



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*  
HIGHER EDUCATION

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## **Higher Education Roundup of Indiana's 2015 Legislative Session**

Several bills related to Indiana higher education were successful in this year's legislative session, including many aligned to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's goals for increased college completion, academic quality and return on investment.

The following key higher education policies have been signed into law or await the Governor's signature:

### 2016-2017 State Budget (House Enrolled Act 1001)

- **Return and Complete:** The budget includes language requiring the Commission for Higher Education and Indiana's colleges to reach out directly to adult Hoosiers who have completed some college but have not completed a degree, share with them existing opportunities and aid, and work to ease their transition back to college so they can earn a quality degree or credential.
- **21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars:** The budget fully funds the estimated cost of the [21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars](#) program for 2016 and 2017. Since 1990, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholar program has provided up to four years of full-tuition scholarships for low-income Hoosiers.
- **Performance Funding:** The General Assembly maintains its commitment to Indiana's [nationally-recognized](#) performance funding incentives for public colleges by dedicating money for performance at the level of 4 percent of schools' total state funding in 2016 and 6.5 percent in 2017.
- **Total State Funding:** \$1.9 billion, or more than 12 percent of the state's total budget for 2016 and 2017, is allocated to Indiana colleges.

### College Financial Aid Reform

- **Adult Student Grant (SEA 509):** This law changes the state's [part time financial aid program](#) to meet the needs of returning adults—who make up the bulk of Indiana's part time students—by allowing these students to access aid from the grant even if they attend some semesters full-time.
- **Expanded Access to Career Ready Funds (HEA 1333):** The state's [EARN Indiana](#) program that provides funding to encourage more internships for low-income students will expand to allow more students to participate.
- **National Guard Scholarships (HEA 1333):** This bill ensures that any member of the Hoosier National Guard qualifies for the [state's National Guard scholarship](#) regardless of his or her state of residence. The bill also requires recipients of this scholarship to use federal financial aid before using the state National Guard scholarship.
- **Truth in Borrowing (HEA 1042):** This law will require Indiana's public and private colleges to send specific disclosure information about college loans to students who have college loan debt.

Once signed by Gov. Mike Pence, all of these laws will be effective July 1, 2015.