



Iowa Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

THE INFORMER

The Quarterly IASFAA Newsletter

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Spring is near, and the IASFAA Newsletter is here!

With offers coming out, We're switching into high gear.

Through the strife and doubt, IASFAA professionals need not fear!

We will persevere through the troubles and burnout,

And come together at the conference in Cedar Falls with cheer!

Upcoming Events

- **Spring Conference: April 15 - 17**
 - **Hotel Blocks:** closes March 25
 - **Registration:** deadline April 1



IASFAA SPRING 2026

Get Involved with IASFAA

Find your perfect volunteer match!

IASFAA is run by so many fantastic volunteers! If you are looking for a way to get involved but aren't sure where to start, the newsletter will be spotlighting IASFAA Committees that could use YOU as a volunteer.

Find something that piques your interest? Contact the committee chair for your potential new committee to learn more.

Awards

The Awards Committee collects nominations for the IASFAA Awards, orders plaques for the awards, and then has the honor of presenting these awards to IASFAA members at the conference!

Time Commitment: Very low! Involvement increases as we get closer to conference time.

Chair: Jess Graham, jessica-graham@uiowa.edu

Electronic Services

The purpose of Electronic Services committee is to provide technological support and services via the IASFAA website. The committee acts as a liaison between membership and website provider to communicate all web requests.

Time Commitment: The time commitment varies based on the time of year and the needs of the association. Some weeks no time commitment is required; however, during busy times (such as conferences and new year start up) it could be 4-6 hours per week.

Chair: Mary Jacobsen, mjacobse@iastate.edu



ISL Education Lending is your local nonprofit lender offering lower-cost private loans for student and parents and serving lowans for more 40 years. In addition to private loans, ISL Education Lending offers scholarships and no-cost college planning financial literacy tools. We recently rolled out a new national scholarship search database, for high school students, college students and their parents called [Step 1 Scholarship Search](#). ISL Education Lending also supports our Iowa colleges and their loan processing through the iLink Service Center. We look forward to seeing you at the spring conference.



Opens Jan. 5

**Forty-five
\$1,000
Scholarships**



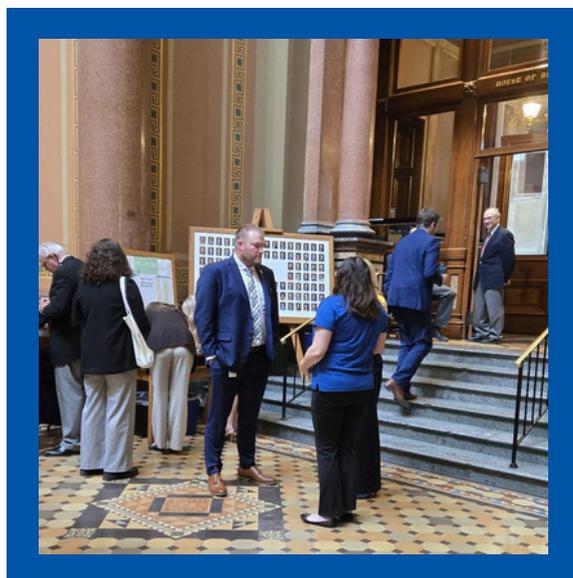
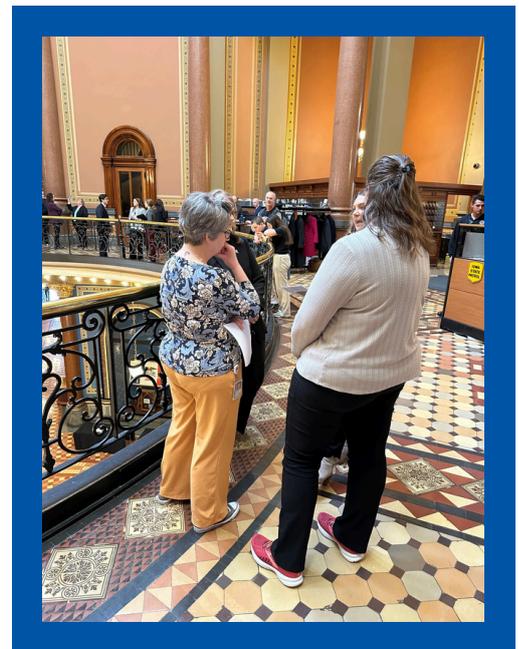
IASFAA Day at the Hill

Thirteen IASFAA members ventured to Capitol Hill in Des Moines on February 25, 2026 to discuss pertinent issues in financial aid with our Senators and House Representatives. IASFAA members discussed topics like the tuition freeze, FAFSA filing requirements, state aid opportunities, and more.

Thank you to the Community Outreach Committee for planning a great event and all IASFAA members who attended!

IASFAA Members in attendance:

Matthew Anderson, Angie Collum, Krystal Crandall, Alyssa Dalton, Dawn Fleming, Emma Johnson, Olivia Lederman, Kristin Pals, Cristen True, Ryan Roberts, Erik Danielson, and Natalie Price



College Ave is a top two private education loan lender dedicated to simplifying the student loan experience for families when savings, scholarships, and federal student loans don't cover the full cost of college. We deliver a best-in-class customer experience supported by a full suite of loan products, including undergraduate and graduate options. Our graduate suite offers specialized loans such as Health Professions, MBA, Dental, Law, and Medical School loans. Our approach is simple, clear, and personal. Our simple and intuitive 3-minute application is accessible from any desktop or mobile device and offers an immediate credit decision. We offer flexible repayment options so borrowers can customize a loan that fits their budget and financial goals. We're committed to giving students and families helpful tools and resources that promote responsible borrowing, credit education, and financial literacy. We offer both print and online materials and presentations throughout the year.

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We've Got You.**

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Womens History Month

Diversity Committee Article

Why is March Women's History Month?

Many historical and significant events occurred during the month, which encouraged and prompted the designation.

National Women's History Month honors the successes and sacrifices of U.S. women and dates to March 8, 1857, when hundreds of women from New York City garment and textile factories rallied to protest harsh working conditions. March 8 is now celebrated as International Women's Day in recognition of this historic march.

In 1909, New York City became the site of the nation's first Women's Day celebration, a year after 15,000 women there marched to demand shorter working hours, better pay, an end to child labor and the right to vote.

More than seven decades later in 1981, Congress set aside the second week of March as National Women's History Week. Six years later, Congress expanded the week to a month.



Did You Know?

Did you know that women outnumber men in the U.S. 168 million to 165 million? Did you know that in 2022, women aged 85 and older outnumbered men by 1.9 million?

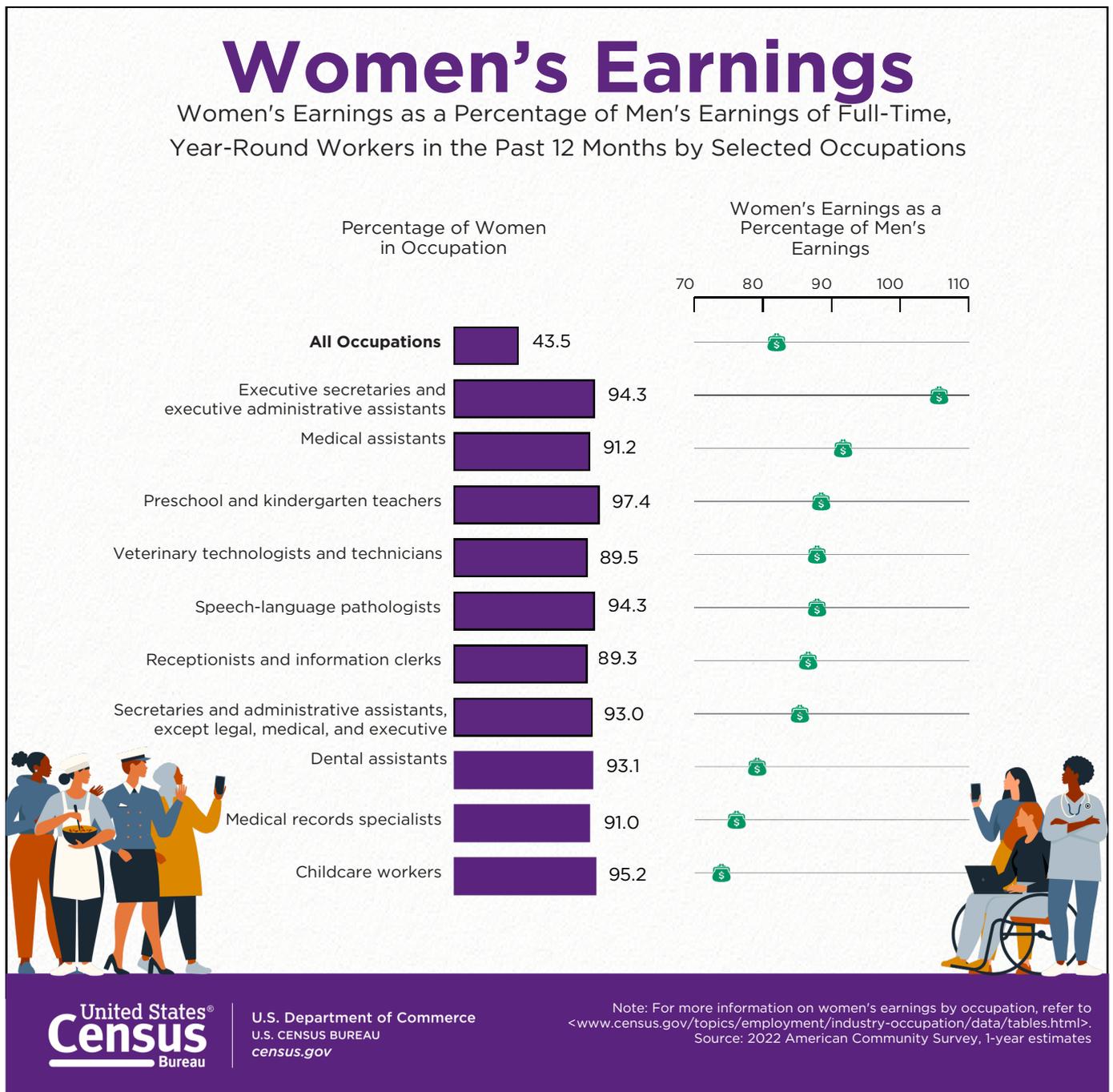
Did you know that in 2022, more women than men aged 25 and older had earned bachelor's degrees or higher? [36.8% vs. 34.5%]

Did you know that in 2022, 80.3 million women aged 16 and older were part of the civilian labor force? That number is 58.6% of women in that age range.

Did you know that even in the 21st century, women still earn only 82.2 cents of every dollar a man earns? (see related pdf)

** Above information from U.S. Census Bureau 2024 Report

Women's History Month: March 2024 For information about early women's rights movements, check out Early Women's Rights Activists Wanted Much More than Suffrage | HISTORY. As we celebrate Women's History Month, we reflect upon the advances women have made, including increased earnings, educational attainment and job opportunities. But there is still work to be done! If anyone can get it done, it's women!



NEW FAAC MEMBERS!

Congratulations to the new FAAC Members in IASFAA! Your hard work and dedication to the financial aid profession are recognized in this great accomplishment!

- **Sara Early** - Iowa State University
- **Jessi Stone** - Iowa State University
- **Sultan Karim** - Kirkwood Community College
- **Sarah Heller** - Iowa State University
- **Jessi Stone** - Iowa State University
- **Brittany Peterson** - Kognitiv
- **Karla Gilson** - Simpson College



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MRiggs@monogramllc.com or visit monogramllc.com

Monogram Student Lending helps schools support students navigating new funding gaps created by OB3 changes. Our newest product, Abe, was built specifically to complement federal aid by restoring flexibility and protections students have lost—without adding complexity for financial aid offices. Abe offers a 12 month grace period, 18 month past due balance protection to help students stay enrolled, and a 2% graduation reward that encourages persistence and completion. With multiple repayment options, terms up to 20 years, and strong in school default prevention, Abe is designed to support responsible borrowing and positive outcomes. Backed by more than 30 years of private student lending experience, Monogram partners with schools to deliver access, flexibility, and stability when students need it most.

Recognizing IASFAA's women that have made an impact

Diversity Committee

Every March, the United States recognizes Women's History Month — a time to celebrate the achievements of women and acknowledge continued efforts toward gender equality in education, workplaces, and leadership roles.

For 2026, the National Women's History Alliance selected the theme: "Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future."

Several IASFAA members shared tributes honoring women in financial aid who have shaped their professional journeys.

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Alyssa Dalton shared her appreciation for Mary Edwards of the University of Iowa.

"She has been by my side since my very first day in financial aid. She helped train me, and I truly would not be the professional I am today without her support. Mary has so much patience, encouragement, and knowledge. She consistently supports my growth in the office and my successes as both an individual and professional. She's always willing to listen when I need guidance. She's a wonderful role model not just for me, but for everyone in our office. She often celebrates the success of others without taking enough credit for her own. I am so grateful to work alongside her and learn from her every day."

Jess Graham highlighted two women who have deeply impacted her career: Kelsey Ryder and Vanessa Wiest, both of the University of Iowa.

Of Kelsey, she shared



“Kelsey interviewed and hired me as a student and later supervised me as a financial aid advisor. She is one of the many reasons I fell in love with financial aid work and definitely the main reason I am as involved as I am with IASFAA. She did not hesitate one bit to introduce me to other IASFAA members and connect me with folks that would support my further involvement. She has been a professional role model for me since I was in undergrad and continues to be a woman I aspire to be like. To have her as a mentor for all these years and now be passed the President’s gavel by her is pretty cool.”

Of Vanessa, Jess wrote:

“If you have a ride-or-die in your office, you know how much value that person brings to your day-to-day and overall career. Vanessa is undoubtedly that person for me. She grounds me, tells me what I need to hear and not what I want to hear, and pushes me to grow through moments of discomfort. You can never have enough gratitude for your sounding board, and I am immensely grateful every day that I get to work with her.”

Kelsey Ryder also submitted a tribute recognizing Cindy Seyfer, retired Director of Financial Aid at the University of Iowa.

“During my time working with Cindy — and since then — she has been an amazing mentor, leader, and friend. I learned the importance of curiosity and not being afraid to ask questions, how crucial it is to appreciate the unique talents each person brings to the table, and what it truly looks like to keep students and their success at the center of everything we do. I couldn’t have asked for a better woman to learn from as a financial aid administrator.”

Josh Rinderknacht recognized Melissa Mincy of Des Moines Area Community College.

“Melissa has always been my go-to in the office — whether it’s navigating a complicated procedure, helping with back-end research, stepping in when a call or meeting becomes escalated, or simply being someone to talk to. Be it work-related or life-related, she is an amazing individual who helps the whole team be better.”

Women’s History Month honors the women of the past who fought for equal rights and recognizes the women today who continue striving for equity and opportunity for all.

Thank you to the women who lead, mentor, challenge, support, and shape the future of financial aid.

Stay Connected with the IASFAA Listserv!

Are you taking advantage of the IASFAA Listserv? This valuable tool is designed for IASFAA members to quickly and efficiently share relevant information with fellow members.

[What is the IASFAA Listserv?](#)

The IASFAA Listserv is an email-based platform that allows members to easily disseminate and receive updates, announcements, and other important information related to the financial aid profession and our association.

How to Subscribe or Post a Message

1. Log in on the IASFAA website: <https://www.iasfaa.com/iasfaa-listserv>
2. Click on IASFAA Listserv.
3. Navigate to My Features > E-Lists to subscribe or post a message.

Join the conversation and stay in the loop with timely updates from your IASFAA community. Don't miss out—sign up today!

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What's new with the IASFAA Crew?

- **Alyssa Gorsch** started as a Financial Aid Advisor at the University of Iowa.
- Iowa State University has recently hired a handful of new staff members! **Logan Stapp**, Financial Aid Advisor, Scholarships; **Amalia Riordan**, Financial Aid Advisor; **Miguel Valera**, Financial Aid Advisor; **Hannah Phelps**, Financial Aid Advisor; **Olivia Jackovin**, Work-Study Program Specialist
- **Melissa Baker** at University of Dubuque office has been promoted to Associate Director of Financial Aid.
- **Faith Baptist College** just got approved for a new AAS Trades Program! For years, our prospective students, pastors, and ministry leaders have asked for a program that combines hands-on trades training with a strong biblical foundation—and now, Faith is answering that call. The Applied Trades program is intentionally mission-fit. It is designed to prepare bi-vocational pastors and missionaries, tradesmen and women, camp directors, and ministry leaders who desire practical skills alongside theological training. Students will gain marketable trades skills and also be equipped to serve in bi-vocational ministry. There is an increasing shortage of men and women entering the trades; meanwhile, many pastors and missionaries find it beneficial to have a supplemental source of income.
- **Kelly Carrell** recently retired from the University of Iowa Financial Aid office, she worked in financial aid for 26 years. While she is retiring from financial aid, she is still planning to continue working and is pursuing credentials in cyber security. Pictures from Kelly's retirement party are featured below!



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Happy clients

Excellent 4.7 out of 5

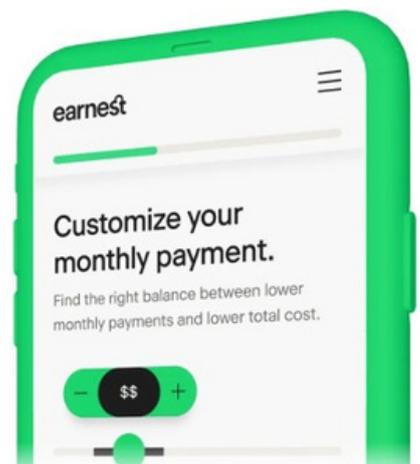


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MASFAA 2026

The Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators site visit for the October MASFAA Conference took place February 25-26, 2026, and the energy throughout the meetings made one thing clear: this conference is taking shape in a powerful way.

Twenty-five members of the Local Arrangements Committee, primarily from Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri, gathered in Cedar Rapids to thoughtfully plan the on-site experience. The team is intentionally designing an experience that will feel welcoming, organized, and complete from the moment you arrive.

At the same time, ten Program Committee members representing every state in the region worked through session proposals, keynote direction, and the schedule framework. The goal is a balanced program that supports new professionals, seasoned leaders, and everyone in between, across compliance, data, leadership, customer service, and the broader business of higher education.

We are genuinely excited to welcome MASFAA back to Cedar Rapids, October 18-22, 2026. Even more meaningful is knowing that in just a few short months, many of YOU will be here with us! Cedar Rapids is ready, and we cannot wait to gather together this October.



Where We Gather, Greatness Happens

MASFAA 2026

Cedar Rapids, Iowa
October 18-21

IASFAA Member News

The date was August 1, 1985.

To put that in perspective for younger staff: in 1985, "Apple" was just a fruit, "Windows" were things you cleaned with Windex, and the "Cloud" was something that ruined your picnic. It was on that summer morning forty years ago that Kysa Gordon began a journey that would touch thousands of lives at Southwestern Community College.

Starting as an Adult Education Secretary, she mastered the foundation of student service. She then transitioned into the role of Financial Aid Secretary, where she became the gatekeeper of opportunity, before finally serving as our Financial Aid Awards Coordinator since 2002.

When we asked Kysa to look back at those early days, it feels like a different century—because it was.

- The Typewriter Symphony: There were no "Edit" or "Undo" keys. Every loan application was a high-stakes performance on a typewriter. It was typed on 3-part NCR paper (Google it). One page went to the lender, one page stayed in the office and another was the student's copy.
- The Paper Fortress: Financial aid wasn't stored on a server; it was stored in heavy metal cabinets that required a workout just to open.
- The Wait: Back then, "instant" didn't exist. You didn't refresh a browser; you walked to the mailbox and waited for the postman.

On campus, Kysa is known for her orneriness, her sweet and innocent smile and her high ponytail. She has been through the trenches over the last 4 decades, but not a day goes by that she doesn't start a conversation with, "In the olden days....", followed by something that seems crazier than FAFSA simplification.

Forty years is more than just a career; it is a legacy of doors opened and lives changed. On behalf of the generations of students who may never know your name, but who carry a degree because of your work, we thank you.

Congratulations, Kysa Gordon!

Southwestern Community College



IASFAA Member News



IASFAA member and Financial Aid Advisor Grace Hanna and her husband Dylan welcomed baby Gus Michael Hanna to their family on January 13, 2026. Congratulations!

Connect with us!

Please send content suggestions or member updates to

tatiana-choa@uiowa.edu

Like the IASFAA page on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)!



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Discover which of our Credit Union partners can help you reach your goals.



Loan Amount

Minimum loan amount: \$3,000
Maximum loan amount: \$95,000



Interest Rates

Fixed & variable interest rates
Rates as low as: 2.81%
Max interest rate: 16.00%
Average interest rate: 8.44%



Loan Types

Undergraduate
Graduate
Parent
Line of Credit
Health Professional
Refinance



Repayment

Deferred
Immediate
Interest only
\$50 payment while in school
Repayment terms up to 15 years



Benefits

Past due balances allowed
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- Expand financial access for current and future students with transparent lending solutions
- Provide planning tools that help families navigate the true cost of college
- Strengthen partnerships with credit unions that share your commitment to student outcomes
- Present responsible private student loan options that align with institutional values