

COLLEGE ACCESS

UNIVERSAL FAFSA COMPLETION

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) allows students to access Pell Grant, State Grant, Work Study and other need-based financial aid. But in Minnesota, only 45% of graduating high school seniors complete the form each year and Minnesota ranked 39th nationally for FAFSA completions last year.

FAFSA completion is a critical workforce issue for our state. Minnesota's public community and technical colleges provide access to many of the very trade programs that can lead to employment in well-paying jobs like construction, welding, manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, information technology, and more. By completing the FAFSA, students open the door to thousands of dollars in grants to help them pursue educational training in these critical workforce sectors.



Minnesota High School Graduates Who were unable to complete the FAFSA left

\$49 Mil

In Pell Grants on the table in 2021

LeadMN supports legislation to make FAFSA an opt-out procedure rather than on opt-in for all graduating high school students. With federal changes to simplify the FAFSA from 108 questions to 36 coming this fall, it is time to implement policies that ensure students can access the aid available to them.

- 1. Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid, 2022
- 2. The Growing Gap - Public Higher Educations Decling Affordability for Pell Grant Recipients., 2023. <https://www.ncan.org/page/affordability>
- 3. LeadMN How Are You Doing Fall 2022 Survey. 7,707 students responded. (<https://www.leadmn-fall-survey-2021>) https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hopecenter_RealCollegeDuringthePandemic_Reupload.pdf
- 4. https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2019_MinnesotaState_Report.pdf
- 5. <https://www.leadmn.org/policy-impact-hunger-free-campus-act-two-years-later>
- 6. \$3.75 Billion in Pell Grants Goes Unclaimed for High School Class of 2021. January 24, 2022. <https://www.ncan.org/news/592984/NCAN-Report-3.75-Billion-in-Pell-Grants-Goes-Unclaimed-for-High-School-Class-of-2021.htm>
- 7. \$3.75 Billion in Pell Grants Goes Unclaimed for High School Class of 2021. January 24, 2022. <https://www.ncan.org/news/592984/NCAN-Report-3.75-Billion-in-Pell-Grants-Goes-Unclaimed-for-High-School-Class-of-2021.htm>

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!

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AFFORDABILITY

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COLLEGE WITHOUT DEBT

Minnesota has been a great place to live, work, and raise a family because we have one of the most highly educated workforces in the country. Our future is being threatened because it is too expensive for Minnesotans to pursue an education after high school.

With the 6th highest community and technical college tuition and fees in the nation, students are being burdened by high amounts of student loan debt. This is impacting Minnesotans' ability to enroll in college, complete their degree, purchase houses, purchase vehicles, invest in retirement, open small businesses, and participate in the state and local economies.

A Free College program would boost enrollments and graduations at Minnesota's community and technical colleges, increasing the number of students completing degrees and entering the workforce. With an ever-growing workforce shortage, Minnesota cannot continue with business as usual in higher education. Businesses across the state need educated employees now, and a college promise would help to quickly improve the number of available graduates.

This is why **LeadMN** supports the creation of a **Free College Program that would cover the cost of tuition, fees, and textbooks** for two years for any family making under \$125,000, after federal, state, and local grants and scholarships have been applied.



MINNESOTA
COMMUNITY
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25

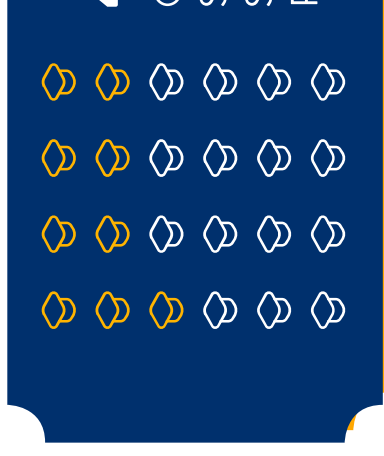
COMMUNITY AND
TECHNICAL COLLEGES IN
MINNESOTA ARE GRADED AS

“UNAFFORDABLE”
BY THE NATIONAL COLLEGE
ATTAINMENT NETWORK²

BASIC NEEDS AND MENTAL HEALTH

For many students the greatest barrier to success is not academic but from addressing their own basic needs.

The experiences of the pandemic have highlighted the need for resources and information to students facing housing insecurity, homelessness, and food insecurity.



Accessing existing resources and services is a challenge for students. The Hope Center for Workforce Development students didn't know about or how to apply for campus emergency aid. Even when students apply for these resources, the process is reduced as a barrier to students success.

LeadMN supports funding to address basic needs. This includes funding to provide a basic needs assessment, mental health services and counseling.

HUNGER FREE CAMPUS!

The 2019 Hunger Free Campus Act provides funding to address food insecurity among their students. Since its implementation, the designation of Hunger Free Campus. A

