadlines associated with different programs.”

To be eligible for many Iowa’s state-funded scholarships and grants, the FAFSA must be completed and received at the federal processing center **no later than July 1, 2011** (earlier priority filing deadlines exist for certain programs). However, most colleges and universities have earlier financial aid deadlines so students should check with their college of choice to determine the priority deadline for financial aid. To take advantage of all state-administered financial aid opportunities, in addition to the FAFSA, Iowa students need to complete the Iowa Financial Aid Application which can be accessed through the statewide community web portal, www.IHaveaPlanIowa.gov.

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In 2010, the State of Iowa through the Iowa College Student Aid Commission assisted over 25,000 Iowa students through state-funded financial aid programs totaling nearly \$60 million. Families who have questions about applying for financial aid can contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456. For more information about financial aid and products and services that help Iowa families plan, prepare and pay for college visit Iowa College Aid's website, www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

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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 nearly \$60.0 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 GEARUP 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.