

EducationQuest Foundation

College Planning Bulletin

A monthly college planning guide for Nebraska high school students

December 2014

Prepare for the FAFSA with *free* programs and resources

If you're a senior, it's time to start preparing for the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). You should complete the form after January 1 (after you and your parents have completed your 2014 tax returns) but before your college's priority deadline (typically before April 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 these *free* EducationQuest programs and resources:

Financial Aid Programs

EducationQuest is conducting statewide **Financial Aid Programs** that explain the financial aid process and the FAFSA. The programs are free and open to the public. [Find the program nearest you](#). Juniors and seniors and their parents or guardians are encouraged to attend. ***If you attend, you will be eligible to register for a \$500 [Financial Aid Program Scholarship!](#)***

FAFSA Webinars

EducationQuest will conduct free “**How to Complete the FAFSA**” webinars on the following dates:

Tuesday, December 9 – 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/110PHjx>

Wednesday, December 17 – 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/112ADCd>

Monday, January 12 – 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/1zmonbq>

Wednesday, January 14 – 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/1upQdmV>

Tuesday, February 24 – 7:00 pm (CT)

Webinar link: <http://eqf.org/1u5EpVG>

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

College Funding Estimator

To estimate your FAFSA results now, use the [College Funding Estimator](#) at **EducationQuest.org**. This program will ask for 2014 income tax information. You may estimate your tax information to complete the *Estimator* but should use your completed 2014 tax returns when you complete the FAFSA.

Seniors...have you submitted your college applications?

If you haven't submitted your college 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 ever 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](#), [ScholarshipExperts.com](#), [School Soup](#), and [Scholarships.com](#).

Visit your school counselor often for information about local scholarships.

Focus on local and college-specific scholarships 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.

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 29 for the January 24 SAT.
 - ___ [Register](#) by January 9 for the February 7 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

[EducationQuest.org](#)

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for college planning tips!

Your Journey to College Begins with Us