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FAFSA application season approaches

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Financial aid professionals are encouraging students to prepare to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for the 2018-19 school year, which becomes available Oct. 1.

Although it can seem daunting, students don't need to throw away money to fill out the free form available at fafsa.ed.gov. Many area high schools are hosting workshops, and Western Kentucky University offers free assistance with the FAFSA.

"If they come to us, we can ease their burden," said Michelle Shutt, the coordinator of WKU's Educational Opportunity Centers program. Shutt said her program's services are free and said they aren't limited to aspiring WKU students. "We can help anyone apply for any school."

Students should apply as soon as possible, Shutt said, because some types of financial aid can be depleted after being distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

“If they are Pell eligible it’s imperative to come and do your FAFSA early,” said Shutt, referring to federal Pell grants intended for students who need it to pay for college. Kentucky’s College Access Program Grant, which can award up to \$1,900 to students in need, can also be depleted, Shutt said.

Filing a FAFSA is also important for working students, Shutt said.

“You must have the FAFSA filled out if you want an on-campus job,” she said.

Shutt encouraged students to get ahead of the process and get an FSA ID, which allows access to Federal Student Aid’s online systems and can serve as an applicant’s legal signature.

“The most important thing is to have their FSA ID prepared,” Shutt said. “They need to have their FSA ID ready with their correct personal identifiers and the correct tax information.”

Appointment scheduling with the Educational Opportunity Centers is available by calling 270-745-4441.



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John Bergman, the southwestern Kentucky outreach counselor for the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, will help students and families interested in filing the FAFSA through several area workshops throughout October.

The workshops are limited to seniors in high school, current college students and adults interested in attending college for the 2018-19 school year.

“We can do a FAFSA within 30 minutes,” Bergman said.

Students and families can get more information by emailing Bergman at jbergman@kheaa.com.

Nearby workshops and their dates include:

- The Warren County Public Library main branch from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Oct. 3.
- Warren Central High School from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 9.
- Warren East High School from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Oct. 11 and from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 12.
- Warren County Area Technology Center from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 13.
- Greenwood High School from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 17.
- South Warren High School from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 18.
- Bowling Green High School from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 19 and Oct. 20.

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