

**For Immediate Release**

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## **City Clerk Mendoza's Office, Ladder Up Partner to Help Students Receive Thousands in Financial Aid**

***Millions of Dollars in Aid Goes Unclaimed Each Year, Free Program Assists Students in Receiving Maximum Financial Benefits for College***

**CHICAGO, IL (January 30, 2013)** – Each year millions of dollars in federal and state financial aid for post-secondary education goes unclaimed because students fail to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form or submit it too late. In fact, students who file the FAFSA late may receive nearly 25% less financial aid than those who complete it early in the year. To ensure students receive the maximum amount of financial aid benefits for which they are eligible, City Clerk Susana A. Mendoza and Ladder Up have partnered to provide free FAFSA workshops.

The one-on-one assistance program runs February 5 through April 9 on Tuesdays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in Room 107 of City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle. This is a free service provided by Clerk Mendoza to anyone, regardless of income, and no appointment is necessary.

The FAFSA is required for all students seeking grants, work-study opportunities or student loans. Students interested in attending a university, community college or technical program may be eligible to receive more than \$10,000 in grants and other aid for higher education. Submitting the FAFSA is the first step in applying for financial aid for higher education.

“As families’ budgets continue to be strained and the need for higher education grows, financial aid for college is more important now than ever before,” said Clerk Mendoza. “Often certain financial aid options run out of funding in early spring. It is vital that students and their parents complete the FAFSA as early as possible to help them receive the maximum amount of financial benefits possible. I strongly encourage all students planning to enroll in college or technical school to take advantage of this free, valuable resource on Tuesday evenings.”

In order to complete the FAFSA, students must have the following information available for themselves and their parents or spouse: Social Security numbers, birthdates, 2012 income statements, completed 2012 federal tax return (if available) or 2011 tax return, checking and savings account balances and a list of colleges the student is applying to. It is recommended that parents accompany their students to the financial aid assistance session.

“I was confused trying to fill the FAFSA out but Ladder Up took me through step by step and answered all my questions,” said Christina Estrada, a Chicago student.

“We are pleased to work with Clerk Mendoza to offer this service to Chicago students and their parents,” said Robert Burke, founder of Ladder Up. “We often hear that students are intimidated by the financial aid application process or feel they won’t be eligible for financial aid. The reality is that many students are eligible for some financial aid and our volunteers and staff will provide one-on-one expert assistance to help them receive it.”

Parents or students needing more information should contact Ladder Up at 312-458-9105 or visit [www.goladderup.org](http://www.goladderup.org) or [www.chicityclerk.com/fafsa](http://www.chicityclerk.com/fafsa).

#### **About City Clerk Susana A. Mendoza**

Susana Mendoza was elected Chicago City Clerk in 2011 and is the first woman ever elected to the office. City Clerk Mendoza’s office is responsible for maintaining official City government records, including about 1,000 pieces of legislation at each City Council meeting, distributing approximately 1.3 million vehicle stickers and residential parking permits, issuing City business licenses and licensing all dogs in the City of Chicago. City Clerk Mendoza is committed to improving the City Clerk’s office by making it the most technologically savvy, user-friendly and efficient City Clerk’s office in the country. For more information about the Office, visit [www.chicityclerk.com](http://www.chicityclerk.com). You can also find the Chicago City Clerk’s office at [www.facebook.com/chicityclerk](https://www.facebook.com/chicityclerk), [www.twitter.com/chicityclerk](https://www.twitter.com/chicityclerk) and [www.youtube.com/chicityclerk](https://www.youtube.com/chicityclerk).

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