

Time to Complete College Financial Aid Forms

Graduate! Philadelphia officials urge the time is now to complete financial aid forms for anyone thinking of returning to college in the next year and a half. The deadline for the Pennsylvania State Grant is May 1. Completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is an important first step at determining eligibility for receiving financial aid for college. Qualified students can receive about \$10,000 toward their tuition. There is more than \$100 billion in federal aid available for college students to access nationwide.

"Graduate! Philadelphia encourages adults to think about their education goals for 2009 and 2010 – getting financial aid requires planning ahead," said Hadass Sheffer, Executive Director of Graduate! Philadelphia. "Any adult who is thinking about enrolling in college or will be taking college courses in 2009 and the first half of 2010, must fill out a FAFSA form NOW to apply for financial aid. You don't have to commit to starting classes right away, but don't miss this opportunity for free money." Federal and State financial aid can provide \$10,000 toward the cost of tuition, fees, room and board, books, childcare and transportation.

The FAFSA can be completed online at www.fafsa.gov

or electronically at the Graduate! Philadelphia College Access Center with the assistance of a professional staff person.

Many schools and state agencies have differing deadlines to apply for aid that are earlier than the federal deadlines and use FAFSA information as a means to determine need. Therefore, it is important to apply right away. Students are now filing the 2009-2010 FAFSA application.

Completing the FAFSA is just the beginning of your journey to and through college. Obtaining a college degree has many benefits. Individuals with a college education earn more money during their lifetimes and have a wider selection of career choices.

Graduate! Philadelphia provides free and ongoing guidance and support to adults who want to return to college and complete their degree. Financial aid completion workshops are being held at the Graduate! Philadelphia College Access Center, which is located inside the Gallery Mall at 9th and Market Streets, street level, next to the Dollar Store:

- March 27, 2009, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- April 17, 2009, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
- April 21, 2009, 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- May 1, 2009, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30

p.m. (Last chance to be considered for over \$4,000 in PA State grants)

To reserve your seat at the Financial Aid Completion workshops or to schedule an individual advising session, call 215-574-1341, ext. 107 or e-mail info@graduatephiladelphia.org. To learn more about events and workshops and Graduate! Philadelphia's services, visit www.GraduatePhiladelphia.org.

Financial aid information for college-bound high school students and their parents can be found at PhillyGoes2College.com.

Remember: you should never pay anyone or any service for assistance in completing your forms or filing them. FAFSA is a free application and the federal government has mandated that no one should charge for assistance in completing or filing the form.

Each FAFSA applicant will need their most recent tax returns, Social Security card, driver's license and alien registration card, if applicable, to fill out the form. A current bank statement, mortgage information, records of untaxed income, records that relate to any unusual family circumstances and records of family assets and investments, not including a primary residence, also will come in handy when completing the FAFSA.

