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Important Dates to Remember

January 20: Late registration deadline for February 11 **ACT**

February 10: Registration deadline for March 10 **SAT**

College Students

- The **2012-13 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** is now available online. It's recommended that you file your FAFSA - the first step in applying for student aid - as soon as possible.
 - o Your college's deadline for filing the FAFSA is different than the federal deadline, so be sure to check with your school so you don't overlook any important deadlines and miss out on opportunities for additional dollars.
 - o Your FAFSA must be filed by **April 2, 2012**, in order to be eligible for some state financial assistance programs such as **Access Missouri**.
 - o Filing your FAFSA early means you'll get information about your potential financial aid award amounts sooner.

Completing the FAFSA online after Jan. 1 can be a simple and stress-free task for the college student who wants to be "ahead" of the class when the spring semester begins. If you would like free professional help filling out your FAFSA, financial aid advisers will be available at locations throughout the state to help you during **FAFSA Frenzy (FF)**, a program of **College Goal Sunday**, in January, February and March.

To find a FF location or other financial aid workshop near you, check out the Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel's **Show-Me to College events calendar**. You may also access a **complete list of FF sites and dates** via the Missouri Department of Higher Education's website.

- Visit the MDHE's website to learn more about the **Advanced Placement Incentive Grant**, a new program created for students who score well on advanced placements exams in math and science while attending a Missouri public high school.

High School Seniors

- If you think you will be using state or federal financial assistance to help pay for your college education, it's time to start thinking about filling out the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** for the 2012-13 academic year. The FAFSA is used to calculate your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) or, in other words, the amount you or your family can be reasonably expected to pay toward your cost of attending college. Your EFC is very important in determining how much financial assistance you may be eligible to receive.

Most colleges and universities have a much earlier deadline for filing the FAFSA than the U.S. Department of Education. While the official federal deadline is June 30, 2013 - for the 2012-13 academic year, you should check with the financial aid office at the school you plan to attend to make sure you know the deadline that applies to you.

In addition to meeting the timeframe for your school, your FAFSA must be completed and filed by **April 2, 2012**, to be eligible for some state financial assistance such as the **Access Missouri program**. Since a large number of scholarships and grants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, it's in your best interest to get your FAFSA filed as soon as possible.

If you would like free professional help filling out your FAFSA, financial aid advisers will be available at **locations throughout the state** to help you during **FAFSA Frenzy (FF)**, a program of **College Goal Sunday**, in February.

To find a FF location or other financial aid workshop near you, check out the Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel's **Show-Me to College events calendar**. You may also access a **complete list of FF sites** via the **MDHE's website**.

Because this will be your first time completing the FAFSA, we thought it would be helpful to let you know what information you will need to bring with you to participate in FF.

1. Your **FAFSA PIN** number.
 2. Your Social Security number (SSN) and your parents' SSNs if you are under the age of 24 and not married;
 3. Your driver's license number, if you have one;
 4. Your Alien Registration Number, if you are not a U.S. citizen;
 5. 2011 federal tax information or tax returns (including IRS W-2 information) for yourself and spouse if you are married, and for your parents if you are providing parent information. If you have not yet filed a 2011 income tax return at the time you complete your FAFSA, you can still submit your FAFSA but you must provide estimated income and tax information.
 6. Records of untaxed income and veterans benefits, for yourself, and your parents if you are providing parent information; and
 7. Information on savings, investments, business and farm assets for yourself, and your parents if you are providing parent information.
- If you are an A+ student and plan to use the A+ Scholarship in the summer 2012 term, check with your financial aid office to ensure you complete the FAFSA for the correct academic year.
 - Visit the MDHE's website to learn more about the **Advanced Placement Incentive Grant**, a new program created for students who score well on advanced placements exams in math and science while attending a Missouri public high school.
 - Contact the schools you submitted applications to. Make sure the admissions offices have everything they need from you, and be sure to follow up if there are missing items or paperwork. Ask about specific deadlines and note them on your calendar.

- Schedule campus visits and in-person interviews, if required, at your top school choices. Check with your counselor about your high school's policy regarding absences for college visits. Many allow an excused absence if you provide the necessary documentation.
- Interested in obtaining the **Bright Flight Scholarship**? Make plans to take the ACT or SAT again if you aren't satisfied with your score. Students in the class of 2012 will need to achieve an ACT score of at least 31 to qualify in the top 3 percent or 30 to qualify in the top fourth and fifth percentiles on or before the June 2012 national test date. A qualifying score achieved as a sophomore or junior on a national test date will also be accepted. The MDHE is in the process of verifying the qualifying SAT scores with The College Board and will announce them as soon as possible.

Award amounts may be reduced based on the amount of funds appropriated to the program. Students in the top 3 percent must receive the \$3,000 maximum award before students in the top fourth and fifth percentiles will be awarded. Award amounts are \$1,750 and \$0 for the 2011-12 academic year. The MDHE is currently estimating these same award amounts for the 2012-13 academic year. However, these estimates may change as the MDHE receives additional information about program funding and the number of eligible students. For more information about the Bright Flight Scholarship, visit the [MDHE's website](#) or contact us at 800-473-6757, option 4.

High School Juniors

- Begin collecting and requesting information from universities and colleges you may be interested in attending. This information may come in the form of emails, brochures, pamphlets or booklets. After you receive this information, your next step should involve finding a safe place to store it. To help you keep track of college-related materials, the MDHE developed the *College Portfolio*, which can be used to store institutional, federal and state aid documents, such as transcripts, admissions applications, Student Aid Reports (SARs), and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If you are interested in obtaining this portfolio, please visit your high school counselors' office. If your school has yet to order these sturdy organizational portfolios, ask your counselor to submit a [request online via the MDHE website](#).
- To help you land on the school choice that's best for you, it's helpful to know your options. There are a variety of schools offering a wide mixture of both degrees and programs. Learn more about the different types of colleges and universities available in Missouri and search our [Institution, Program and Degree Search](#) to help match up your interests and goals with the schools best suited to meet them.
- Visit the MDHE's website to learn more about the [Advanced Placement Incentive Grant](#), a new program created for students who score well on advanced placements exams in math and science while attending a Missouri public high school.

Nontraditional Students

- If you would like free professional help filling out the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**, financial aid advisers will be available at locations throughout the state to help you during FAFSA Frenzy (FF), a program of **College Goal Sunday**, in February.

To find a FF location or other financial aid workshop near you, check out the Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel's **Show-Me to College events calendar**. You may also access **a complete list of FF sites** via the MDHE website.

Parents

- If you have a high school senior or a student who has returned to college for the 2011-12 academic year that will likely need some sort of financial assistance to help pay for postsecondary education expenses, please plan to attend **FAFSA Frenzy (FF)**, a program of **College Goal Sunday**. Available at 50 locations statewide, this helpful tutorial leads students and parents through filling out the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**, which is the first step in obtaining student financial assistance.
- What should you bring? Your 2011 tax returns, if they're ready; W-2 forms, and student and parent **PINS**. If you haven't done your 2011 taxes yet, bring paycheck stubs from December 2011 that show year-to-date earnings, your 2010 tax forms, and 2011 statements of interest earned. Even if you don't have any 2011 tax information yet, plan to attend anyway to learn valuable information about obtaining financial aid and filling out the FAFSA.

Scholarship Opportunities

- Exceptional student leaders are invited to apply for the 2012 GE-Reagan Foundation Scholarship Program, which honors the legacy of President Ronald Reagan. Twenty college-bound students who demonstrate exemplary leadership, drive, integrity and citizenship will be awarded \$10,000 renewable scholarships (up to \$40,000 per recipient). Applications for the 2012 GE-Reagan Foundation Scholarship Program will be accepted online until **February 17, 2012**. For additional information, please visit www.reaganfoundation.org/GE-RFScholarships.aspx.
- Charter Communications is offering a \$1,000 Charter Student Scholarship. To be considered, the student must be a graduating high school senior, a resident of Missouri within Charter's service area, and plan to major in a field with relevance to Charter (i.e. accounting, business administration, business management, communications, computer technology, engineering, marketing or a related field at an accredited college or university). A completed **Application Form** and supporting documents must be postmarked no later than **March 30, 2012**.