

College Goal Sunday provides free help to Indiana students filing for financial aid

February 11, 2008

Program supports efforts to connect first-generation college students and at-risk students with financial aid

Kokomo, Indiana—College Goal Sunday is a charitable program of the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association (ISFAA) that provides free information and assistance to Indiana families filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Now in its 19th year, College Goal Sunday has helped more than 70,000 Indiana students and families complete the complicated FAFSA form properly and on time, and has been cited as a valuable resource for first-generation college students and at-risk youth.

For Indiana students seeking undergraduate admission to a college or technical school in 2008, it is important to file the FAFSA – the form required by educational institutions nationwide – so that it is received by the federal processor by March 10. By filing on time, students have an improved chance of receiving federal and state grants, loans and scholarships, as well as other financial aid.

College Goal Sunday 2008 is at 2 p.m. (local time) Sunday, Feb. 17, at 36 sites statewide, including Indiana University Kokomo, 2300 S. Washington St., in the Kelley Student Center room KC130 and the student commons. At the event, financial aid professionals from Indiana colleges and universities walk through the FAFSA line-by-line and answer families' individual questions. This year, select sites offer FAFSA online capabilities and Spanish interpreters. To locate that information, visit www.CollegeGoalSunday.org.

Program assists first-generation college students and at-risk youth

According to the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI), programs like College Goal Sunday are reaching first-generation college students. In addition, according to SSACI statistics, in recent years, more single-parent Hoosier families have filed for financial aid, indicating programs like College Goal Sunday are reaching high-risk students and their families.

College Goal Sunday answers families' financial aid questions

In 2005-2006, the State of Indiana awarded nearly \$173 million in financial aid to more than 52,000 students. "Nearly half of Indiana's college students qualify for financial aid from the State of Indiana," said Jacki Switzer, ISFAA College Goal Sunday co-coordinator and district marketing director for Edamerica. "College Goal Sunday helps students and families better

understand the financial aid process and brings students one step closer to fulfilling their educational goals.”

Students should attend College Goal Sunday with their parent(s) or guardian(s) and bring their parents’ completed 2007 IRS 1040 tax returns, W-2 Forms and other 2007 income and benefits information. If students worked last year, they should also bring their income information. Students 24 years of age or older may attend alone and bring their own completed 2007 IRS 1040 tax return, W-2 Form or other 2007 income and benefits information. Pens and FAFSA forms will be provided, but students are encouraged to bring their own FAFSA forms and their U.S. Department of Education Personal Identification Numbers (PIN) if filing online. Parents will also need to obtain PINs to file online. To obtain a PIN, go to www.pin.ed.gov.

Students attending College Goal Sunday qualify for a chance to win an educational prize to help with their higher education expenses. Three educational prizes, worth \$300 each, will be awarded statewide – one for northern Indiana, one for central Indiana and one for southern Indiana. The winners will be notified in March; prizes will be sent directly to the higher education institutions selected by winning students. To enter the drawing, students must attend College Goal Sunday and submit a completed evaluation form.

Experts from the financial aid community help families

Each year, ISFAA is fortunate to have the support of hundreds of volunteers from the financial aid and education communities who help on average about 5,000 students and parents complete the FAFSA at College Goal Sunday.

“Financial aid professionals have seen firsthand the disappointment of students who don’t complete their financial aid paperwork properly,” said Melinda Middleton, marketing coordinator for College Goal Sunday and director of financial aid, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. “That’s why the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association continues to provide College Goal Sunday for Indiana students and families. If our assistance gives students a better chance at higher education, we’re fulfilling our mission.”

Twenty-first Century Scholars can benefit from College Goal Sunday

Twenty-first Century Scholars are income-eligible students who sign a contract in the seventh or eighth grade promising they will graduate from high school with a minimum of 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, refrain from using drugs and alcohol, and apply for college financial aid. Upon high school graduation, Scholars who have fulfilled the commitment receive state funds to help cover their college tuition and fees for eight semesters at eligible Indiana colleges. To fulfill their pledge, Scholars must submit a completed FAFSA form on time. College Goal Sunday can help.

Program is a national model

College Goal Sunday has more than tripled its reach from 10 sites statewide, in its first year, to 36 sites currently, and it has become a national model to other College Goal Sunday programs. In addition to Indiana, College Goal Sunday now takes place in more than 25 other states.

Helpline open during Financial Aid Awareness Month

ISFAA's College Goal Sunday is one of the highlights of Financial Aid Awareness Month. In February, students and their families can call the Learn More Resource Center helpline at 800-992-2076 and have their questions answered by financial aid professionals. The Indiana Commission for Higher Education supports the helpline. For more information about College Goal Sunday or Financial Aid Awareness Month, call the helpline or visit www.CollegeGoalSunday.org.

College Goal Sunday, sponsored by ISFAA, is offered in cooperation with Learn More Resource Center, the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana and The Twenty-first Century Scholars Program. It is funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., Lumina Foundation for Education and USA Funds, three Indiana-based nonprofit organizations with a particular interest in higher education.