

## ONE DATE MAY SAVE YOU THOUSANDS

By Janet Haley  
(January 2011)



One date may save you thousands when it comes to paying for college. Whether it's pursuing a degree at the community college level or a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution, the National Center for College Costs (NCCC) educates families of all backgrounds that college is an option they CAN afford. The Community Foundation has worked with NCCC since 1999 to provide the College Cost Estimator to all Hendricks County residents for FREE and, last year, added FAFSA Days at each county high school.

FAFSA, Free Application for Federal and State Aid, is a form prepared annually by current and prospective college students to determine their eligibility for student federal and state financial aid. To be eligible for state and federal financial aid, a student must file a FAFSA by the March 10 deadline. FAFSA can be found online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

Last year, students and their parents who completed their FAFSA during FAFSA Days at the Hendricks County High Schools were able to draw down \$740,532 in federal and state grant dollars or an average of over \$4,500 in aid for each student. All of these savings were brought to the county parents and students at **NO COST** because of a grant from the Community Foundation. One parent commented on their local FAFSA Day celebrating, "I [now] feel our daughter has the ability to attend any college."

In 2011, FAFSA Days will be offered again thanks to another grant by the Community Foundation as well as the generosity of several partners --- State Bank of Lizton, North Salem State Bank, Hendricks College Network, First National Bank and Brownsburg Education Foundation. Experts will be on hand from 10 am to 7 pm to help students and their parents complete the FAFSA form and answer any questions.

Have a child that is not a senior? Another important program available in preparing for college is NCCC's College Costs Estimator. The Estimator is NCCC's unique format analysis of a client family's financial situation under the Federal Methodology used to determine need-based financial aid. NCCC provides families with personalized strategies and advice on how to make the numbers work and take the fear out of the college cost issue. The Estimator can be filled out online at [www.collegecosts.com](http://www.collegecosts.com) and is **FREE** to all Hendricks County residents.

A customized analysis of your family's estimator will be distributed at the College Costs Estimator Workshop on Thursday, April 7, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hendricks County 4-H Fairgrounds and Conference Center. If you are unable to attend the workshop, the Estimator will be mailed to the address you provided. NCCC will also provide ongoing guidance through the financial aid process. No matter the age of your child, you may complete an Estimator. You may then update it for free each year to monitor your progress toward a wide array of post high school options. And in the words of one parent, "There is hope!"

When you have questions, contact me at 317.718.1200 or [janet@hendrickscountycf.org](mailto:janet@hendrickscountycf.org) or visit our website at [www.hendrickscountycf.org](http://www.hendrickscountycf.org).

**FAFSA DAYS -10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

*Mon. Feb. 14 - Avon HS*

*Tues. Feb 15 - Plainfield HS*

*Thurs. Feb 17 - Cascade HS*

*Tues. Feb. 22 - Tri-West HS*

*Wed. Feb. 23 - Brownsburg HS*

*Thurs. Feb 24 - Danville HS*

***College Costs Estimator Workshop***

*April 7, 2011 @ 6:30 p.m.*

*Hendricks County 4-H Fairgrounds and Conference Center*