The University of Northern Iowa Educational Opportunity Center, which is one of the federally-funded TRiO programs, has diligently worked since 1988 to help adults in our seven county service area fulfill their dreams of obtaining a postsecondary education.

On March 23, 2009, Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) spoke in support of TRiO Programs at the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) 29th Annual Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C. COE is a nonprofit organization dedicated to furthering the expansion of educational opportunities throughout the United States. COE works in conjunction with colleges, universities, and agencies that host TRiO programs to specifically help low-income students enter college and graduate. The following is a partial excerpt from Senator Collins’ speech:

“Now more than ever before, it is essential that the door to higher education be open to all. As we face this grave economic crisis, expanding access to college is about more than providing opportunities for low-income and first generation students, critical though that it is. The fact is that America simply cannot afford to let all of that intelligence, talent and determination go to waste. The TRiO programs provide the opportunity for our nation to build a stronger future. And we cannot squander that opportunity.”

At this point, Senator Collins goes on to give examples of TRiO at work in her home state of Maine, and concludes her time with the following remarks:

“Too many of our students grow up in families that have simply not had experience in higher education. And too many families who do aspire to higher education are discouraged by the complexity, the rising costs and the staggering debt that they feel they would incur. This cycle can only be broken by programs like Pell grants and the TRiO programs.

And that is why the TRiO programs are so critical. Starting with Talent Search and the middle schools, or identifying students at high school, and helping them even when they are in college, helping our veterans, it’s all absolutely critical. It changes their lives and it changes America for the better.
Education has always been recognized as an investment in our future that is critical to the economic success of our nation. So, if the argument of helping individuals does not sway the day, turn to the economic argument as well because truly education is recognized as the key to our economic recovery, particularly during these difficult times.

America’s future depends on educated citizens and a well trained workforce. And I congratulate each and every one of you for your efforts each and every day to help build a brighter future for our country and our citizens.”

This is the time of year when Congress will make important decisions concerning education and funding. Congress will attempt to finalize its spending plans for next year sometime in the fall. The recently enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) has allowed for billions of dollars to be poured into education, including approximately $17 billion for Pell Grants. Despite the significant funding provided by the legislation, it has neglected a set of programs that are critical to the welfare of low-income and first generation Americans - namely, the Federal TRiO Programs.

For the fiscal year 2010 budget, it seems clear that President Obama plans to launch a new initiative where he will distribute $2.5 billion over the next five years ($500 million annually) to the governors to fund college retention initiatives. Recently, President Obama did release his budget and it now moves to the Congressional appropriations committees, where lawmakers will decide whether to add or subtract money from the President's request.

The state of Iowa is very fortunate to have the Honorable Senator Tom Harkin as Chairman of the very committee that funds TRiO programs – the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations Subcommittee. Needless to say, currently there is a strong push to influence the Administration to give TRiO an increase. One action the community can take to assist in this effort is to write Senator Harkin and urge him to support TRiO. It is important to advocate for the TRiO programs that have been a proven force in the educational arena and have changed thousands of lives.

Senator Tom Harkin can be reached at:
The Honorable Tom Harkin
U.S. Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

https://harkin.senate.gov/c/index.cfm
Is Now a Good Time to Go to School?

By Nickole Dillard, Senior Educational Counselor

It seems like every time you turn on the news, pick up the newspaper, or log onto the Internet, there’s another company going through a round of lay-offs or closing altogether. Although some industries have been hit worse than others, there are no real exemptions. Many people are struggling with meeting day to day expenses. There is no escaping the recession. The “silver lining,” if there is one, is that a recession is temporary. It will not happen overnight, but there will come a time when the current economic climate will be a memory.

The current economic climate has also provided many people with the opportunity to re-evaluate their chosen career path and lifestyle. For those that find themselves suddenly unemployed, the recession may provide a unique opportunity to go to school. It may not seem to make sense, but the truth is for some it makes perfect sense. This may be the time to invest in you. This could be the time to pursue that degree that you have always wanted but never had the time. It may also be a perfect opportunity to pursue a new career path.

To some it may seem to go “against the grain” to go to school during a recession. You may feel that you need to work. The fact is that many students, traditional and non-traditional, work while they attend college. The college experience has evolved and is more flexible than ever. More and more colleges and universities are offering classes in the evenings, weekends and even online. There are also financial resources available to make college possible. Depending on your financial situation, some students may qualify for some free funding. There are also student loans and scholarships available. The idea of borrowing money during a recession may seem scary but most student loan payments can be deferred until you have completed your chosen program.

The decision to return to school should be made with careful consideration. You should do your research. Check out the schools in your area. Consider your priorities and choose the school that will best fit your needs. You will also want to take care in considering a career path. Although no job is completely recession proof, there are some areas that fair pretty well during these times such as health care, education, energy, law enforcement/security and information technology to name a few.

For those that may be considering going to school, the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) program can help to point you in the right direction. If you have questions or would like to schedule an appointment to meet with a counselor contact the EOC at 319-433-1220 or visit the office at 800 Sycamore Street Waterloo, IA 50703.
The Educational Opportunity Center program works with many agencies in Black Hawk County and our seven county coverage area. This month we are proud to spotlight Operation Threshold, a Community Action Agency, as an agency that “gives a hand up”.

In the economy we are experiencing today, many families are faced with forms of crisis they have never seen before. According to the Iowa Community Action Association, there are eighteen Iowa Community Action Agencies serving families living in all ninety-nine counties of Iowa. The services vary from agency to agency, but staff members from all eighteen agencies are committed to helping families and changing lives.

Operation Threshold has multiple programs which serve the counties of Black Hawk, Buchanan and Grundy.

The programs are; WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children; Stork’s Nest; Career Ladders; Fair Housing and Lending Program - PROUD Homeownership Initiative; Low Income Energy Assistance Program; Weatherization Program; Crisis Assistance; Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program, FaDSS; Tenant Based Rental Assistance; and Rental Units.

- Operation Threshold in Waterloo is temporarily housed at 405 Chestnut Street off of Dane Street between E. 4th and E. Mullan (63 N). 319-291-2065.
- Operation Threshold in Grundy County is at 1606 G. Avenue, Grundy Center, Iowa 319-824-3460.
- Operation Threshold in Buchanan County is at 1707 1st Street, (East 3) Independence, Iowa 319-334-6081.

**WIC**

The WIC program is a place where you may see an EOC counselor talking with families in the waiting area. We provide information on education and the WIC clinic provides nutritional information. WIC provides checks for nutritional food purchases from local grocery stores and checks for fresh produce. WIC meets and provides education to pregnant women and women with infants and children up to five years of age. The household income guidelines for this program are very reasonable and well worth checking to see if your family may be eligible. Call 319-233-1851.

**Stork’s Nest**

The Stork’s Nest participants are Black Hawk County pregnant women, postpartum mothers up to one-year and their children up to 13 months, who can earn incentive points for activities that are health related such as attending parent and other classes and keeping doctor appointments. The points can be redeemed for incentive items of diapers up to cribs and car seats. The guidelines are the same as WIC’s. Stork’s Nest is a great asset for young families in our county.

Community Agency Spotlight continued on page 5
**Career Ladders**
Career Ladders assists individuals to gain work skills required to become employed or to advance within present employment. Learning “hard skills” such as customer service and computer skills along with “soft skills” such as communications and following work rules is part of the emphasis of the program. The program has a mentoring component, a training component and works with employers to move participants to the next level of employment.

**Fair Housing and Lending Program PROUD Homeownership Initiative**
This program has counselors that assist with Housing and Fair Lending and they offer:
1) Foreclosure prevention services
2) Homebuyer education classes
3) Anti-predatory lending education
4) Financial literacy education/ Credit management/ Budget counseling

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**
LIHEAP energy assistance program supplements winter heating for low-income households, and for qualifying homeowners, it can provide emergency furnace repairs or replacement. LIHEAP also offers assistance with telephone costs for those that qualify. Applications are open October 1 for the elderly and disabled, then November 1 for all others. This year applications are being accepted through May 29, 2009.

**Crisis Assistance**
On a limited basis Operation Threshold provides financial assistance to households facing crisis situations such as utility disconnection or refusal to deliver fuel. Income requirements are the same as LIHEAP.

**Weatherization Program**
This program helps reduce heating and cooling costs to reduce energy consumption.
Benefits of Weatherization:
- Insulation
- Furnace repair or replacement
- Water heater repair or replacement
- Safety checks for gas leaks

**Tenant Based Rental Assistance**
TBRA is to assist people in securing decent affordable housing with a full rental deposit and 70% of first month’s rent within the City of Waterloo. Eligibility requires the person to be enrolled in the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program FaDSS or on the Waterloo Housing Authority’s Section 8 waiting list. All units must be inspected and meet or exceed Housing Quality Standards, inspections are performed at no cost by a qualified housing inspector.

**Family Development Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS)**
If one is receiving FIP and actively participating in Promise Jobs they may be eligible to enroll in FaDSS. This program provides supportive services that assist families with building strengths to reach self-sufficiency. The Family Development Specialist partners with the family to support and assist them in setting and attaining their goals.

**Operation Threshold Rental Units**
Rental units may be available at 3601 – 3615 Canterbury Court.
Financial Aid FAQ’s

By Shateisha Bruce, Educational Counselor

Everyone knows that unless you plan to write a check on the first day of class you will need to apply for financial aid. To apply for aid, you must fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, otherwise known as the FAFSA. I find students have numerous questions about how to file for financial aid. Therefore, I have created these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help you in the process:

How often do I need to file a FAFSA application and when?
Most financial aid offices require you to apply for financial aid every year, typically, in the spring after you have filed taxes. You will want to do so in this time frame so that you allow yourself ample time to be awarded the funding you are eligible to receive. The best case scenario is to file taxes before applying for financial aid. If you cannot and have to estimate, you should be as accurate as possible and then go back and make any needed corrections. Iowa has a financial aid priority deadline of July 1, 2009.

So what do I qualify for?
When you fill out the FAFSA with the information you provide, it will determine what federal and state financial aid you qualify for.

- Your school’s financial aid office will prepare a financial aid package for you to help meet your financial need. **Financial need** is the difference between your school’s **cost of attendance** and your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).
- The amount of your financial aid package also depends on whether you are a full-time or part-time student and whether you attend school for a full academic year or less.

TIP: If you believe that you have unusual circumstances that should be taken into account, such as unusual medical expenses or a significant change in income, contact the financial aid administrator at the school you plan to attend.

How much do I qualify for?
By providing your tax return information from the previous year, it is determined what forms of aid you are eligible to receive. The federal government calculates an official federal EFC calculation. This calculation determines family resources available from a family’s income and assets. After all necessary documents and information are collected, an award letter will be sent to you. The award letter tells you exactly how much financial aid the school is able to provide you for the coming year.

I live on my own so doesn’t that make me independent?
You are an independent student for the 2009-2010 academic year if you can answer yes to at least one of the following:

- You were born before Jan. 1, 1986.
- You are married on the day you apply (even if you are separated but not divorced).
- You are or will be enrolled in a master’s or doctoral degree program (beyond a bachelor’s degree) at the beginning of the 2009–10 academic year.
- You are currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.
- You are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. (A “veteran” includes students who attended a U.S. service academy and were released under a condition other than dishonorable).
- You have children who will receive more than half their support from you between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010.
- You have legal dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half their support from you now and through June 30, 2010.
- When you were age 13 or older, both your parents were deceased and you were in foster care or a dependent or ward of the court.
- As of the day you apply for aid, you are an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your state of legal residence.
- As of the day you apply for aid, you are in legal guardianship as determined by a court in your state of legal residence.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2008, your high school or school district homeless liaison determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2008, the director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2008, the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless.

If none of these criteria apply to you, you’re a dependent student.

Financial Aid FAQ’s continued on page 7
What if I can’t get my parents information?

Under Federal law, your family is primarily responsible to the extent they are able to pay for your college expenses. The federal government and colleges consider it a primary responsibility of parents to pay. To determine how much your family can afford to pay toward your college expenses, financial information must be collected and if you are a dependent student your parents’ financial information is still needed.

Under “very” limited circumstances, an otherwise dependent student may be able to submit the FAFSA without parental information due to special circumstances. Before you proceed to skip the parental section of your FAFSA, consider the following:

The following are a “few examples” of special circumstances where you may be able to submit your FAFSA without providing parental information:

- Your parents are incarcerated; or
- You have left home due to an abusive family environment; or
- You do not know where your parents are and are unable to contact them (and you have not been adopted).

Not all situations are considered a special circumstance. The following are situations that would not be considered a special circumstance:

- Your parents do not want to provide their information on your FAFSA; or
- Your parents refuse to contribute to your college expenses; or
- Your parents do not claim you as a dependent on their income taxes; or
- You do not live with your parents.

If you believe you have a special circumstance and are unable to provide parental information, you should complete information about you and your finances and skip any questions about your parents. You should sign your FAFSA with your PIN and leave your parent’s PIN blank. It is important to note:

1. Financial aid offices will allow you to submit your FAFSA without parental information, however, your FAFSA will not be considered complete.
2. Because your FAFSA is not considered complete, they will not calculate your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which is the index used by colleges to determine how much student aid you are eligible to receive.
3. If you are approaching any deadlines for your state, college, or scholarship aid, you may want to contact your financial aid administrator (FAA) before submitting your FAFSA without parental data.

4. Once you submit your FAFSA without parental data, you must follow up with the FAA at the college you plan to attend, in order to complete your FAFSA and receive an EFC. It is highly recommended that you call and talk with an advisor in financial aid about your circumstances. They will recommend how to proceed.

Also note the following:

- Under Federal law, only your FAA has the authority to decide whether or not you must provide parental information on your FAFSA. You will have to provide documentation to verify your situation. Gather as much written evidence of your situation as you can. Written evidence may include court or law enforcement documents, letters from a clergy member, school counselor or social worker, and/or any other relevant data that explains your special circumstance.
- After reviewing your circumstances carefully, your FAA will decide if you must provide parental information or if your circumstances allow you to proceed without providing parental data. Your FAA’s decision is final and cannot be appealed to Federal Student Aid.

What ways are there to fill out FAFSA?

You can fill out the FAFSA using a paper application or online at www.fafsa.ed.gov

Remember, the FAFSA is a completely FREE application.

I accidentally submitted the wrong information and need to make a change?

Yes, you can do so. You will get a summary of the information you submitted on your FAFSA called a SAR (Student Aid Report). You will receive this report either by mail or if you provided an email address it will be sent electronically. Student and family should review the report and make any needed changes. To make changes electronically, go to www.fafsa.ed.gov. Once online, click the link titled: Make Corrections to a Processed FAFSA. Or you can make changes on your paper SAR and return the form.
Financial Aid FAQ’s from page 7

Where can I find more information?

The financial aid office at the school you plan to attend is the best place to get information about federal, state, school and other sources of student financial aid.

You can also check out these resources:
- www.studentaid.ed.gov
- www.students.gov
- Your high school counselor’s office
- Your local library

The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) would be glad to assist you in applying for financial aid, so please give us a call to schedule an appointment at 319-433-1220 or stop by the UNI-CUE at 800 Sycamore St. Waterloo, IA 50703.

The Importance of Higher Education

By Kelli Beener, Educational Counselor

A degree or certification is a key to your future, whether it would be an Associate’s, Bachelor’s, Master’s or some other higher educational degree. The learning that you experience when studying for a degree or certification beyond your high school education will broaden your perspectives, and your understanding of the world around you, and help you become more marketable.

Many degrees contain specific programs that lead to employment opportunities. That little piece of paper (a degree), in the eyes of an employer, can make you stand out from other potential employees. When choosing a degree, you should look at the need for jobs and positions. You should look at how to apply your interests to the needs of the present economy as well. For example, if there is a high demand for healthcare positions, you may want to consider a career path in this area. There is a wide variety of occupational directions that you may pursue. This is where an educational counselor can be of assistance to you by helping you examine, in detail, some of the many opportunities in the health profession such as nurse, doctor, radiologist, ultrasound technician, medical transcriptionist, data entry, laboratory technician, or dietitian. The requirement for these positions may range from a certificate to a doctoral level degree.

With unemployment on the rise, the need for post-secondary education is greater than ever. The competition for job positions is also higher than in the past. Therefore, someone who has a two- or four-year degree will be qualified for more positions and will have an opportunity for those positions before someone without a higher education degree.

A little publicized fact is that the unemployment rate varies greatly according to one’s education, with those with college degrees enjoying an unemployment rate that is less than half of the national average. (Freeman, 2008)

It has been my experience that employers tend to believe that employees with higher educational experience can tend to be mobile and adaptable for businesses and organizations. For example, if you have a teaching degree, this does not mean that you are locked into a career of teaching. Employers look at your capability of being committed to learning

EOC is ready to help – we have the answers – and all of our services are FREE!

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which means that you would likely be committed to the position which they are offering. Employers will believe that you can be educated to fit into a position within their organization.

Certification for skills is becoming a necessity in our present economic climate. Today, people are losing their jobs which many have had for fifteen to twenty years due to the needs of the present day economy. They may need to learn new types of skills that are classified as hard skills. For example, if there is no need for the skill of a drill press operator, a person may need to go back to a higher education setting to learn how to be a truck driver in order to become employable once again.

No matter what your choice is or the number of years it takes to pursue a degree, a path that takes you through a college setting will benefit your future. A degree or certification is a critical step in becoming and remaining employable in our present and future economy.


Certification for skills is becoming a necessity in our present economic climate.

I have the privilege and honor of introducing Eliza Washington as a student who represents success. Eliza is a nontraditional student who started her college classes in 1962 as an example to her daughters who were at home at that time. Ms. Washington completed her Bachelor's degree in May 2007 and is attending the University of Northern Iowa with 2 classes this semester and has accomplished 12 hours toward her Master's of Arts in Postsecondary Education Administration / Student Services Graduate Program. With great pride, Ms. Washington has privately paid for her education.

When Ms. Washington first started taking classes, UNI's Center for Urban Education was in a house on Vine Street. She told her daughters to go to college for at least one year and set out to make herself an example for them. She did not want to ask them to do anymore than she was willing to accomplish. Ms. Washington postponed her education to care for her mother and her husband. She also worked 15 years for John Deere, 11 of which were spent as a supervisor in shipping and handling. Ms. Washington also worked for the Federal Government surveying for attorneys. She served the Black Hawk Buchanan County Community Action Council. Ms. Washington owned and operated a beauty salon and gift shop for 23 years where she was a cosmetologist. She was married, divorced and remarried in 1972 when the girls were in high school and getting ready for college.

“My advice would be don’t give up at the first sign of disappointments, work with the professors and have patience, let them know that you are a nontraditional student and haven’t been in school for a while. There are not a lot of nontraditional students on campus.”

Student Spotlight
Ms. Eliza Washington

By Constance McGovern, Educational Counselor

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Student Spotlight from page 9

Her greatest reward of raising three daughters with the help of her husband, brothers and sisters was when Ms. Washington's example worked, as all three of her daughters completed bachelor's degrees, and one with a double PhD!

Today, Ms. Washington works 3 days a week and is involved in church activities including Pastor/Parish relations, clothes closet and food pantry. She loves Sunday at church and getting together with her family at her daughter and son-in-law's home for the Sunday meal. She enjoys listening to her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren share and tell of their activities for the week.

When asked about her college experience, Ms. Washington shared that for the most part her experience has been a good one, “My advice would be don't give up at the first sign of disappointments, work with the professors and have patience, let them know that you are a nontraditional student and haven’t been in school for a while. There are not a lot of nontraditional students on campus.”

Many times, the EOC counselors hear people say they are too old to go back to school, so I asked Ms. Washington if she had any message for them, “You are never too old to go. Once in awhile, you hear of a person in their 80’s or 90’s completing a degree, but in your 30’s and 40’s you have plenty of time to complete an education and get a better job.”

Here is some advice for those who are considering going back to school from Ms. Washington, “Stop over thinking it, just go. Don’t do a lot of what ifs, just go. Go ahead and try to get an education, classes aren’t as hard as you think, you would be surprised at how much you know and how far you can go.”

Ms. Washington received help from University of Northern Iowa Center for Urban Education in the 60’s, but she lost time from caretaking of her parents and husband, along with paying the bills. When she went back to UNI-CUE, she was provided a counselor. The Educational Opportunity Center counselor helped with filling out her FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and also directed her to key people at UNI that assisted her to succeed in school. The EOC not only assisted with paperwork, they helped with a referral to the TRiO Student Support Service program on campus. Ms. Washington said, “Without their help, I probably would have dropped out.”

“You are never too old to go (to school). Once in awhile, you hear of a person in their 80’s or 90’s completing a degree, but in your 30’s and 40’s you have plenty of time to complete an education and get a better job.”

Success is loving life and daring to live it.

~Maya Angelo
Welcoming Our New Educational Counselor

Ms. Kelli Beener

The Educational Opportunity Center welcomes Kelli Beener to our staff as an educational counselor. Kelli is originally from Cedar Falls. She attended the University of Northern Iowa, graduating with a double Bachelor of Arts degree in early childhood and elementary education. During her time at UNI, Kelli became involved in several different campus functions. She assisted with registration in the continuing education/non-credit programs at UNI. She also assisted in the beginning reading and math conferences. She made the decision to be involved in these events to gain experience in her major and stay connected with others in her field of study. Kelli states, “Being involved in campus activities really helped me gain a broader understanding of what was happening in my major. It also allowed me to network and meet a lot of teachers from the community who were working in my field.”

Upon graduation from college, Kelli began substitute teaching in the local schools and then transitioned into preschool teaching positions for about seven years. Kelli gained her teaching experiences at two different centers, the last with Tri-County Head Start in Waterloo.

Kelli states what she likes most about working with the EOC program is the people. She stated, “I like working with the people and the students. I am someone who likes to see others succeed, whether it’s a child or an adult. And at EOC, I find myself working with many parents from my previous work experiences only now on the postsecondary education side.”

Kelli is motivated to help people achieve their dreams. You can reach her by calling 319-433-1230 for an appointment or you may see her working in one of our partnering agencies helping new EOC participants. When asked if she has a favorite quote that inspires her, she quickly came up with her favorite one, “Live in the moment, dream for tomorrow.” Give her a call today. She is ready to help you reach your dreams!
Inspirational Corner

ACTUALLY DO

The results you achieve are not based on what you plan to do or what you say you’ll do. Your results come from what you actually do.

The rationalizations and excuses you make will not add any value or quality to your life. Your actions are what truly make a difference.

To get where you wish to go requires more than just talking about it. To get where you wish to go requires focused, sustained effort.

And the great thing is you’re perfectly capable of making whatever effort is necessary. You must simply choose to actually do it.

No one can reach real fulfillment on your behalf. The life you experience is the life you create for yourself.

There are so many possibilities to choose from, and so many opportunities to make life great through the actions you take. Now is the moment to actually do it.

~Ralph Marston

Come to the EOC today!

Office Hours
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Summer Hours:
Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Contact the EOC

Educational Opportunity Center
Center for Urban Education
800 Sycamore Street
Waterloo, IA 50703-4730

Phone: 319.433.1230
Fax: 319.433.0160
E-mail: Educational-Opportunity-Center@uni.edu

Providing You the Opportunity to Succeed

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Susan Quam, Secretary
Joan Hovey, Clerk

A program of the University of Northern Iowa funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The University is an equal opportunity employer with a comprehensive plan for affirmative action.

EOC: A Tradition of Service

The Educational Opportunity Center program has provided quality service to the Cedar Valley area since 1988. EOC is sponsored by the University of Northern Iowa and funded by the U.S. Department of Education to recruit and assist 2000 non-traditional students with obtaining a secondary and/or postsecondary education.

The EOC program provides a wide range of comprehensive service to the participants. However, our primary focus is assisting students with the admissions and financial aid process, providing career and academic counseling, assisting students with rehabilitating defaulted student loans, and referrals to GED classes. We also work closely with various community service agencies to assist our clients with other needs.

All of the services provided by the EOC program are free. In order to qualify for services, you must be 19 years of age or older, not have a completed baccalaureate degree, and live within the following counties: Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Grundy, and Tama. If you or someone you know has a desire to obtain a secondary and/or postsecondary education, call us for an appointment and we will be happy to assist you.