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Application window for college financial aid opened Jan. 1 *Colorado's CollegeInvest tells students to send their federal application ASAP*

Denver, CO – January 1 was the opening window for students to begin to apply for college financial assistance using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The FAFSA can be submitted through June but [CollegeInvest](#), Colorado's not-for-profit higher education financing resource, encourages parents and students to submit their forms as early as possible because most financial aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Students need to check with their colleges for their priority financial aid deadlines.

“The FAFSA is an important step in paying for college.” said Janet Gullickson of CollegeInvest. “All Colorado students planning on enrolling in an institution of higher education in 2010 should plan to complete their FAFSA's now.”

“Financial aid is available to students in almost every income bracket; however, time is of the essence,” Gullickson added. “Waiting to send in your FAFSA until later this spring can translate to fewer aid dollars received. Students planning on beginning college in the fall of 2010 should apply as soon as possible to ensure that they get as much aid as possible.”

The FAFSA must be filled out and submitted to qualify for grants, work-study, federal loans and even many scholarships. Before completing the FAFSA, families should collect their 2009 financial information, such as 2009 W-2 forms, 2009 income tax returns for the student and parents, current bank statements, and investment records.

Students and parents should complete the FAFSA online but first they must create a personal identification number or PIN. The PIN allows students and parents to sign the form electronically rather than mailing a signature page. Instructions for how to create a PIN are available at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

CollegeInvest provides important information on the FAFSA process at www.collegeinvest.org/FAFSA where students and their families can:

- See answers to frequently asked FAFSA questions.
- Find links to helpful FAFSA tutorials.
- View tips to keep in mind when completing the FAFSA.
- See the calendar of free FAFSA workshops held across Colorado.
- Families can also email their FAFSA questions to asktheexperts@collegeinvest.org.

Additional resources include the following:

- For students who have a free account with College In Colorado, a sister agency of CollegeInvest, the FAFSA can be auto-populated and submitted through their collegeincolorado.org account,
- CollegeInvest's financial education program, Education Cents, also provides additional tools for planning and paying for college.

About CollegenInvest

CollegenInvest is a not-for-profit division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. Since 1979, CollegenInvest has helped more than half a million families break down the financial barriers to college by providing expert information, simple planning tools, [college savings plans](#), and scholarships. For more information, visit www.collegeninvest.org or call 1-800-448-2424 or contact your financial advisor.

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