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Be Prepared for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Jan. 1 marks the first day the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be available, and nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation encourages Montana students and families to be prepared.

“Filling out the FAFSA is just that much easier if students and parents have everything they need when they begin the process,” said Rhonda Safford, statewide coordinator of College Goal Montana.

In order to complete the FAFSA, students and parents should have the following information available:

- FSA ID – Get a Federal Student Aid ID at fsaid.ed.gov. Both the student and one parent (if the student is under the age of 24) will need a FSA ID. It replaces the FAFSA PIN. Those individuals who previously had a PIN will need to log on to the system to get a FSA ID and link their PIN to that ID.
- Social Security numbers (students and parents)
- Last year’s federal tax returns for estimating purposes (or most current if complete). You can go back later to confirm numbers after you finish your taxes. If you need free help with your taxes, try Montana Free File at montanafreefile.org.
- W-2s
- Additional asset information (savings and checking account balances, real estate excluding the home in which you live, money market funds, stocks, other investments)
- Untaxed income information (child support received, payments to retirement, health savings plans and tax-deferred pensions)

College Goal Montana is an annual campaign to encourage FAFSA awareness and to help students and families complete the important form. 2016 will mark the 11th year that SAF has organized the effort for Montana.

For more information about the FAFSA or College Goal Montana, visit www.SmartAboutCollege.org.

Student Assistance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Montana corporation that provides students with knowledge and tools to pursue and fund their postsecondary education. Funds

generated by SAF are returned to Montanans in the form of education grants and public benefit programs - to date more than \$30 million. For more information, visit www.safmt.org or www.SmartAboutCollege.org.