



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## College-Bound Students and Families: It's Time to Complete the FAFSA

ANDREW J LANZA December 19, 2012

The most important tool in securing student financial aid is the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*, the *FAFSA*.

"Start Here to Get There," the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation's (HESC) campaign for student financial aid awareness, is taking place throughout the month of January 2013 to encourage and help families to complete the FAFSA, the first step in applying for free or low-cost federal and state aid.

Schools, community groups and other organizations will hold FAFSA completion events at which students and families can get help completing the FAFSA online.

Volunteers from HESC and/or local colleges will provide professional assistance with FAFSA completion at each event. Some locations will also have certified tax preparers from the Ca\$h Coalition's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) tax aide program available to assist families earning less than \$49,000 in preparing and filing their taxes prior to completing the FAFSA.

Students and families can have their FAFSA questions answered through a number of outlets available throughout the month, including:

- online chat that will be available weekdays
- a special toll-free HESC hotline, 1-800-808-1790, that will be open noon to 5pm weekdays
- email assistance at [FAFSAhelp@HESC.ny.gov](mailto:FAFSAhelp@HESC.ny.gov)

To find an event near you, or for more information about financial aid or completing the FAFSA, visit [StartHereGetThere.org](https://www.startheregetthere.org).

Remember, you can pay for college. It starts with the FAFSA. Go to [StartHereGetThere.org](https://www.startheregetthere.org) to begin.

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