

February—March 2023

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Learn Financial Aid Facts at an Upcoming Workshop

Please join a virtual 2023-2024 Financial Aid and Scholarship Workshop! We will be able to assist you and your family to complete your FAFSA/CASFA.

When: Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 6:00PM to 7:00 PM and
Thursday, March 23, 2023 6:00 PM-7:30 PM

Where: Virtual via Zoom. Register at <https://apply.coloradomtn.edu/Events/List?ID=120>

Affordable Connectivity Program available to help with Internet costs

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) offers the Affordable Connectivity Program to help eligible households with the cost of broadband internet service. The program provides:

- Up to \$30/month discount for broadband service;
- Up to \$75/month discount for households on qualifying Tribal lands; and
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider if the household contributes more than \$10 but less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

The Affordable Connectivity Program is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household.

A household is eligible if a member meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- Participates in Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;
- Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision;



Congratulations to Reilly Watanabe, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, for earning FAAC designation from the Certified Financial Aid Administrator program. This program certifies individuals with proficiency in the body of knowledge pertaining to administering federal (Title IV) financial aid and its interaction with state and private financial aid.





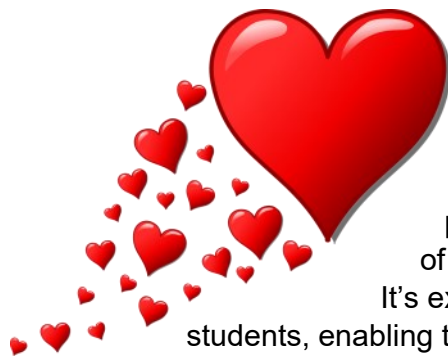
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider’s existing low-income program.

Two-Steps to Enroll

1. Go to [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://www.AffordableConnectivity.gov) to submit an application or print out a mail-in application; and
2. Contact your preferred participating provider to select an eligible plan and have the discount applied to your bill.

Some providers may have an alternative application that they will ask you to complete. Eligible households must both apply for the program and contact a participating provider to select a service plan.

What’s to LOVE about Financial Aid?



We asked Financial Aid staff to reflect on why they love student financial aid. Here are their responses.

How it helps students to succeed and thrive

Alicia Garcia, Financial Aid Specialist I

What isn’t there to love about financial aid? To think that I am part of a national allegiance that supports students from all walks of life in attaining their educational dreams—it boggles my mind.

It’s exciting to work with an array of programs that financially assist students, enabling them to attend a school of their choice. Even better, many awards are considered “gift money,” meaning that repayment is unnecessary. Remember,

1. Never pay for assistance to complete your financial aid application. If you need assistance, contact your financial aid office. We are here to help.
2. Apply for financial aid. There is money out there, but some believe that financial aid is only for those who are disadvantaged socioeconomically. This is not true. Many programs take a variety of factors into account.

JoAnna Hulett, Financial Aid Specialist II and Scholarship Coordinator

I love the CMC Foundation Scholarship program! With over 400 scholarship opportunities available exclusively to our CMC students, you can add unencumbered funds to your financial aid package.

I also love that it’s easy to apply! There’s one universal application that CMC students access from Basecamp. The application automatically matches students to scholarship opportunities for which they may be eligible. There is no need to complete multiple applications to be considered for the many amazing scholarship opportunities from the CMC Foundation.



Dates to Remember

Application deadline for CMC Foundation Scholarships: March 1, 2023

Deadline for filing a SAP Appeal for Spring 2023 Financial Aid: March 10, 2023

And talk about *love*; these scholarships are funded through the generosity of community members, businesses, and CMC employees and alumni. CMC Foundation scholarships have helped support many CMC students as they work to achieve their educational goals. With the application deadline coming up on March 1, 2023, I want to remind students why I love CMC Foundation Scholarships!

Katie Rust, Financial Aid Specialist I

As a student, I loved the opportunities to better myself through education. Having financial support allowed me to focus on school, not work.

Kim Ganley, Administrative Technician

After my first year of college, I put myself through school with the help of financial aid. As a dependent student without parental aid, I qualified for work-study and student loans. However, because my academic performance was average, merit scholarships were not presented as an option. I worked jobs on and off campus, and with determination and financial aid, I excelled in higher education. I made the dean's list for many semesters and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree. Yes, I love financial aid.

Melessa Mekis, Financial Aid Specialist I

Work-study provides the opportunity to work in unique positions on-campus. Jobs are available in many different areas that allow students to build their resumes, network, develop valuable skills, and gain insight into various career options. When I was an undergraduate, I was able to work as an assistant in scholarship programs, which lead me to working in financial aid today!

Why it's great to work in Financial Aid

Janelle Cook, Director of Financial Aid

I love working for and serving CMC and our leaders, our community, and our students. It's a pleasure and an honor to be able to help students achieve their educational goals by meeting expenses through the many options that financial aid offers. It brings great joy when the students we help did not think attending college was attainable. I could not ask for a better team to work with. I also enjoy the challenge and learning financial aid offers, as long as we are in this profession. The learning never stops.

Theresa Hadsock, Assistant Director of Financial Aid

I love the support it offers for students to attend and graduate from post-secondary educational institutions. I love the people who work in this field—at CMC and at the state and federal levels. They have a passion for students and their success. They have a sense of humor and keep things in perspective.

Work-study positions are still available for Spring 2023!

If work-study is part of your financial aid package and you haven't applied for a job yet, it's not too late! Work-study positions are still available in a variety of areas. Earn money, build skills, and make valuable connections with faculty, staff, students, and community members. To learn more, visit <https://coloradomtn.edu/financial-aid/workstudy/>.

Employee Spotlight—Kirsty Baze



In May of 2022, the CMC financial aid team welcomed Kirsty Baze as a new Financial Aid Specialist. Kirsty brought with her a wealth of experience in many aspects of financial aid, mostly gained on the Front Range where she lives.

Kirsty grew up in Stillwater, Oklahoma, a city with a small town feeling and the cultural liveliness of a university community. Both her parents were teachers, and her father became an elementary school principal.



With summers off, Kirsty’s parents were devoted to planning outdoor adventures for the family. These family expeditions began early for Kirsty, who remembers a road trip from Oklahoma to Denali National Park in Alaska when she was only five years old. Fortunately, with Kirsty, mom, dad, sister, and grandmother all living in an RV for a month, everyone got along and had a splendid adventure.

Kirsty attended college at the University of Oklahoma, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy with a minor in Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Environment. When her parents decided to move to Colorado for their retirement, Kirsty followed.

Kirsty launched her financial aid career as a remote staff member for Ashford University, an online proprietary school. She soon grew concerned about the school’s values. While with Ashford, she “rarely spoke to a student who wasn’t at or near maximum loans.” After nine months, she had landed a position with Front Range Community College, a “great shift” for her. From there, her career took her to Metro State University as a Work-Study Processor, and then to the Community College of Denver as the Financial Aid Operations Manager.

What do you like best about your job?

“The students here are on mountain time. They are polite and don’t give me a hard time if I have to give them bad news. They are accepting and patient while we find the best solution and work through it together. CMC is a pleasant surprise.”

“The team is the number one thing. There is a lot of communication and transparency about the ongoing changes in financial aid and in our department. It helps me to determine what I want to work on and what I can bring to the team.”

Kirsty has been inspired by her family, including her parents, siblings, grandparents, and great aunt. “Almost everyone in my family is a role model in some way,” she says. “They are independent thinkers and motivated people—driven and resourceful.”

Outside of work, Kirsty enjoys snowboarding, camping, hiking, and paddleboarding. In the summer, she always brings her dog Laila, who even hops onto the paddleboard.



You can contact the CMC Office of Financial Aid at finaid@coloradomtn.edu or call 970-947-8322. For questions about work-study, email workstudy@coloradomtn.edu.



Coming Soon— More Virtual Office Hours

We know that students’ schedules can be demanding. Beginning on February 6th, our availability will increase from 14 hours to 27 hours per week. Visit <https://coloradomtn.edu/financial-aid/contact/> to book a virtual appointment with a Financial Aid specialist.

