



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*
HIGHER EDUCATION

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Filing for College Financial Aid Gets Easier

Students Have More Time to File, Can Use Tax Returns from Prior Years

This year, changes to the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) give students more flexibility when filing for college financial aid. The application is available three months earlier, and families are able to use income information from their 2015 income taxes. Previously, students were required to use their most recent tax return information, which created a time crunch for Hoosier families trying to submit the FAFSA by the March 10 deadline.

“Removing some of the barriers for students who apply for financial aid will help more qualify for both state and federal dollars to attend college and earn a degree,” said Teresa Lubbers, Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education. “Indiana has one of most generous need-based financial aid systems in the country, but every year students miss out by failing to file the FAFSA on time.”

The changes to the FAFSA were developed by the U.S. Department of Education to make the filing process easier. This year’s 2017-18 FAFSA opened October 1, 2016, compared to the January 1 open date of previous years. The March 10 deadline has not changed. Since the application opens earlier, students are able to use tax information from 2015. This simple change means families won’t need to rush to complete their taxes before filing for financial aid.

The first step for students who have never filed a FAFSA is to visit FSAID.ed.gov to create an FSA ID (Federal Student Aid ID). Students who already have an FSA ID should visit FAFSA.gov to begin their applications.

Students planning to attend college should file the FAFSA regardless of their income status. Many colleges require FAFSA information when determining institutional financial aid, and students without a FAFSA on file cannot receive state or federal financial aid.

For more information about paying for college visit www.LearnMoreIndiana.org/Cost.