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TN FAFSA Frenzy to Kick-start College and Career Ambitions

NASHVILLE, TN — The 2022-23 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) officially opened on Friday, October 1, 2021 for new and returning students who plan to attend college. Research shows that students who complete the FAFSA are far more likely to enroll in higher education. Students across Tennessee can receive help in completing the FAFSA through the Tennessee FAFSA Frenzy initiative, a partnership between the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), school districts, and college access organizations across Tennessee.

Tennessee leads the nation in the amount of financial aid awarded per student, awarding over \$500 million annually in financial aid to Tennessee students according to the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO). Filing a FAFSA is the first step students must take to apply for most state and federal financial aid for college. The deadline for many state financial aid programs, including Tennessee Promise and priority for the Tennessee Student Assistance Award and Tennessee Reconnect, is February 1, 2022.

There is FAFSA completion help for students and families available during Tennessee FAFSA Frenzy including informational webinars, FAFSA hotline, and step-by-step FAFSA filing guides. Additionally, THEC provides resources for schools and communities focused on increasing FAFSA filing and supporting college and career ambitions across the state. All resources are available on www.TNFAFSAFrenzy.gov.

“The Tennessee Higher Education Commission is committed to ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed, and we are relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential,” said THEC Executive Director Dr. Emily House. “Nearly 75 percent of Tennessee high school seniors completed a FAFSA in 2020, and Tennessee FAFSA Frenzy is an important first step for students to begin their path.”

As anticipated during the pandemic, the college-going rate for the high school class of 2020 dropped to 56.9%, representing a decline of 4.9 percentage points from the previous year. To address the decline, THEC is redoubling its efforts to ensure more Tennessee students meet key college-going milestones. To facilitate this work, THEC recently launched an improved one-stop resource for college and career information in the state of Tennessee through www.CollegeForTN.org. THEC will continue working with partners across the state to increase and improve access to future college and career opportunities for students.

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