



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Financial Aid Experts Helped Nearly 4,600 Hoosier Families Complete the Financial Aid Form at College Goal Sunday 2009

Event Offered FAFSA Online and Spanish Interpreters

INDIANAPOLIS—February 24, 2009—The Attendance at this year's College Goal Sunday was up nearly 60% for families, with several sites reporting record turnouts. The event, offered to make filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) easier for Indiana students and families, was held on February 15 at 36 locations statewide.

This year's event drew 4,588 families seeking free, professional assistance in filling out the FAFSA, the financial aid form required by postsecondary educational institutions nationwide. Of those attending, nearly 2,100 were students, a 75% increase over last year.

Individuals seeking grants, scholarships and loans to attend any college or technical school nationwide are required to submit the FAFSA, which must be received by the federal processor by March 10. In its 20-year history, College Goal Sunday has helped approximately 80,000 Hoosier students and families complete the form.

This year, all 36 sites offered FAFSA online capabilities and 18 provided Spanish interpreters. The online filing option was used by 1,835 students and families, more than double last year's number.

A total of 514 volunteers helped students and parents complete the FAFSA form at the Sunday afternoon session. These included college financial aid advisors, Twenty-first Century Scholars Program professionals, high school guidance counselors and other community volunteers with financial aid expertise.

"As financial aid professionals, our goal is to make the complicated financial aid process easier for Indiana families," said Sue Allmon, Account Executive, USA Funds Services, and College Goal Sunday co-chair. "This year we were pleased that our efforts to reach those students who needed help culminated in an extremely successful event."

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College Goal Sunday— add one

Most College Goal Sunday sites showed increases in attendance from last year, with Bloomington, Lafayette and Terre Haute reporting attendance records. Nearly twice as many students and families – 1,032 to last year’s 525 – visited the seven Indianapolis sites. In fact, the largest attendance percentage increase came at the Indianapolis Downtown site, which had eight times the number of families seeking assistance this year.

For information about the FAFSA, financial aid or higher education, ISFAA encourages students and families to call The Learn More Resource Center’s Helpline at 800-992-2076 (toll free). From February 1 through College Goal Sunday on February 15, the Helpline received 608 calls from individuals inquiring about College Goal Sunday, an increase of more than 60% over 2008. Families may continue to call the Learn More Helpline with their financial aid questions.

College Goal Sunday is sponsored by the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association, in cooperation with Learn More Resource Center, the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana and The Twenty-first Century Scholars Program. It is funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., Lumina Foundation for Education and USA Funds, three Indiana-based nonprofits with a particular interest in higher education.

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Editor’s note: For your area’s attendance numbers, please see the enclosed report.