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FAFSA application season kicks off Oct. 1

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com 6 hrs ago

From securing a work-study job on campus to qualifying for college-level scholarships, many students don't realize all the ways the Free Application for Federal Student Aid can affect their lives.

One of the biggest misconceptions John Bergman encounters as a regional outreach counselor for the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority is when students write off their chances for college aid because they perceive their parents' income as too high.

Income does play a role, but it's not the only factor, Bergman said. Household size also counts, for example.

"It's a formula," Bergman said. "It's not just how much money your parents make."

His biggest piece of advice: "Always fill out a FAFSA, no matter what."

FAFSA application season for the 2020-21 school year will open Oct. 1. Throughout the month, Bergman will help students complete the form during several workshops at local high schools

(A list of local workshops is at the end of this article.)

The application – which is free to fill out – is available online at studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa or through the myStudentAid mobile app. The entire FAFSA can be completed on a student’s phone.

For students interested in the workshops, Bergman offered a few tips, with the first being to create a Federal Student Aid Identification at home to save time.

The ID functions as the individual’s legal signature, and parents should not create one on behalf of their child. To create one, students can log on to studentaid.gov/fsaid.

An FAFSA completion guide from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority said students will need their own FSA ID and one for their parent or guardian, their Social Security number and an email address or mobile phone number.

Students will also need an alien registration number (only if they are not U.S. citizens) and their parents’ dates of birth, Social Security numbers, marital status and the date their parents were married, divorced or widowed, according to the KHEAA guide.

For the 2020-21 school year, applicants will use their 2018 tax information and federal income tax returns. W-2s and other records of money earned that year are also highly helpful to have on hand.

If applying from home, Bergman recommends using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool, which is built into the application. Doing so can shave 30 minutes off the application process, he said.



“It’s safe. It’s secure. It’s efficient,” Bergman said.

Having a FAFSA on file also enables students to qualify for many kinds of state-level college aid.

Unlike federal money, state dollars can deplete on an annual basis, which is why Bergman recommends students apply immediately after Oct. 1.

“Definitely fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible,” Bergman said.

Local high school FAFSA workshop locations, dates and times are:

- Warren Central High School: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. Oct. 2.
- Warren County Public Library: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Oct. 8.
- Warren County Public Library Bob Kirby Branch: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 9.
- Warren East High School: 6 to 8 p.m. Oct. 15.
- South Warren High School: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 17.
- Warren East High School: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 21.
- Bowling Green High School: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 24.
- Bowling Green High School: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 25.
- Warren County Area Technology Center: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 28.
- Greenwood High School: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 29.
- Greenwood High School: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 31.

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Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.

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