



INSPIRED
PATHWAYS



Fall Newsletter

INSIDE — SEPTEMBER 2024

- *Inspired Pathways reps visit Faribault plant*
- *Why college price tags don't tell the whole story*
- *Tips to help make studying a breeze*
- *And more*



FAFSA Issues Continue

Issues surrounding the rollout of the new FAFSA form created challenges for students and colleges alike during the 2023-2024 application process.



These challenges resulted in significantly lower FAFSA completion rates, especially among first-generation and low-income students — the groups that often benefit the most from completing their financial aid applications. Looking ahead to the 2024-2025 cycle, we expect the challenges to continue. Some FAFSA publications indicate a return to the October 1 opening application date, but the fine print indicates that this will only be for a portion of the student population. **The vast majority of students will have to wait, many until early December or later.**

At Inspired Pathways, we are already working with our college partners on mitigation strategies, just as we did last year. Despite having dozens of students face FAFSA issues within our Class of 2024 scholarship group, we had no one lose their scholarship because of those issues. To ensure that we have the same success rate this year, we encourage all students and parents to prepare early. Below are some steps you can take to move the process forward:

Create your FSA ID now

The FSA ID (Federal Student Aid Identification) is a username and password that allows students and parents to access U.S. Department of Education websites, including the FAFSA application. It serves as a digital signature and is used to confirm identity when applying for federal student aid. Both the student AND the parent need to create their own, and it can be created at any time.

Prepare your documentation

More than half of families are able to use the IRS retrieval tool to automatically upload tax information, but many others will have to enter it manually. Get the following documents ready in case you have to enter the information manually: social security number, driver's license number, federal tax returns from 2023, access to current bank statements.

The full 2025-2026 FAFSA won't be open to the general public until December.

Attempt to apply early

Some students will be able to apply on October 1. We suggest checking to see if your application is available as close to that date as possible. If it isn't, try every other week until you are able to complete your application.

Keep us in the loop

Let us know if you're having any trouble with your application. We'll make sure to note it on your file so you won't miss out on anything. We'll provide support if the issue you're facing can be resolved from the outside, and we'll work with your college to make sure there is no delay in your education.

Inspired Pathways Team Members Visit Jennie-O Faribault Location

Members of the Hormel Inspired Pathways advising team made their way to Jennie-O's Faribault plant to spread awareness of the program.



From left to right is Edel Fernandez, Director of Admissions at South Central College, Jose Lopez, Jennie-O® Senior HR Representative, and two members of the Inspired Pathways team.

Edel Fernandez, director of admissions at South Central College, joined the team to help provide concrete examples of ways Inspired Pathways participants can put the program to use.

The advisors talked with over 100 plant employees, prompting several new applications.

“I know sometimes it is difficult to schedule location visits, but I think they are important,” said Senior Human Resources Representative Jose Lopez.

Visits to Hormel Foods production facilities have been fruitful thus far.

The program has seen an uptick in applications and in the number of students and parents reaching out for advising help from these locations.

Want to schedule a meeting with Inspired Pathways advisors? Reach out to:

advising@hormelinspiredpathways.com

to set something up!

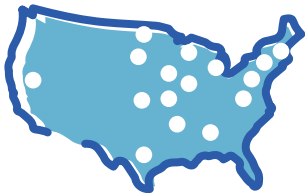


Pathways Program Overview

300

STUDENTS & PARENTS HELPED BY INSPIRED PATHWAYS

Through advising and scholarships during the 2023-2024 academic year.



16

STATES WITH AN ENROLLED
PATHWAYS STUDENT

194

APPLICATIONS IN THE
2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

Four-Year College Price Tags Don't Tell the Whole Story

It is no secret that the cost of four-year colleges has skyrocketed over the last decades. Many of the most selective private schools now have a cost-of-attendance over \$80,000, more than double the average full-time salary within the United States. Because of this, many students and families have all but given up on the idea of attending one of these colleges, even if the student is academically qualified.

Fortunately, some of the country's very best colleges and universities are aware of this issue and have committed to making their college affordable for any student capable of gaining

admission. These schools, known as "Full-Need Met" colleges, are now telling students, "If you can get in, we guarantee that we will make sure you can afford to attend."

Each year more of the top colleges join this group, and now nearly 100 schools across the nation make this promise. Grinnell, Carleton, Macalester, and all of the Ivy League universities guarantee they will work with families to ensure their school is affordable.

Importantly, Full-Need Met colleges don't have different tuition rates for in-state and out-of-state students the way many public universities and community colleges do. It doesn't matter whether you live down the street from your dream school or across the country. If you get accepted, you'll receive the same financial aid package.

To learn more about Full-Need Met colleges and other types of financial support available, attend our upcoming presentations on [The Keys to Financial Aid & Scholarships](#).

Applying to College

As you begin fall of senior year, it's important to get started on your four-year college applications. These applications have many components and can take some time to complete.

The vast majority of colleges — with a notable exception being the University of California schools — have two deadlines: the first around November 1st and the second in January.

- Set up your Common App account. This is the account you use to apply to four-year colleges. You apply to community colleges through each school's website.
- Complete your Common App essay which will go to all four-year colleges. The essay is 650 words long and the questions can be found by Googling "Common App Prompts."
- Look for each school's supplemental essay(s) in the Common App and cut and paste the supplemental essay prompts into the application supplement schedule (make a copy for yourself). Be sure to indicate the expected word count for each essay. You may need to begin

Contact Us For Application Support

✉ Advising@hormelinspiredpathways.com

☎ 507-481-0142

filling in basic information such as your intended major/school of study for all supplements to appear.

- Complete the activities and honors worksheet. This follows the structure of the Common App, so it's easy for you to copy/paste your information from this worksheet into the application. This also provides examples of well-written activity descriptions
- Finally, you must submit each of your applications individually.. Once you've finished filling out a college's section on the Common App, it will ask you to "Review and Submit." This is the final step.

- Admissions decisions usually arrive about six weeks after the college's deadline.

Community Colleges, on the other hand, operate on a rolling basis, so you're able to apply any time between now and the end of your senior year in high school. We strongly advise that you take care of this by April, though, so there aren't any issues when it comes to applying your financial aid or scholarships. To apply to a community college, you must go to that college's website, find Admissions, and fill out the application they have posted there. As long as you have graduated from high school or received a GED, you will be admitted.



Tidewater Community College Virginia Beach Student Center

The Inspired Pathways Scholarship and Advising Programs Are Open for the HS Class of 2025



Seniors, now is the time to apply for the Hormel Inspired Pathways Scholarship, which covers two years of community college. In addition to having your tuition covered, your application gives you access to all of the Inspired Pathways program resources, including:

- One-on-one college admissions advising from former college admissions counselors through our digital Office Hours program.
- Presentations by experts that'll help you understand:
 - Financial aid & scholarships
 - College essays, community college, four-year universities, and transfer admissions
 - Finding the best-fit college for you or your child
 - How to take advantage of the college's academic and support resources
 - Pre-graduation career search
- Access to the Hormel Inspired Pathways website which includes resources like:
 - Scholarship search engines
 - Contact information for college admissions offices
 - Lists of colleges with the best financial aid programs in the country
 - Links to financial aid forms like FAFSA and the CSS Profile
 - and much more!
- Information about and access to apply for Hormel Foods internship programs

Even if you are unsure if you will attend a community college next fall, we encourage you to apply to gain access to all the resources Inspired Pathways has to offer.

The program and resources are 100% free and applying does not commit you to anything.

Study Smarter, Not Harder

This guide is meant to help you develop the type of study skills and habits that will allow you to be successful in college.

BY: NATE LOCKETT

Director, Hormel Inspired Pathways

The study skills needed for college are different from those required to be successful in high school. The professors are less involved with individual students than teachers, classes are larger, and there are fewer assignments so each carries much more weight.

Reading Is Not Enough

Reading and re-reading texts alone is not studying. Think of reading as an important part of pre-studying, while learning requires actively engaging with the material. Active studying does not mean highlighting or underlining text, re-reading or rote memorization, it is using the material in your own way.

Ideas for active studying include:

- Create a study guide by topic. Formulate questions and problems and write complete answers. Create your own quiz.
- Become a teacher. Say the information aloud in your own words as if you are the instructor and teaching the concepts to a class.
- Derive examples that relate to your own experiences.
- Develop symbols that represent concepts.
- For non-technical classes (e.g., English, History, Psychology), figure out the big ideas so you can explain, contrast and re-evaluate them.

- For technical classes, work the problems and explain the steps and why they work.
- Study in terms of question, evidence and conclusion: What is the question posed by the instructor/author? What is the evidence that they present? What is the conclusion?

Get Organized

Organization is key to being successful in college. There will be no teachers reminding you of your assignments. You'll want to collect all your syllabi and create a semester-long plan that indicates when each assignment is due and how long you will need to complete it. You can do the same with materials before a test. Make sure you gather and organize the test materials as outlined in the syllabus so you know exactly what needs to be studied before the test.

Don't Procrastinate

In college, many of the assignments will all be due around the same time, often in the middle and the end of the semester. The most effective practice is to work a short time on each class every day. The total amount of time needed to learn the material will be less than if you do a couple all-night cramming sessions right before the test. The important thing is how you use your study time, not how long you study.

So, it is critical that you're organized and have a study plan. Having a consistent time and place where you know

you'll be working each day will help you stay on top of your assignments, keep the amount of work manageable and greatly reduce your stress. A couple dedicated hours in the library each day should be all you need to easily stay on top of your work. Remember, in college, you'll likely be spending only three or so hours a day in the classroom, and professors expect you to spend an equal amount of time studying outside of it.

In addition to learning the material better, spacing out your work and having a consistent schedule helps you stay mentally fresh and keeps procrastination at bay.

Find a Study Spot That Works for You

The silence of a library may work for some, but not all. Some students do best in an environment like the dining hall or student union where the background noise helps them concentrate. Because of this, one of the most important things you need to do as a college student is identify HOW and WHERE you study best.

This may change based on the type of work you're doing. Maybe you remember what you're reading better in a quiet environment. Or perhaps you have an easier time with math equations when you have the opportunity to take a break and interact with friends between problems. Whatever the case may be, it's important that you're honest with yourself and figure out what works best for you personally.

Multitasking Is Not Effective

Almost all research indicates that multitasking does not help and may actually hinder study.

With proper organization and a dedicated time to study each day, you will provide yourself ample time to work on one thing at a time. It's important to use this time wisely, because social media, web browsing, game playing, texting, etc., will affect the quality of your studying. So, put the phone away, and if you need to, disconnect your computer from Wi-Fi so you can focus solely on what you're working on.

40%

The amount multitasking has been shown to reduce productivity in some studies

Take Breaks, but Make Sure They're at the Right Time.

Easy weeks on your syllabi often seem like a cause for celebration, but this is most likely the calm before the storm of tests and project due dates. Instead of taking easy weeks easy, use them to get ahead. That way you'll be able to sit back and relax with little or no pressure as your classmates scramble through all-nighters trying to simultaneously study and complete that 20-page research paper they should have started a month ago.

Become a Teacher

It's long been known that teaching materials helps you learn them better. You can do this in a study group, with a study partner or on your own. Saying the material aloud and in your own words will point out what you don't understand and will help you retain the information that you do.

Creating your own examples and making connections between concepts (just as a teacher does) is one of the best ways to actively engage with the material. Instead of just reading it, you'll be figuring out how it can be broken down into simple, easy-to-grasp components in words that you understand.

Creating a test for yourself will help you think like your professors. Make study guides and think of ways questions could be asked about the material. Identify the questions that you don't know and quiz yourself on only those questions. By doing this, you'll feel confident opening up your test booklet because there won't be anything unexpected.

The College Essay

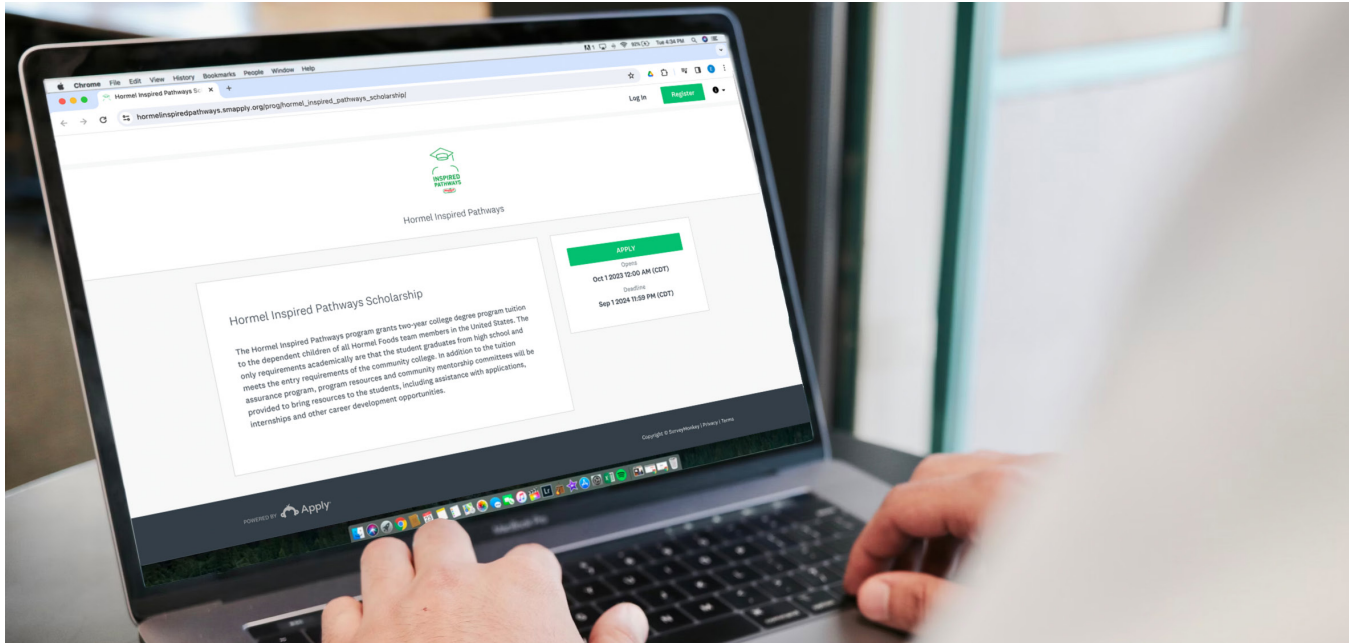
College essays are one of the most important parts of your four-year-college application. While your transcripts, activities and recommendations allow schools to understand what you did and how successful you were in high school, the essays are designed to give you the opportunity to discuss your goals, passions and achievements. This allows the college admissions committee to understand the type of person they'll be admitting with hopes that you'll join their community.

These college essays differ from those written for an English or history class. The focus of these essays will be solely on you, your experiences, and why you took the actions you did. The colleges will specifically look for times that you took initiative, and they will want you to discuss why you took the steps you did and what impact the experience had on you and those around you.

These essays can have a massive impact on whether you are admitted to the colleges you're applying to, so it's important to start early and make sure you are providing the information they're looking for in the way they have asked you to present it.

Our Advising and Admissions and Financial Aid Platform

Makes Applying Easier Than Ever



The new Inspired Pathways Application Portal is up and running! Introduced at the end of last year, the new portal has streamlined the application process and provides a host of other benefits for students and their families as they navigate the Hormel Inspired Pathways program.

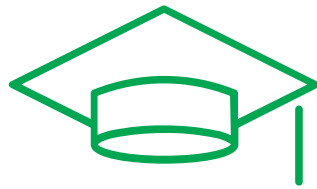
Students no longer have to use multiple platforms to complete their application — now, the initial application and subsequent document submissions are all housed in one easy-to-use, secure and accessible location. Students can now complete the application at their own pace, track the status of their application and see what tasks they have remaining. Additionally, because the portal has been set up to send regular reminders, there is no fear of missing any of the important college application deadlines.

To get started, visit HormelInspiredPathways.com and click APPLY at the top of the page. Once you have created your account, you will be able to work on your application, which you can come back to at any time to finish.

It's important to note that even though we have a new portal, the scholarship and advising programs remain the same. This means you can still reach out at any point during the process to get support regarding any and all of

your college, scholarship, admissions and financial aid questions.

If you currently have questions about the new portal or how best to use it, we encourage you to reach out to a member of the Inspired Pathways team.



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Have Questions?

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