

(**Washington D.C.**) - January marks the beginning of the season for college-bound students to apply for financial aid and scholarships.

“I encourage all students to file their FAFSA applications and take advantage of more than \$80 billion that is available in federal aid to help pay for college. While virtually all students are eligible to receive some federal aid to pay for their college education, financially needy students may qualify for additional benefits such as grants, work-study programs and federally guaranteed loans. I urge you to apply as soon as possibly,” said Scott.

Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the first step in the financial aid process. While available in both paper and electronic forms, ninety-five percent of the 14 million annual applicants use the on-line application, because the system flags errors that can be corrected immediately.

Visit the Department of Education's Federal Student Aid website <http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov> v for deadline information and forms.

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