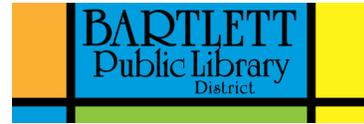


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Learning all about the FAFSA

Nowadays, more and more students are finding the need to receive financial assistance to attend college, and one of those ways is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

On Wednesday, Sept. 20, 32 patrons took in advice at the Bartlett Library about completing the FAFSA from Diante Hackler, a representative of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

The advice Hackler said was his best would be for students and parents to fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible since there is a certain amount of funds in place and they will decrease the more time passes. This year, the FAFSA opens on Oct. 1, whereas last year it opened Jan. 1.

Where do you go to fill the form out?

Head to FAFSA.gov (If you go to FAFSA.com, you will be redirected to the .gov domain). There is an option on the website if you would like the form to be in Spanish.

Hackler mentioned that the form could be filled out online or in paper format. Doing it online is easier and faster, and the paper application process could sometimes take up to a month.

Here is some necessary information Hackler brought up you need in order to fill out the FAFSA:

- The previous year's tax returns (If you're filing in 2017, you'd use your 2016 tax returns.)
- Records of income
- Asset information
- Driver's license
- Social Security Number
- Alien Registration Number (for non-citizens)
- For a complete list, visit isac.org.

With all that provided information, an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) will be revealed. This number is what each family is expected to be able to contribute to their student's college costs.

Also, when looking at colleges, pay close attention to all the different fees. All of these combined create the Cost of Attendance (COA):

- Tuition and fees
- Room and board
- Transportation
- Books and supplies
- Miscellaneous living expenses

Then, to determine a student's financial need, the equation to use is $COA - EFC = \text{Financial Need}$. So if the COA is 20,000 and the EFC is 5,000, the Financial Need is 15,000. So, now the student needs to get scholarships, take out loans, or enroll in the work-study programs at the schools if they offer them.

Hackler wrapped up the presentation by summarizing what everyone learned in short bullet points:

- Complete FAFSA
- Receive and review student aid report
- Complete verification process (if selected)
- Receive and review award offer
- Respond to college
- Complete all pending processes
- Renew FAFSA every year it is needed

If you missed this program, a similar upcoming program at the Bartlett Library is "How to Pay for College Without Going Broke" on Wednesday, October 18 at 6:30 p.m. Experienced professionals share their knowledge and expertise to guide you through action steps you can take to reduce college costs and still attend the college of your choice. Discover creative, little-known financial and academic strategies to reduce college costs while finding the best-fit college for your child. Both parents are encouraged to attend this free, 90-minute seminar presented by My College Planning Team.

For more information and a complete listing of scheduled programs, call 630.837.2855 or visit www.bartlettlibrary.org.

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The Bartlett Public Library District, located at 800 S. Bartlett Rd., provides programs and services to meet the needs of the community. For more information and a complete listing of scheduled programs, call 630.837.2855 or visit www.bartlettlibrary.org.