



December 15, 2015

An Open Letter to the Education Community

As representatives of counselors, higher education administrators and state aid programs, we applaud the bipartisan support for the use of prior-prior-year income information (PPY) on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Federal data show that 2 million students already in college fail to file the FAFSA each year, as do 1 million graduating high school seniors, especially from low-income school districts. A simple goal to address this problem: make accessing federal student aid easier.

In September, the Obama Administration announced two major changes slated for the FAFSA: first, that PPY income (2015 tax year data) will be used to determine federal aid eligibility for the 2017-18 school year and second, that the 2017-18 FAFSA will be available to students on October 1, 2016.

We are committed to supporting a successful transition to PPY to ensure our collective memberships understand and support the goals of PPY. Through early FAFSA, students and families will have more time to consider their aid eligibility potentially at the same time many are searching for, applying to, and even selecting colleges - ideally allowing students and families more time to consider their enrollment choices.

We also recognize that the availability of the FAFSA in October has the potential to create significant changes in the college application and admissions process. Together, we encourage colleges and universities and all organizations who serve our students to work towards the goal of PPY to allow students more time to plan and, ultimately, to make informed enrollment decisions. Adhering to this objective, including the preservation of the May 1 decision deadline, is critical to making this important policy change a success for students and institutions.

We are committed to working closely with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) to ensure our professionals are prepared to assist students and families with this change. In the coming weeks, we will be working closely with each other and with FSA to provide information and resources to our constituent members to help answer the numerous questions pertaining to PPY implementation.

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP)

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)

National College Access Network (NCAN)

The College Board