

MASON CAN UPDATE

NEWS FROM THE MASON COUNTY
COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

February 2021 UPDATE

**Mason CAN Encourages FAFSA
Michigan Reconnect Is Here!
Financial Support to Stay Connected
College Enrollment Down!
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Partner News

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Flyers

FAFSA FRENZY

Michigan Re-Connect Is Here!

In early February, Governor Whitmer's office announced the launch of Michigan Re-Connect, which supports residents (of one year or more) aged 25 and older, who have a high school diploma or equivalent, in their pursuit of a certificate or degree from their local community college, tuition free. Mason County residents can attend WSCC as a part of this program. FAFSA completion is required. Residents interested in this program can visit to apply:

<https://www.michigan.gov/reconnect/>



February FAFSA Frenzy in Mason Co.!

Local high school counselors have been working hard to get seniors to complete their FAFSA, and Pennies from Heaven Foundation (PFHF), West Shore Community College and area universities are helping by supporting a FAFSA Completion Initiative at G2S, LHS MCC & MCE!

- Each high school was awarded funds from PFHF to support the purchase of prizes for this event. Schools design their own efforts.
- Current FAFSA completion rates can be found on the next page, but note that these numbers are only updated biweekly.
- At the May Decision Day event (or in an alternative fashion if there is not a possibility to hold an event), Seniors who have applied by March 1st to the Mason County Promise will be awarded a Promise T-Shirt. FAFSA completion is required for the Promise Scholarship.
- Check out some of the gear that WSCC offered to local high school seniors to complete the FAFSA! Oakland U., Central Mich. U., UofM, Michigan Tech, and Western Michigan also sent in items to encourage participation!

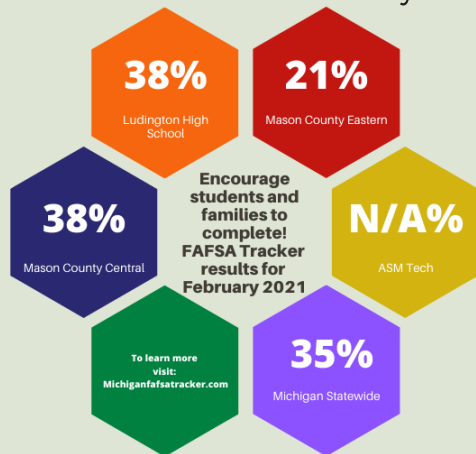


**252 students qualified
for Futures for
Frontliners free tuition
program at WSCC!**

College Enrollment and FAFSA Completion Rates Down

Across the state and nation, high school seniors have been impacted by two academic years of Covid-19 illness and related closures, internet connection issues, and more online interaction than ever before. This impact is affecting students daily lives, and high school educators, counselors, staff and administrators are more challenged than ever to support students. According to National Clearinghouse, college enrollment was already down 3.6% last year, and in fall 2020, declined another 2.5%. Locally, according to Dr. Mark Kinney, VP of Academics and Student Services, WSCC's enrollment remained relatively flat. But the rate of decline for low-income students is projected to be as much as 33%. In Michigan, the declines at public universities across the state averaged about 3.5%.

Students with post-secondary aspirations may be waiting out the pandemic to avoid residence hall isolation or online course delivery, but experts know that first year enrollment is also effected by economic factors, like students needing to work to help their families. Jobs of the future will require more post-secondary education, but the demands of the present weigh heavily on students. Remember to stay college-positive!



Across Michigan, FAFSA Completion and College Enrollment Rates Are Down

COLLEGE ADVISING HOTLINE
FOR MICHIGAN STUDENTS

TEXT OR CALL
810-373-5385
FREE SERVICE
AVAILABLE MON-FRI
micollegehelp.com



PAYING FOR INTERNET? HAVE A MASON COUNTY H.S. STUDENT OR WSCC STUDENT AT HOME?

CONNECT TO COLLEGE WITH FAMILY LINK &



Does a student in your household attend a Mason County High School and hope to go to college someday? OR Are you a WSCC student who lives in Mason County doing classes online? Mason County Family Link can provide financial assistance for internet connectivity. Email Mason County Family Link to get COVID-response financial support for getting or maintaining your internet connection. Assistance is available while funds last. Participants must complete a monthly evaluation on their activities related to college prep or classes.

For LHS Students: becky@masoncountyuw.org
For MCC or MCE Students: joellen@masoncountyuw.org
For WSCC Students: angie@masoncountyuw.org
Home schools, parochial or private school: lynne@masoncountyuw.org



MASON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS:

IT'S TIME TO APPLY!

The Promise, the FAFSA, & the WSCC admissions are open!

If you're a high school senior who lives in Mason County (or in your Mason County School District Boundary) and attend a Mason County High School, you are a potential Promise Scholar! To apply, complete:

- The Promise Application: <https://www.masoncountypromise.org/>
- The 2021-22 FAFSA: [FAFSA.gov](https://fafsa.gov)
- WSCC Application: <https://my.westshore.edu/ICS/Admissions/>

QUESTIONS? INFO@MASONCOUNTPROMISE.ORG

Do The **FAFSA**
THE EARLIER THE BETTER

Partner News!

Michigan Works Is Growing Apprenticeships!

Michigan Works West Central, CTE and area College Access Networks are combining forces to help bring pathways to apprenticeships to more youth. This program is in development, but Governor Whitmer's most recent budget proposal includes funding for this initiative. Keep an eye on Michigan Works West Central's website to learn more as information develops! See below for more details on the budget, and visit Michigan Works for more on this developing project: <http://www.michworkswc.org/>

Talent 2025 Hires New Director!

Grand Rapids-based organization Talent 2025 has hired Lisa Hungerford to be the Director of Education and Innovation. Hungerford is already on board with area College Access Networks to build a pilot to let more employees in local manufacturing agencies connect to post-secondary opportunities. In Mason County, Hungerford will join Jody Maloney of the Mason County College Access Network and Wendy Wells, WSCC's interim Talent Pipeline Coordinator to launch the pilot at FloraCraft in Ludington.

The Promise Plans Ahead

The Mason County Promise is working with Kennari Consulting of Grand Rapids to help solidify Board and Committee roles, and to narrow their focus so that they are set for developing a strategic plan for growth over the next decade. The Promise Zone tax capture is expected to double in the next five years, and the Board feels that planning ahead to use the dollars in a way that fits the needs of Mason County and the Promise Vision of Hope, Opportunity, Sustainability, Growth and Unity will set a strong foundation for the future of the Promise Scholarship. Visit MasonCountyPromise.org for more information..

Higher Education Funding Proposal from Governor Whitmer's Office Includes the Following:

- **\$120m for the Reconnect Program**
 - Provides a tuition-free pathway to an in-demand industry certificate or associate degree for adults (25+) through FY23
- **\$60.4m for the Future for Frontliners Program**
 - Provides free tuition for eligible frontline workers who have proven to be vital in the fight against COVID
 - \$25m will support an expansion of the program to frontline workers that became newly unemployed between Nov. 1, 2020 and Jan. 31, 2021 in industries disproportionately impacted by COVID
 - \$21.3m will support the existing population of frontliners in the program
- **\$6m for Reconnect and F4F Wraparound Services Pilot (in addition to \$6m in Mi COVID Recovery plan)**
 - Provide enrolled single parents customized support to ensure completion including child care, tutoring, and career counseling
- **\$3m for Statewide Pre-apprenticeship Program**
 - Connects unemployed or underemployed with training and resources necessary for gainful employment in the construction and building trades

FEBRUARY FAFSA FRENZY!

Want a Promise T-Shirt? Complete the FAFSA Application by March 1!

1.15M

Michigan's college students left \$115 Million of Federal Financial aid unused in 2019-20



Michigan's goal for FAFSA completion is 75%. We're on our way, but need everyone's help!



Mason CAN has great resources for scholarship and FAFSA applications. Find tutorials on our YouTube channel or visit our website!
MasonCountyCAN.org
Tutorials:
https://youtu.be/e_g_sMflitZM

NOW'S THE TIME!

March 1st: While there is no federal deadline for FAFSA for first time applications, March 1 is the "deadline" for high school seniors to apply for Michigan Competitive Scholarship, so Michigan has made March 1st the state deadline.

School FAFSA Initiative: Your school will be announcing a FAFSA Initiative soon! Be sure to get your FAFSA in by May 1st to get a chance at a prize! Pennies from Heaven Foundation is sponsoring the initiative across the county, and area colleges have contributed gear that you can win!

Apply at FAFSA.gov

You will use 2019 taxes for the Parent (and Student, if they filed) to apply. The FAFSA can import taxes directly from the IRS website, so you can complete it quickly!!

Seniors in high school need to apply for their first year of college, which goes from Fall after graduation through summer (2020-2021)

Students continuing in college will renew the FAFSA, together with their parents, once each year, after October 1.

When a student turns 24, they no longer need parent information for FAFSA. Until age 24, a student is considered "dependent" unless they get married, have a custodial child, enter full-time military service, or get legally emancipated

WHY APPLY?

Local scholarships: While some scholarships don't require FAFSA, the Mason County Promise requires FAFSA to become and remain eligible each year. Apply at MasonCountyPromise.org

State student aid: In Michigan, state based grant aid like TIP is dependent upon submitting the FAFSA. All other state aid can be applied for by completing a profile at <https://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid>

Federal student aid: Federal Pell Grant and student loans are available only to students who apply for the FAFSA each year. Apply at FAFSA.gov

Sources:

www.mcan.org, www.getmidegree.org, www.fafsa.gov, masoncountypromise.org, masoncountycan.org, michigan.gov/studentaid