



INDIANA COMMISSION *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

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Indiana Commission for Higher Education Asking for Feedback on Frank O'Bannon Grant Methodology to Maximize Funding for Students

The agency is seeking feedback from partners to maximize \$168 million appropriation

INDIANAPOLIS – For the first time, the [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](#) (Commission) is transparently sharing the [methodology](#) used to model future Frank O'Bannon Grant spending. The Frank O'Bannon Grant is Indiana's primary need-based financial aid program for residents attending Indiana institutions. Higher education institutions, financial aid organizations, and other key stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback to help ensure the state continues to maximize the approximately \$168 million annual appropriation to support as many students from low-income households as possible.

"Every dollar matters when it comes to helping students access and complete college," said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education. "By transparently sharing the forecasting methodology behind the Frank O'Bannon Grant, we're inviting collaboration from our higher education partners and stakeholders to ensure Indiana maximizes state resources so more Hoosiers can pursue higher education without unnecessary financial barriers."

Per Indiana statute, the Frank O'Bannon Grant includes both the Higher Education Award and the Freedom of Choice Award. As the state's primary need-based student financial aid program, the Frank O'Bannon Grant helped over 37,000 Hoosiers afford college at both Indiana public and private institutions in the last year alone. The Frank O'Bannon Grant represents approximately \$168 million of the approximately \$400 million total in state student financial aid each year for postsecondary education and training.

The Commission utilizes two distinct [forecasting models](#) to support the administration of the [Frank O'Bannon Grant](#) – the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) model and the Claims model. These models guide the development of the annual schedule of awards and act as a fiscal control to ensure spending stays within the appropriation.

FAFSA Model

The FAFSA model uses historical FAFSA-filing data through Indiana's April 15 priority deadline and historical Frank O'Bannon Grant utilization patterns. The model predicts future student financial need and enrollment behavior to develop an annual award schedule with the goal of maximizing the appropriation without overspending.

Claims Model

The Claims model utilizes institutionally submitted fall Frank O'Bannon Grant claims data through October to project total fiscal year spend. The model tracks payments in real-time as the fiscal year progresses and acts as a fiscal control once institutions begin submitting Frank O'Bannon Grant claims to ensure the current award schedule will contain spend within the appropriation.

The [2026-2027 Frank O'Bannon Grant schedule of awards](#) is based on the results of the FAFSA model and will guide institutions in developing financial aid packages for both prospective and current students. Using the FAFSA model, the projected total spend is \$156 million in fiscal year 2026 and \$157 million in fiscal year 2027.

Those interested in submitting feedback or comments to the Commission regarding the Frank O'Bannon Grant methodology should complete this [JotForm](#) by Wednesday, March 25. For questions about state financial aid, students can contact the Commission by phone at 888-528-4719 or via email at awards@che.in.gov.

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About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Created in 1971, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE, Commission) is the State's higher education coordinating agency, driven to improve economic and social mobility for fellow Hoosiers through postsecondary education and training, and is a part of Governor Mike Braun's Office of Education. The Commission also administers Indiana's state financial aid programs, including [21st Century Scholars](#), which celebrated 35 years in 2025.