



INDIANA COMMISSION for
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEDIA CONTACT:

Charlee Beasor at (317) 232-1016 or CBeasor@che.in.gov

Jess Nejad at (812) 499-0771 or JNejad@che.in.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, October 1, 2020

FAFSA Opens Today For 2021-2022 School Year

Hoosier students can apply for financial aid through April 15, 2021

(INDIANAPOLIS) – Hoosier students and families are encouraged to file the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA), which is now open for the 2021-2022 school year.

With over \$350 million in state financial aid available, as well as billions of dollars in federal aid, the [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](#) reminds Hoosiers that filing the FAFSA by April 15, 2021 is imperative for securing money for college.

Filing the FAFSA is required for many of Indiana's scholarship and grant opportunities, such as the 21st Century Scholarship and Frank O'Bannon Grant, and many colleges require a completed FAFSA to award merit and need-based scholarships. Students earning a variety of degree types – including short-term certificates, associate and bachelor's degrees and higher – should file the FAFSA to take advantage of available financial aid.

"We encourage all Hoosiers with an interest in pursuing education and training to file the FAFSA because we know that paying for college is one of the most common barriers to attending," said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers. "We also know that recent unemployment data show Hoosiers without education beyond high school are more likely to be unemployed, so the value of pursuing higher education has never been greater."

The Commission recently released the 2020 [College Equity Report](#), which includes data on Indiana's college achievement gap progress and the workforce, shows that poverty has a direct impact on college-going rates, as only 38 percent of low-income high school graduates go to college – lower than the statewide average (61 percent), higher-income peers (68 percent) and low-income peers who are part of the state's 21st Century Scholars program (86 percent).

"Many Hoosiers fail to file the FAFSA by the deadline because they assume they don't qualify for any state or federal financial aid. The reality is that there is considerable funding available, especially for those that demonstrate financial need," said Lubbers. "Filing the FAFSA on time is a surefire way to be considered for both state and federal aid opportunities, but you'd be surprised at how much aid is left on the table each year."

How to file the FAFSA

Students can file the FAFSA online at [FAFSA.gov](https://fafsa.gov). The first step for students who have not previously filed the FAFSA is to create a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID. Then, each student will need:

- Social Security number
- Alien Registration number (for non-U.S. citizens)
- Federal income tax returns, W-2s and other records of money earned
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)

The U.S. Department of Education provides email and live chat assistance for FAFSA filers as well as a helpline at 800-4FED-AID. Hoosier families can also find FAFSA help through INvestEd Indiana at www.investedindiana.org.

FAFSA Kickoff Event

Tonight, Thursday, October 1, 2020

6:15-7 p.m. (ET)

Online: **Live** on Learn More Indiana's Facebook page (Facebook.com/LearnMoreIN); available on Instagram (@LearnMoreIndiana) and Twitter (@LearnMoreIN).

Students and families will receive tips and tricks to help them file the FAFSA correctly and on time!

Applications now open for various teaching scholarships and stipends

Scholarship and stipend opportunities for aspiring teachers and education majors are also open as of October 1.

According to the Commission's Equity Report, less than 15 percent of students studying for a teaching career in Indiana are non-White.

"Students of color are more successful in their education journey when they have the opportunity to be in the classroom with a teacher who looks like them," said Lubbers. "We hope to increase the awareness of these programs in order to make real progress for educational equity in Indiana."

More information about the following scholarships and stipends is available on the Commission's [website](#):

- [Next Generation Hoosier Educators Scholarship](#) – Provides up to \$7,500 per year of college (up to \$30,000 total) for top performing Hoosier students who commit to teaching in Indiana for five years after earning their degrees. The deadline to apply is January 31, 2021.
- [Earline S. Rogers Student Teaching Stipend for Minorities](#) – Open to minority students (defined as Black and Hispanic individuals) who will participate in student teaching or a school administration internship as part of their degree requirements.
- [Student Teaching Stipend for High-Need Fields](#) – Available to students planning to teach Special Education or math at either the middle or high school level. Eligible students can receive up to \$4,000 per stipend, or \$8,000 if awarded both.

For questions about state financial aid, students can contact the Indiana Commission for Higher Education by phone at 888-528-4719 or via email at awards@che.in.gov.

###

About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Created in 1971, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education plans, coordinates and defines Indiana's postsecondary education system to align higher learning with the needs of students and the state. The Commission also administers Indiana's financial aid programs, including the [21st Century Scholars](#) early college promise scholarship, which celebrates 30 years in 2020. Learn more about the Commission's *Reaching Higher in a State of Change* strategic plan at www.in.gov/che.