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Important Dates to Remember

December 30: Registration deadline for January 28 **SAT**

January 13: Registration deadline for February 11 **ACT**

College Students

- You recently completed the fall semester and are probably anticipating getting some much needed rest during your holiday break. However, there's one aspect of college life that you shouldn't wait to address after you've returned to campus for the spring semester. The 2012-13 academic year is rapidly approaching, and if you think you will be using state or federal assistance to continue your education, now is the time to start thinking about completing the 2012-13 **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** as soon after January 1, 2012 as possible.

As you may have realized, most colleges and universities designate a deadline for the FAFSA that is much earlier than the deadline designated by 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 your school's financial aid office to confirm the FAFSA deadline for your specific institution.

In addition to meeting the timeframe for your school, your FAFSA must be completed and filed by **April 1, 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.

Completing the FAFSA online after January 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 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**.

High School Seniors

- Find out about college firsthand from friends who are home from college for Christmas break.
- 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.
- Have you created a schedule or master calendar so you don't overlook important admission or financial aid deadlines? If not, it's not too late.

- 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 1, 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.

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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.

- Interested in obtaining the **Bright Flight Scholarship**? Make plans to take the ACT or SAT again if you aren't satisfied with your score. As a reminder, the 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. Estimated awards for the 2012-13 academic year will be available in the spring. For more information about the Bright Flight Scholarship, visit the **MDHE's website** or contact us at 800-473-6757, option 4.

- Stay challenged by enrolling in dual credit or AP classes this spring. It may also help your wallet down the road. If you graduate from college even one semester early by taking college or AP courses while still in high school, you could save thousands of dollars in tuition and dorm costs.
- Don't quit extracurricular activities like sports, drama, or newspaper. Seniors usually take over leadership roles in activities like these. Being in charge of underclassmen can provide you with valuable, confidence-boosting experience and proven leadership skills that will serve you in college and beyond.

High School Juniors

- Discuss college finances with your family. When performing your college search, you need to know how much your family will be able to contribute towards your college education. Always remember, just because a college may seem expensive and out of your reach, never assume anything. There are several types of financial aid that may enable you to attend a college that may seem too expensive.
- Sign up for the **ACT** or **SAT** if you haven't done so.
- Do a little investigating to see which colleges or universities you would like to visit. Websites, admissions representatives, and college guides are all helpful resources. The MDHE also offers an **easy online service** that allows you to **search for schools** based on a variety of details specific to your individual needs. For instance, you can search for a school that offers a particular degree or program, or even a school that meets your ideal for size and location.
- 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.

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Parents

If your child is...

A college student or high school senior:

- Whether you have a high school senior with an eye on the exit or college student deep in the campus routine, provide your son or daughter with encouragement to make the most out of the next semester. If plans include using financial assistance to help with college expenses, encourage him/her to complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** as soon as possible after January 1 in order to meet all school and state aid deadlines, and help gather any required materials necessary to complete the application.

If you would like free professional help filling out the 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.

A high school junior:

- Support your child in efforts to research colleges or universities that he/she would like to visit. Websites, admissions representatives, and college guides can all be very useful. Set aside some time to check out the **MDHE's Institution, Program & Degree Search** that allows you to seek out schools based on a variety of details specific to your individual needs. For instance, you can search for a school that offers a particular degree or program, or even a school that meets your ideal for size and location.
- Encourage your student to sign up for the **ACT** or **SAT** if he/she hasn't done so already.

A younger teen/middle school student:

- As the new year approaches, it's the perfect time to make a resolution with lasting impact. Let 2012 mark active involvement in your child's educational plans. Start a dialogue with your student that lets him/her know that you value education and feel it's an essential component in being prepared to enter the workforce of tomorrow. Ask questions about his/her possible career choices and find **resources** for learning more.

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 between **November 14, 2011 and February 17, 2012**. For additional information, please visit www.reaganfoundation.org/GE-RFScholarships.aspx.
- Check out the following websites to learn more about other scholarship opportunities that exist for future and current college students:
 - Scholarships4Students.com
 - [College Board](http://CollegeBoard)
 - Zinch
 - StudentScholarshipSearch.com
 - Cappex
 - Meritaid.com
 - ScholarshipExperts.com
- Thanks to a grant from the National Science Foundation, the Computer Science/Information Systems Department at Northwest Missouri State University will award up to 25, four-year scholarships, to talented, financially needy students, including women and minorities, interested in studying computer science. The exact amount of the scholarship will vary depending on financial need. For more information, visit <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/dept/csis/stemscholars.htm>.
- 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**.