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COUNSELOR CONNECTION

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Deadline for KHEAA essay contest approaching

A rising junior at one of Kentucky's public or private high schools will win a \$500 scholarship and a photo shoot at his or her school through the Promote Your School scholarship contest, sponsored by KHEAA.

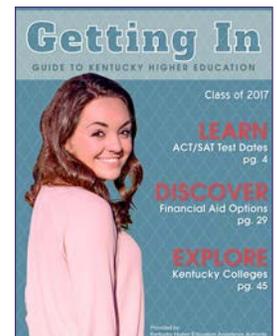
The school must participate in the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program to be eligible.

To enter, the student must submit an essay no more than 200 words long and cannot mention the student's name, school, county or community. The essay topic must be shown at the top of the page. The student's name, address and high school must be listed at the bottom of the essay. The student must be a junior during the 2016–2017 school year. For essay topics and additional information, visit kheaa.com/website/contest/intro.

Photos from the winning school will be used in KHEAA publications and on KHEAA websites.

To enter, mail your essay to KHEAA Publications, P.O. Box 798, Frankfort, KY 40602. You may also email your essay to publications@kheaa.com or fax it to 502.696.7574. The winner will be chosen by a committee of KHEAA employees. The deadline for submissions is May 31.

Students from schools that have been featured the past five years are not eligible for this year's contest. Those schools are Lexington STEAM Academy, Somerset Christian, J. Graham Brown, Sacred Heart, and Bowling Green.



With this edition:

Included with this *Counselor Connection* are “Take 15 to Finish” and “Updating the FAFSA: IRS Data Retrieval Tool or Tax Transcript” flyers.

KHEAA publishes the *Counselor Connection* to share information about student financial aid, college preparation and college planning. Comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please send them to publications@kheaa.com.



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Students, parents should take verification seriously

The federal government requires many students who submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to verify the information on the FAFSA.

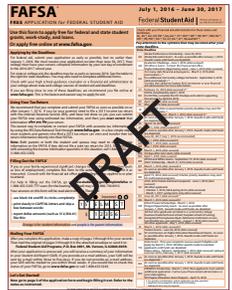
Used to apply for most federal and many state student aid programs, the FAFSA asks detailed questions about the income and resources of students. Parents are required to provide their information as well if their children are dependent students. Students are considered dependent if they are undergraduate students under 24 years old, not married, have no dependents of their own, are not veterans or were not orphans or wards of the court until age 19.

The college or, in some cases, an agency working with the college will contact students to let them know if their data is being verified.

Students and parents need to take that process seriously, according to KHEEA. Students chosen for verification cannot receive their financial aid until they have completed the process. As soon as they are contacted, they should provide any information that is required. Putting it off will only lead to frustration if the process isn't finished when classes are ready to start.

If students have decided not to attend a college that asked them for verification, they should let the college know so it will stop requesting information.

KHEEA is the state agency that administers the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES), need-based grants and other programs to help students pay their higher education expenses.



May 15 is deadline to apply for dual credit scholarship

May 15 is the deadline for high school students to apply for the Mary Jo Young Scholarship. Students and schools will be notified of scholarship awards as soon as possible after June 1.

The scholarship pays up to \$420 per course for up to two courses per semester, plus textbook reimbursement of \$125 per course, for students enrolled in dual credit courses at a Kentucky college or university. To be considered, a student must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Be a Kentucky resident.
- Be a high school junior or senior during the 2016-2017 academic year.
- Have at least an 18 ACT composite or at least a 2.5 GPA for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Priority is given to students eligible for free and reduced price lunches.

Students who receive a 100% dual credit tuition waiver as part of the agreement between the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education may use their award to cover their \$50 administrative fee.

To apply, students must sign in at kheaa.com, select the MyKHEEA account link, choose “Apply Online for Scholarships” from the menu on the left, click on the Mary Jo Young Scholarship application link, and follow the instructions from there. They will receive a confirmation message when they have completed the process. Students using MyKHEEA for the first time will need to click on the “Register now” link to create an account before they can apply.

For more information, contact Danny Prather at 800.928.8926, ext. 67399, or danprather@kheaa.com.



KEES training dates for coordinators, counselors set

The annual Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) training will be held in April. The training will be done through Go To Live Meeting, which lets you participate from your office.

New to this year's training will be information on weighting dual credit courses and KEES compliance reviews being conducted by KHEAA. Other topics include an in-depth review of rules and regulations related to the KEES program, how to submit student records and common errors to avoid, KEES eligibility criteria, and the process for uploading transcripts to KHEAA.

KHEAA encourages all district KEES coordinators and school counselors to attend a session. The same material will be discussed in each session, which will last about 2 hours. The dates and times are:

- Tuesday, April 19, at 9:30 a.m. Eastern time
- Thursday, April 21, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern time
- Wednesday, April 27, at 9:30 a.m. Eastern time

To register, email kees@kheaa.com with the subject heading "KEES training." Be sure to include your name, title, and high school name in the message. Participants interested in receiving EILA credit must make that request at the time of registration. KHEAA staff will send confirmation once your registration is received. Make plans now to participate.

For more information about the KEES program, call 800.928.8926 or email kees@kheaa.com.



Go Higher Grant helps adults earn college credit

Adult Kentuckians who are interested in taking college classes may be eligible for a Go Higher Grant from KHEAA.

The maximum award amount is \$1,000.

Recipients must be at least 24 years old and be enrolled less than half time at a participating Kentucky college. They must show financial need and be U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents. They must also be working on their first undergraduate degree.

To apply, students must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which can be found at fafsa.ed.gov. They must also submit a Go Higher Grant application, which can be found on kheaa.com by clicking on the "Paying for College" tab, choosing "KHEAA-Administered Programs" and clicking on the link to the grant.



Scholarship available to those providing early childhood education

Kentucky's child care providers and those who train child care providers may be eligible for the Early Childhood Development Scholarship to further their college education.

The application deadline for summer classes is April 15. The deadline for fall classes is July 15.

The scholarships are available to those who work at least 20 hours per week in a participating early childhood facility. Kentuckians employed as a preschool associate teacher in a state-funded preschool program are also eligible.

Recipients must be working toward an associate's or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or other approved credential. Depending on funding, the scholarship will pay up to \$1,800 for tuition each year. Students may not take more than nine hours of classes per semester.

The scholarship is administered by KHEAA, the agency that administers state aid programs, including the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES).

To apply, students must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and an Early Childhood Development Scholarship application. The FAFSA is available at fafsa.ed.gov. The scholarship application is available at kheaa.com. To complete the scholarship application, students must set up a KHEAA account. After registering, sign in, then select Apply Online for Scholarships.



'Surviving College' booklets can help freshmen, adults

"Surviving College," a guide that helps college freshmen succeed during their first year on campus, is available free from KHEAA.

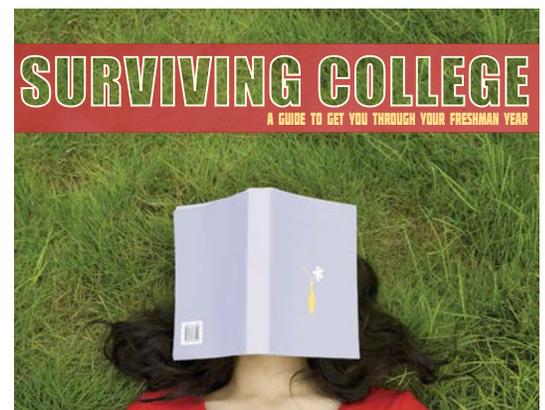
The 36-page booklet includes sections about:

- Majors and class schedules.
- Staying healthy and safe on campus.
- Learning styles and study tips.
- Campus life.
- Financial basics.

KHEAA also provides "Surviving College for Adults," geared toward nontraditional students.

To order a free copy, email publications@kheaa.com. Please include your mailing address.

Online versions of both are available on kheaa.com.



TAKE 15 TO FINISH



College is a commitment. Earning 15 credits per semester may not be easy, but it's important. Here's why:

- You're more likely to graduate on time.
- Research has shown you're more likely to get better grades.
- If you attend a four-year public university, you'll save money, since taking 15 credits is the same cost as taking 12 credits at most Kentucky state universities. You're getting 3 credits for FREE!
- By finishing on time, you have more options. You can get an advanced degree, take time off to travel or volunteer, or start working full time.

4 CREDITS NEEDED PER YEAR TOTAL CREDITS NEEDED FOR YEARS YOUR DEGREE PROGRAM

What can you do to get on board?

- Know the courses you need to graduate, and meet with your advisor to map out a plan to earn your degree on time.
- Make school your priority. If it's possible, cut back on work time so you can earn 15 credits per semester and finish faster. The payoff in your salary as a college graduate will be worth it.

- If you have to work, consider working on campus while taking 15 credits. You'll have more flexibility in your schedule and will have a shorter commute time than if you work off campus.
- Be ready for freshman English and math, and take these courses as part of your first year of college. Students who take 15 credits per semester and complete their English and math courses early are more likely to graduate on time.
- Fill out a FAFSA. With financial assistance, you can concentrate on your studies, work fewer hours and finish college faster.
- Ask for help. On campus, you're surrounded by people and resources with the purpose of helping you get your degree. Ask for help from professors, teaching assistants, academic advisors and fellow students when you need it.
- Take summer classes. If you can't take 15 credits a semester, take summer classes to stay on track.

SAMPLE COLLEGE COURSE SCHEDULE

Each class usually has a section number.

These are the days the class meets each week. Many schools use "R" for Thursday.

These are the number of credits you'll receive for completing the class. They're also referred to as "hours."

CRS NO	SUBJ	CAT NO	SEC	TITLE	DAYS	TIME	BLDG	INSTR	CRED
0738	SPAN	101	01	BEG SPANI	MTWF	10-10:50	LB105	MALO	4.0
9203	ENGL	101	09	INTRO COL WRTG	MWF	11-11:50	WH218	JOHNSON	3.0
0610	HIST	201	02	US HIST I	MWF	2-2:50	CC509	HEDGPETH	3.0
3300	BIOL	103	03	INTRO BIOL-LAB	TR	2-3:15	MH102	GARRETT	3.0
8143	HPER	150	01	BEG TENNIS	TR	4-5:15	SB TN CT	NEWMAN	2.0

You'll probably need the course number when registering for classes.

The catalog number represents the course level/difficulty. The higher the number, the more advanced the class is.

Use a campus map to locate the buildings where your classes will meet. It will have a guide to building abbreviations. The numbers here tell you the room number.

Updating your FAFSA: IRS Data Retrieval Tool or Tax Transcript

If you estimated your 2015 income and tax information when you first submitted the 2016–2017 FAFSA, you must update your income information once you have filed your taxes. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool is the best way to do that because it transfers your tax information directly to the FAFSA. However, some people are ineligible and must request a tax transcript from the IRS.

IRS Data Retrieval Process

This tool should be available about two weeks after you submit an electronic tax return. If you filed a paper form, allow eight weeks for the tool to be available.

What you will need:

- Student's Social Security number and date of birth
- FSA ID
- Copy of student's and parent's income taxes / W-2s

Are you eligible for the Data Retrieval Tool?

Some families will not be eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool. If any of the following situations apply to you, you are **NOT** eligible to use the tool:

- Tax filing status is Married Filing Separately
- Tax filing status is Head of Household
- You are filing an amended tax return
- You are filing a foreign tax return

That means you'll need to update your information manually, using a copy of your completed 2015 tax return and any supporting documents. If the student's FAFSA is selected for verification, you must submit a tax return transcript. You may request a transcript by calling 1-800-908-9946 or by visiting irs.gov/Individuals/Get-Transcript.

Tax return transcripts show most line items from your tax return (Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ) as it was originally filed, including any accompanying forms and schedules. This transcript does not reflect any changes you, your representative or the IRS made after you filed your return.

1. Go to fafsa.gov.
2. Log in to the student's FAFSA record.
3. Select "Make FAFSA Corrections" and use the "Next" button at the bottom of each page to navigate to the Financial Information section.
5. Change income tax filing status to "Already Completed."
4. Answer the filtering questions to determine if you are eligible to use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.
5. If eligible, the parent will be asked to enter his/her FSA ID before linking to the IRS website.
6. Follow the instructions to complete the process. After the IRS has validated your identification, your IRS tax information will display. You can transfer your information from the IRS or return to FAFSA on the Web. If you transfer your tax information, questions that are populated with that tax information will be marked with "Transferred from the IRS."
- Note: Be sure to enter your address exactly as it appears on the tax return.*
7. Once the data retrieval is complete, check each field for accuracy and complete any questions requiring information not transferred from the IRS. *Note: Do not change any data transferred from the IRS.*
8. Submit FAFSA corrections.

For more information about college planning services and financial aid programs available to Kentucky students, please call 800.928.8926 or visit kheaa.com.

