



## HAPPY DECEMBER!

December is here! Winter break is just around the corner. Seniors have been busy making plans for their futures. Juniors have been discovering things about themselves that will support their career goals. Sophomores are getting involved and making connections, and first year students are learning a lot about what it takes to be in high school. No matter where you are on your journey, your tenacity and perseverance are inspiring! As we close out 2023, remember to celebrate your accomplishments, let go of worries (at least for a short while), make a difference in someone else's life, and try to relax and enjoy your break!



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# Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

## Launch of the 2024–25 FAFSA® Form

There are major changes and improvements coming to the 2024–25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form. As a result, the new form will be available in December 2023, not Oct. 1. The launch date will apply only for the 2024–25 FAFSA form. The changes to the FAFSA form for the 2024–25 aid year include expanded eligibility for federal student aid and a more streamlined application process. Make sure to [create your StudentAid.gov account](#)—and remember your username and password so you can access and submit the 2024–25 FAFSA form when it is available.

## Upcoming Events

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| FAFSA<br>December 2023                                 | <b>Financial Aid</b><br>The 2024-2025 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is set to open in December 2023. The US Department of Education has informed the public that there are significant changes coming to the form, in hopes to simplify it for students and families. We will continue to update you as we know more. Please reference this <a href="#">financial aid</a> site for additional resources regarding financial aid events, the FAFSA, MN Dream Act, and more.                                 |
| MN Office of Higher Ed.<br>October 2023 - January 2024 | <a href="#">OHE to Host Free Virtual Financial Aid Events</a><br>Kicking off the new school year, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, Minnesota Department of Education, ECMC's The College Place Minnesota, and Minnesota Goes to College are hosting a series of financial aid webinars for Minnesota students and families as they prepare for the college-going process. All sessions will have simultaneous interpretation in Spanish, Somali, Hmong. Karen. Attendees will be entered to win a \$500 scholarship. |

## Winter Break Career Exploration

You may be wondering what to do over your winter break. Many students will have a lot of unstructured time. This may sound blissful to some, but to others this might bring feelings of angst. Students are encouraged to relax, recharge, and reflect on where they are on their journey and how they might chart their path forward. Here are some options to pursue if you are interested in engaging in career development over the break.

- Create your own shadowing opportunity - Reach out to a local business or professional and inquire about a shadowing experience. Even visiting a worksite for a tour and having a conversation with an industry professional can provide incredible insights.
- Refine materials such as resumes and cover letters - Now is a great time to create a resume or polish an existing resume. There are lots of resources available online or on the Career Center website.
- Use online resources to discover more - There are many online resources available to use to discover careers of interest, learn more about yourself, and figure out your pathway. Visit the Career Center website for more details.

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## Trades Tidbits

Do you love working with your head and your hands? Do you want to perform work with good starting salaries, lifetime financial security, the opportunity to build and fix things that are important to everyone — even the opportunity to be your own boss? If this sounds like you, then you should consider a job in the trades. When you think about a career in the trades, don't think that means turning wrenches for the rest of your working life. The skilled trades offer plenty of opportunity for advancement in positions that challenge your intellect, as well as managerial and leadership abilities. As you gain experience in a skilled trade, new opportunities constantly arise. If you want to prepare yourself for a career, look at the classes offered at STEP that can help you. In addition, there are many [resources available online](#) including [Explore the Trades](#), [Trades Hub](#), [Exploring](#), [Construction Careers Foundation](#) and [O\\*net Online](#), to help you learn more about these exciting opportunities! Stop in the Career Center for more information.

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