



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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More Indiana students meet college financial aid deadline in 2017

For the third year in a row, more Indiana high school seniors met the state's filing deadline for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the form that qualifies students for need- and merit-based financial aid for college.

"We are encouraged to see more Hoosier students are taking advantage of this important opportunity to increase college affordability," said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers. "The FAFSA deadline is especially critical for our 21st Century Scholars, and we're gratified that local schools and community partners are coming together to help keep their students on track for success."

Fifty-one (51) percent of Indiana high school seniors filed the FAFSA on time in 2017, up 9 percentage points from 2016. Sixty-three (63) percent of seniors enrolled in the state's 21st Century Scholars program filed on time in 2017, a 6 percentage-point improvement from 2016. Students who fulfill the 21st Century Scholarship requirements, which include filing the FAFSA, receive up to four years of paid tuition and mandatory fees at an Indiana college or university.

The state will recognize 114 local high schools that had 60 percent or more of their seniors from the Class of 2017 file the FAFSA on time this year during an event at the Indiana Statehouse on May 31.

State moves FAFSA filing deadline to April 15

Over \$300 million in state financial aid for college is available annually for eligible Indiana students. To qualify, students must file the FAFSA on time, which traditionally has been March 10 in Indiana. This March, the Commission extended the state filing deadline to April 15 in response to issues with a federal data retrieval tool that complicated the process for families attempting to submit the FAFSA.

This month, the Commission made the April 15 deadline permanent, a change that aligns the state's financial aid deadline with the federal tax deadline. In a related move, the Commission also eliminated a secondary May 15 "edit" deadline by which students had to make any necessary corrections to their submitted FAFSA forms in order to receive financial aid. Students will still need to make corrections before accessing aid, but eliminating this deadline removes another barrier to financial aid.

"Moving Indiana's FAFSA deadline to April 15 not only gives students more time, it also offers an opportunity for the state and local communities to partner with tax preparers and other financial institutions to help families navigate the filing process," said Lubbers.

The Commission's "*Reaching Higher, Delivering Value*" strategic plan, available at www.che.in.gov, includes additional policy priorities focused on increasing college affordability. To learn more about the FAFSA and other financial aid resources for students and families, visit www.learnmoreindiana.org/cost.

2017 FAFSA Facts

- **51%** of all Indiana high school seniors filed for aid on time in 2017, compared to **42%** in 2016.
- **63%** of 21st Century Scholars filed for aid on time in 2017, compared to **57%** in 2016.
- **273,683** FAFSAs were submitted in 2017 by high school seniors, current college students and returning adults.