



# Apply for Financial Aid Early to Maximize Awards

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Godfrey, Ill. – In a struggling economic climate with limited grant funds available, students who need financial assistance for college should apply for it as early as possible to maximize eligible awards.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which can be filled out at <http://fafsa.ed.gov>, determines need for aid, which can range from grants that don't have to be paid back to loans and work study programs at schools like Lewis and Clark Community College.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission Monetary Award Program (MAP) is a state grant based on need that provides for payment of tuition and mandatory fees at a MAP eligible school like Lewis and Clark. It does not need to be paid back. To qualify, applicants must meet ISAC Illinois residency criteria.

“Eligible Illinois students have traditionally relied on the MAP Grant to help pay their tuition at Illinois colleges. FAFSA application receipt dates for MAP eligibility have been suspended for several years now. The State of Illinois suspended MAP awards as early as March in 2011 for the 2011-2012 school year. Many Illinois residents who began College in Fall 2011 did not have the benefit of the MAP Grant. In order to secure eligibility for the MAP Grant, Illinois students must submit the FAFSA early,” said Angela Weaver, director of Financial Aid at Lewis and Clark.

For those who need extra assistance, Lewis and Clark is hosting a FAFSA Completion event on Sun., Feb. 19 as part of College Awareness & Preparation (CAP) Month. All district residents are invited, regardless of what college or university they plan to attend. Lewis and Clark Financial Aid advisors will assist individuals in completing their FAFSA paperwork and answer any questions related to financial aid assistance.

The event, scheduled from 2-4 p.m. in the Haskell Building, Room B225, is part of a statewide initiative aimed to encourage and assist parents and students in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Participants are welcome to come anytime during the event, and completing the application takes about 30 minutes. Parents and students should bring their 2011 financial information with them even if they have not yet filed their taxes. L&C staff will be on hand to help parents and students complete and submit the FAFSA form electronically.

For more information on College Awareness and Preparation, visit [http://www.collegezone.com/informationzone/10\\_7918.htm](http://www.collegezone.com/informationzone/10_7918.htm).