



## 2014 State Roll Call

1. **Some states have begun to see a growth in their state tax revenues, after several years of decline. Has this happened in your state and if so, has it allowed for more funding for state student financial aid programs?**

<b>AK</b>	State tax revenues do not directly impact state financial aid programs in Alaska. Both Alaska's need-based grant and merit scholarship are funded by the Alaska Higher Education Investment Fund (AHEIF), capitalized in 2012 with \$400 million and operated similarly to an endowment. Related statutes indicate what percent of the fund balance at fiscal year end may be appropriated to fund scholarships and grants on a prescribed allocation between the two programs. AHEIF monies are used to fund program payments to students. Alaska's UA Scholars program, which offers scholarships for the top 10 percent of Alaska's high school students to attend the University of Alaska, is funded by the UA Land Grant Trust Fund and is not supported within the state's annual budget process.
<b>AZ</b>	Not only are Arizona's revenues not meeting projections, but also a court case found that during the recession the legislature did not follow the prescribed increases from a voter initiative for the K-12 system and is requiring \$317 million be paid this year and a total of over \$1.2 billion be repaid over several years. This a state with an \$8.2 billion total budget.
<b>AR</b>	Revenue has not grown and we have seen a tightening of the financial aid funds. With a \$115 million tax cut fully phased in this year, the 2015 legislature will have their hands full.
<b>CA</b>	California tax revenues have significantly increased. After several years of actual and threatened program cuts, the Cal Grant program is being expanded by mandating the submission of high school senior GPA's by high schools. Previously, it had been up to the student to see that their GPA was submitted. This will increase the number of award offers. Private college C Grant amounts were increased and a state loan program has been created for our undocumented student population.

<b>CT</b>	Total state tax revenues increased \$2.8 billion between FY 11 and FY 13. However, there has been no appreciable increase in state financial aid. In FY 2008, the total state financial aid budget was approximately \$64 million. The total state financial aid budget for FY 15 is \$42.5 million.
<b>DC</b>	Our funding has increased slightly.
<b>FL</b>	The state forecast indicates that Florida will have an increase in state revenue, but state revenues will remain lower than the 2007 levels for at least the next four to five years. The current growth in revenues has not translated into additional funds for state student financial aid programs. However, during this time merit-based funding has seen a reduction in funding, while need-based programs have seen an increase in funding.
<b>ID</b>	We've seen some growth but we have not fully recovered from the great recession. We're going to be requesting more funding this year.
<b>IL</b>	Illinois tax revenues are not growing. An increase in the State Income Tax will sunset in 2015 and should create some significant budgeting issues.
<b>IN</b>	The State Budget Agency is assuming that appropriations will grow at 1.5% annually in FY 16 and FY 17. According to state forecasts, Indiana expects that sales tax revenue will grow at 3.25% annually in FY 16 and FY 17 and individual AGI will grow at 3.7% annually in FY 16 and FY 17. However, corporate tax revenue will decrease at 2.5% annually in FY 16 and FY 17 and gaming tax (casino) revenue will decrease 5.9% annually in FY 16 and FY 17.
<b>IA</b>	Total tax collections in Iowa have increased since 2010; total Commission appropriations have increased by 23.1% since 2012.
<b>KS</b>	Unfortunately, Kansas is not seeing a growth in state tax revenues. In fact, the Rockefeller Institute of Government - the "go-to" source for information about state revenue collections - just issued numbers on what happened across states in the April-May-June quarter and no other state dropped as far as Kansas has. Kansas income tax collections came in 43% below the same period a year earlier. Kansas had the steepest drop of all states in both individual income tax and in combined revenue. Nationally, the average income tax decline was 7.1%. The reason is mostly attributable to legislated tax changes. Aggressive individual income tax reductions and repealed taxes on income from profits for owners of 190,000 small businesses were signed into law in 2012. Tax collections continue to decline and the Kansas Legislative Research Department - the Legislature's bipartisan research staff - estimates that the state would be confronted by a \$238 million dollar

<b>KS (cont.)</b>	budget shortfall in July 2016. More income tax rate reductions are scheduled to kick in all the way through 2018, further depressing receipts. Even if there is a new administration in November, it will be very difficult to get this situation turned around.
<b>KY</b>	The financial situation in Kentucky is starting to improve. However, there has been no change in funding levels for the state student aid programs.
<b>LA</b>	Funding for need-based aid has remained flat. Funding for merit-based aid increased due to more of less language included in the Appropriations bill. The Means of Financing ratio for merit aid varies between Tobacco Settlement Funds and General Funds.
<b>ME</b>	FAME has experienced level funding from state appropriations over the last biennium.
<b>MA</b>	The Massachusetts economy has experienced slight favorable growth in revenue. As such, funding for the public higher education system realized a modest increase in the current fiscal period. Support for public colleges and universities overall, was improved, when compared to the last fiscal year cycle. State financial aid programs also benefited from this improved revenue stream, with a fairly small 3.5% increase in funding. Although the increase was very modest, it sends a positive message for the Legislature's overall endorsement of initiatives being undertaken by the public higher education system.
<b>MN</b>	Yes, revenues have increased, but it's difficult to say whether this accounts for increases to student financial aid programs. We received a significant increase for the MN State Grant program and the MN Indian Scholarship program for the current biennium. However, most point to the Governor's tax increase on wealthy families as the main source of this revenue.
<b>MS</b>	Mississippi has seen revenue increases in the last couple of years. We have also seen increases in financial aid appropriations, but the increases have come in response to funding needs more than a deliberate reinvestment. The eligibility rules for our state need-based grant have been tweaked to allow for broader eligibility, so funds have been appropriated to make awards to eligible students. Also, all reserves collected from the repayment of loans were expended during the recession. Because prior-year collection dollars have been unavailable to make new awards, the state has needed to rely solely upon General Fund appropriations to make new loan offers.
<b>MO</b>	We have seen some modest increases in total state revenue and increases for state student aid programs were appropriated in FY 15. However, due to disagreement over the cost of some tax reduction legislation, the Governor has withheld the majority of the appropriated increase.

<b>NV</b>	Nevada has not seen growth.
<b>NJ</b>	New Jersey tax growth has been slow, however, it has not had any impact on state student financial aid programs.
<b>NM</b>	New Mexico has not seen growth.
<b>NY</b>	While New York's budget situation has improved, Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards are based on eligibility, and not limited by appropriation.
<b>ND</b>	North Dakota has a strong economy and growing revenues. As the legislative session begins to gear up for 2015, significant interest in higher education is being evidenced. Several factors have led to the growth of the state grant and scholarship programs. State commitment to the flagship need-based state grant has seen considerable funding increases over the last three biennium. Since 2005-06, individual student awards have increased by 175% and for the first time in 2013-14, part-time students could also receive funding. We hope to see additional funding for that program following the 2015 legislature. Additionally, North Dakota implemented a merit-based scholarship in 2010, the North Dakota Academic and CTE Scholarships. Since that time over 7,000 students have qualified for this \$6,000 scholarship, which is earned in high school by taking rigorous coursework and meeting academic and testing standards. There is interest in also growing this program by various groups. Looking to the future, beginning as soon as 2017, oil tax revenues will become available for use for the first time. The state's "Legacy Fund" group has targeted scholarships and grants for higher education as a potential benefactor. This is an exciting time in North Dakota as we anticipate the opportunities for students!
<b>OK</b>	Total state revenues have grown modestly over the last couple of years. However, state funding for higher education has grown less than 4% since the lowest funding level in FY 2012. Increases for state student financial aid programs has also been very modest.
<b>OR</b>	According to the economic forecast from September 2014, Oregon's employment growth has accelerated and the outlook for state revenue growth has become stronger. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission has recommended a major increase in funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant to the Governor. We will know more about the possibility of additional funds for the OOG after the Governor releases his recommended budget in November 2014, but we will not know what our actual funding for 2015-17 will be until the Legislative Assembly approves agency budgets in spring 2015. Despite promising revenue forecasts, however, Oregon's unique "kicker" law could negatively affect state agency budgets. The "kicker" law requires excess funds to be returned to taxpayers if actual revenues from personal

<b>OR (cont.)</b>	income taxes exceed revenue forecasts for income taxes by more than 2%. Oregon is one of two states with no sales tax, so the "kicker" can directly affect available funds for proposed increases to the Oregon Opportunity Grant.
<b>PA</b>	Although state tax revenue was slightly up by 0.11% in 2014 compared to 2013, overall tax revenue is still down 2.31% since 2008. For 2014-15 financial aid programs, PHEAA received level funding for all existing programs and \$5 million for one new program. In addition to the appropriated funds from the General Assembly, PHEAA contributed \$91 million in agency resources to support student financial aid. Level funding for 2014-15 is being provided to the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (14 state-owned universities), the four state-related universities (The Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh, Temple University and Lincoln University) while PA Community Colleges received a 1.6% increase in funding.
<b>RI</b>	In the FY 15 year (2014-15 academic year), the state actually cut all tax revenue funding to the State Grant program. We had anticipated \$4 million in tax revenue plus \$8 million in supplemental funding from our 529 plan, for a total of \$12 million. Instead, we received only the \$8 million in 529 funds. This required us to reduce the maximum annual grant award to \$500 (from the previous year's maximum of \$750.)
<b>SC</b>	South Carolina has seen moderate revenue growth for several years after a significant decline. The State Legislature has provided new funding primarily for the State's two need-based grant programs which includes South Carolina Tuition Grants (and the State Need-based Grants Program administered by the SC Commission on Higher Education). The maximum Tuition Grants have increased \$100 in each of the last three years because of new funds being provided. I would like to point out, to the credit of the South Carolina State Legislature, that South Carolina did NOT reduce funding to any student aid programs (grants or scholarship) during the recent economic downturn.
<b>SD</b>	South Dakota has not seen any significant growth.
<b>VT</b>	In Vermont we received a 1% increase effective in January of 2015 which they rescinded during the late summer.
<b>VA</b>	Due largely to cuts to spending for national defense, Virginia experienced an unexpected budget shortfall for FY 2015 and FY 2016 that has necessitated budget reductions. Higher education predictably took a hit but financial aid was spared. We are looking at a challenging budget in the upcoming sessions as more budget cuts are in order, but we are getting feedback that proposals to increase state financial aid would be well received despite financial aid receiving no increase for FY 2015.

<b>WA</b>	Tax revenue has grown - albeit slowly - in recent years. Flat tuition has obviated the need for increased funding for grant awards in the State Need Grant program, but the legislature has made investments in a public/private scholarship program (Washington Opportunity Scholarship) and added funding for the State Need Grant when they made undocumented students eligible. Going forward, the state faces a large deficit in the next biennium that may make it hard to make new investments in state aid programs, but the state has traditionally increased need-based grant awards along with tuition. However, the state supreme court has found the state has not met its constitutional duty to fund basic education, so the legislature must add a billion dollars in funding for K-12. That plus standard cost growth results in a projected deficit of \$2.5 billion or more.
<b>WV</b>	Our state revenue has gone down as a result of the downturn in the coal industry; higher education has taken budget cuts the last two years but financial aid has been preserved from funding cuts the last two years.

**2. Is your state participating in the FAFSA Completion Initiative? If not currently, do you have plans to do so? If you are participating, what kind of challenges have you faced in implementing this initiative?**

<b>AK</b>	Alaska participates in College Goal Sunday and the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) also operates several state programs that encourage FAFSA completion, all of which have been very well-received. For several consecutive years Alaska has seen a year-over-year increase in total FAFSA filings. Alaska does not currently participate in the federal FAFSA completion initiative.
<b>AZ</b>	Yes, the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education has received funding to program the matching of data, the formulation of reports, and the secure dissemination of this data weekly to our public high schools.
<b>AR</b>	We are not currently, but plan to.
<b>CA</b>	California has for several years provided high schools with data on FAFSA completion. With the FAFSA Completion Initiative, we are now expanding to high school districts and to our partners participating in the TRIO programs. No challenges since the infrastructure was already in place.
<b>CT</b>	We are not participating in the FAFSA Completion Initiative. We do not have plans to participate in the future.

<b>DC</b>	Yes we are. No challenges as yet!
<b>FL</b>	Florida is awaiting directive from the Governor regarding participating in the FAFSA Completion Initiative. In the interim, OSFA is taking the necessary steps toward participation. OSFA has recently signed an agreement with the USDOE and is currently in the process of establishing agreements with each district/school in the state. Once district/school agreements are in place and OSFA has been given the go ahead, district/school personnel will be able to access their reports through the secure State Student Financial Aid Database (SSFAD). The greatest challenge relates to securing the agreements with each of the individual entities.
<b>ID</b>	We are participating. We have not faced challenges yet since we had a recent staffing change, we're still finalizing paperwork.
<b>IL</b>	Illinois has been doing FAFSA data-matching for a number of years with good success. One of the challenges of success is, in fact, success itself. The state's main need-based grant program, MAP, is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. As we increase the number of FAFSA filers, increase the proportion of on-time filers, and increase the proportion of high need filers, we are depleting the available program funding much faster than in the past.
<b>IN</b>	We actually did this last year. The main challenge we have faced the first year is simply getting the word out regarding the reports. I think schools do a good job trying to get their seniors to complete the FAFSA's by hosting FAFSA workshops and information nights (many of which are hosted by our finaid partners), but I do not think that enough schools are aware of the reports that we created for them last year and therefore aren't using them. I think that sending the reports out through our internal high school guidance counselor reporting system (CHIPS) list was a good start, but it's important to use other means to communicate the availability of these reports. We are partnering with the Superintendent's Association to make sure we can get the MOU's back. Over the next several weeks, our Outreach Coordinators will be presenting to superintendents across the state at regional IAPSS meetings, and the FAFSA report will be one of the topics covered. I'm hopeful that getting this information in front of the superintendents will help get the information to school personnel from the top down, so we're not just relying on school counselors to get the word out. Of course, another challenge may be to get the superintendents to complete the agreements we need to have in order to share these reports with the high schools, but I'm hopeful that they'll see the value of the reports and quickly return completed agreements back to us.

<b>IA</b>	Yes. The only challenges have been in regard to potential match rates between the data submitted by the high school and the corresponding data submitted on the FAFSA (using Fname, Lname, DOB, and Zip - no unique identifiers).
<b>KS</b>	We are trying to participate in the FAFSA Completion Initiative. We began discussion with an urban lower-income school district last March and drew up a contract that was sent to them at the end of March and we basically haven't gotten any further since. I've checked with individuals at the school district on several occasions to see where we are. The ball is currently in their court to review and approve the contractual agreement and then we can proceed. We are just planning to work with this one district during our first year of implementation and then move to another urban school district in another part of the state, as well as a larger rural area, during the second year and by year three or four, go statewide.
<b>KY</b>	Kentucky is participating in the FAFSA Completion Initiative. Drafting the data sharing agreement was a bit challenging. Other than that, everything has gone smoothly with implementing the initiative on the high school side. We are facing significantly more challenges with the "other designated entities" since we have never shared data electronically with GEAR UP or TRIO.
<b>LA</b>	Yes, no challenges thus far.
<b>ME</b>	FAME has participated in FAFSA Completion Initiatives for at least the past 11 years. We offer FAFSA completion support by mailing reminders to seniors, offering Financial Aid Night presentations to all Maine high schools, conducting FAME FAFSA Completion Labs from mid-January to mid-February, providing FAFSA completion webinars, reminder emails, and FAFSA focused section on the FAME website. We support completion of next steps by offering IRS DATA Retrieval webinars, providing IRS Data Retrieval section on the FAFSA section of the FAME website, presenting "After the FAFSA... Yes, There's More" at Maine high schools. Additional support includes FA 101 - Friday, October 10, 2014 (all day FAME-funded financial aid training for school guidance counselors); Wednesday Webinars; 5 on the 5th email newsletter; customized presentations; and our Hotline Number - 1-800-228-3734. Through our partnership with the State of Maine Department of Education, we are able to post high school senior FAFSA completion statistics by Maine high school on our website. High schools that provide us with the name and date of birth of each senior can receive a list of those students who have not filed a FAFSA. Privacy and legal restrictions sometimes prevent us from accessing the data needed to accurately calculate FAFSA completion rates.

<b>MA</b>	Massachusetts plans to have the FAFSA Completion Initiative in place for the 2015-16 award year. Work is in process for this to occur.
<b>MN</b>	Minnesota hopes to be able to contract with Colorado to begin the FAFSA Completion Initiative for the 2015-16 aid year. We do not have adequate IT resources at the present time to do all of this work in-house, so we are hoping the US Department of Education gives permission to states to contract with another state for this service.
<b>MS</b>	Yes, Mississippi is participating in the FAFSA Completion Initiative. We already had an established infrastructure for data-sharing with high school counselors due to the merit requirements of our state grants. We are circulating and signing new Participation Agreements now, and we will soon be implementing a new counselor Certification and PIN Application process with more stringent security protocols. The greatest challenges have been explaining the need for the change to a process that has been in place for many years and collecting the Participation Agreements.
<b>MO</b>	We plan to participate beginning in January 2015.
<b>NV</b>	Nevada is not participating at this time but may reconsider at a future date.
<b>NJ</b>	HESAA is participating and setting up the systems to get all scheduled high school graduates from the State Education Department to promote and work with high schools to complete everyone's FAFSA by state deadlines.
<b>NM</b>	This year, for the first time in New Mexico, there is a collaborative effort to incorporate three national initiatives: 1) FAFSA Completion Events - more than 35 FAFSA workshops scheduled across New Mexico in high schools, colleges, and community colleges. 2) College Application Week - a statewide initiative that aims to give every senior the chance to fill out at least one college application before they graduate. 3) College Decision Day - An outreach initiative that publicly acknowledges and celebrates students who are accepted and attend college in the fall 2015. The goal of the collaborative is to increase the numbers of students who start and COMPLETE the FAFSA in New Mexico, thereby increasing the numbers of students who are able to receive financial aid and attend college. Events begin in November with College Application Week, then FAFSA Completion Events between December and April, culminating with College Decision Day in May. New Mexico has not been faced with any challenges yet in the implementation of this initiative.
<b>NY</b>	New York plans to participate for the 2015-16 academic year FAFSA cycle (this winter).

<b>ND</b>	<p>The American College Application Campaign (ACAC) and the FAFSA Completion Project both fall in line with the North Dakota University System's goals to encourage post-secondary education in the state following graduation. Our state will pilot a high school this November for the ACAC project. Beginning in January, it is our plan to begin funneling information to counselors on how their high school FAFSA completions are progressing. Although we will not pursue the student-level data sharing in 2015, we do anticipate this as our phase 2 of this project. The state has a strong commitment from the Bank of North Dakota in its college planning efforts. They provide a wide variety of college prep services to students and high school counselors. Additionally, financial aid directors are committed to educational opportunities and participate in financial aid nights as requested. North Dakota exited College Goal Sunday after 2013 and has no plans to reinstate that grant at this time. Efforts wherein the high school counselors and principals are the primary contact to these students, using the financial aid community as support, is an effort that we hope will show great benefit. We are looking to touch the student through those who may have the strongest relationship and greatest influence, high school counselors and peers. Both the North Dakota University system and the Bank of North Dakota are collaborating on several projects for higher education, both of these included.</p>
<b>OK</b>	<p>Oklahoma is not currently participating in the FAFSA Completion Initiative. No decision to participate has been made at this point, but the proposal will remain under consideration if agency administrative resources are adequate to support the project.</p>
<b>OR</b>	<p>Oregon piloted a FAFSA Completion project with four high schools in spring 2014, and we plan to expand the program to more schools in 2014-15, including several community colleges. Initially, we offered the program to ten schools including five that participate in Oregon's ASPIRE mentoring program for high school students, but only four were able to meet the two-month timeline. For these four schools, we saw a modest 2-3 % increase in the percentage of seniors completing the 2013-14 FAFSA during May and June 2014. By June 2014, we had received data-sharing agreements from eight schools and heard from 17 others that want to participate in 2014-15. Challenges: For the pilot in May and June 2014, the 2-month turnaround was too short. Ultimately, only 4 sites participated. The 2-month timeframe was also too short for schools to show significant increases in percentages of FAFSA's filed by graduating seniors. However, they were able to develop best practices to implement for 2014-15. For schools that did not participate</p>

<b>OR (cont.)</b>	in the ASPIRE program, lack of familiarity with our agency programs. Some schools believed that they were already doing a good job in encouraging students to complete the FAFSA, despite federal data indicating otherwise.
<b>PA</b>	Pennsylvania is planning to have the FAFSA Completion Initiative in place for the 2015-16 award year. Work is in flight for the technical system build while a legal/confidentiality agreement is in place. During November, financial aid training workshops are provided to guidance counselors across the state where this initiative will be promoted.
<b>RI</b>	We are in the very early stages of participation. So far only one local school department has signed on.
<b>SC</b>	We are not participating at this time. No definitive decision for participation has been made for the future. While student funds have increased in recent years, after flat funding during the recession, the Commission's operating budget is less than it was in 1993-94. Funding to take on this initiative is not available.
<b>SD</b>	Currently our state is not involved. We have coordinated efforts at roughly half of our high schools through the College Access Challenge Grant program, and a number of other districts have developed programs at the district level.
<b>VT</b>	Yes, we did a 10 school pilot last year and we expect to roll this out to all schools for this coming FAFSA cycle. Challenges we faced were the mismatch between the student names as they presented on the FAFSA and how the schools reflected them along with the very large number of students who couldn't find/didn't find their high school names on the FAFSA list and entered their own version. We also have a very large immigrant population in Vermont and date of birth tends to be a real challenge for them.
<b>VA</b>	Virginia does not currently have the infrastructure to fully participate in the FAFSA Completion Initiative at this time (we are decentralized and do not receive ISIR's) but we are looking into available options.
<b>WA</b>	Washington is approaching the initiative through a statewide data match with the K-12 agency. The Council will permit counselors and school staff to access a secure portal to view record level data. This builds on the infrastructure in place sharing FAFSA filing for the state early commitment program, the College Bound Scholarship.
<b>WV</b>	Yes, we started this past year with a pilot project with 10 counties and plan to expand it statewide this fall. The way we set our up is high schools have to upload a csv file with student name, birth date, & zip code. The issues come with variations in data with name, students who move and have a different zip code but it is not updated at the school, and incorrect birth date information at the school level. High school personnel are often not tech savvy. Also, FAFSA filing is not at the top of their priority list.

**3. What new activities or initiatives is your state implementing or are their programs that you are planning for the future? (You also may be tweaking existing program and you can talk about that too!)**

<b>AK</b>	Alaska is in the process of redesigning its need-based program, based on the increased and long-term program funding provided by the AHEIF. Alaska continues to expand or refine its suite of higher education outreach programs, including outreach and awareness programs for Alaska's children, teens, and parents; programs in support of adult learners and Alaska's workforce; the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS), which includes tools and support services for counselors, teachers, and mentors; and promotion and support of Alaska higher education institutions.
<b>AZ</b>	The ACPE has been asked by the universities and the Arizona Board of Regents to coordinate Arizona's College Application Campaign. We are combining it with the former College Goal Sunday effort and together they comprise an academic year long College Goal Arizona Initiative. It is all about getting the middle students to apply for both college and the FAFSA. The Commission will also be undertaking a Student Financial Aid Task Force at the prodding of two Commissioners and the interest of various constituents. Ground rules required include we work for aid for students attending all sectors of higher education and nobody undercuts the effort with lobbying efforts for their sector alone.
<b>AR</b>	None that I know of.
<b>CA</b>	California has implemented a Middle Class Scholarship to make sure all students with family incomes under \$100,000 have at least 40% of their state university tuition covered by some type of financial aid. Above \$100,000 the Middle Class Scholarship tapers off until at least 10% of the fees are covered for incomes up to \$150,000.
<b>CT</b>	In FY 14, the state introduced a new financial aid program called the Governor's Scholarship Program (GSP). One component of GSP is called the Academic Incentive Award (AIA), which provides additional need-based grant awards to students who complete 30 or more credits in the prior year and have a GPA within the allowable range for the year. This is a first for our state. The AIA was initiated for the 2014-15 academic year. We are also making improvements to the overall GSP program based on the experiences of the first full year of implementation in 2013-14. Some of these improvements include fine-tuning the distribution formula, increasing the part-time awards and establishing procedures for program audits of the participating institutions.

<b>DC</b>	We are taking the major task of developing a new data system for the DCTAG (National in scope) and other DC programs that may exist in the future.
<b>FL</b>	The 2011 legislative changes to Florida's Bright Futures initial eligibility test requirements are realized with the initial recipients for the 2014-15 academic year. Initial students must now achieve a combined 1170 score on the Critical Reading and Math sections of the ACT or a 26 composite score on the ACT. When the merit-based program was created in 1997, high school graduates needed to earn a 970 SAT score. The 2014 Florida Legislature created a new state merit-based scholarship program to reward high school students who become National Merit or National Achievement Finalists. Qualifying students receive a scholarship equal to the institutional cost of attendance less their Bright Futures award and National Merit/National Achievement award. The 2014 Florida Legislature appropriated \$1 million to provide supplemental need-based educational benefits to honorably discharged student veterans during holiday and semester breaks when their Post-9/11 GI Bill payments stop.
<b>ID</b>	I'm very new in my position so I'm no sure how I will shape our primary scholarship program yet. I have heard chatter about outcomes-based funding so I'd like to explore that possibility.
<b>IL</b>	The Agency is not implementing any new large initiatives or programs. The latest budget request will include a modest increase for MAP, but there really are no funds available for new non-mandatory initiatives.
<b>IN</b>	We are evaluating our part-time student population and grants and will release recommendations November 1, 2014 on ways for increasing the completion rates of part-time students and students who combine part-time and full-time enrollment. Additionally, we are evaluating the impact of our financial aid reforms passed in 2013 and have an expected release for that report in December. We have devised a conceptual framework for an acceleration-specific grant but funding constraints make it unlikely that we will be able to establish it this budget.
<b>IA</b>	CACG programming (texting, possible aid programs); GEAR UP grant 2.0 (7 year grant); new Scholarship and Grant System.
<b>KS</b>	Right now we are just trying to hold on to what we have. With the current condition of our state's economy, we know that higher education is the most likely culprit for budget cuts as they cannot cut Medicare/Medicaid payments and there was a court challenge to the cuts in K-12 funding and money has to be restored there. There isn't anywhere else to go but higher education. Although we have asked for a \$2.5 million increase in FY16 and another \$2.5 million in FY 17 for our primary need-based grant program we are not hopeful. We are actually anticipating a mid-year recission.

<b>KY</b>	The Kentucky General Assembly enacted a new state financial aid program during their 2014 regular session. The KY Coal County College Completion Program provides scholarships to decrease financial barriers to bachelor's degree completion for permanent residents of Kentucky's coal-producing counties. The program also provides grants to community colleges located in coal-producing counties to support outreach, advising, and transfer initiatives to increase student success and degree production in the area. The scholarship program was implemented for the 2014-15 academic year. Implementation of the grant program is planned for the 2015-16 year.
<b>LA</b>	The major new initiative we are implementing is text messaging to a pilot group of 3500 high school seniors (nudge messages to prevent "summer melt") and incoming college freshmen who are recipients of our state merit-based award (to provide accurate information to assist them with maintaining the award during the first year as our data shows that is when they are most likely to lose the award).
<b>ME</b>	<u>SALT</u> : The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) is expanding the SALT program in Maine. Created by American Student Assistance (ASA), SALT is an innovative program designed to empower college students and alumni to confidently approach, manage, and pay back their student loans while gaining financial skills for life. In 2012, FAME launched SALT as a pilot program at ten participating Maine colleges and universities. As a result of the pilot, Maine has become a national leader in its statewide efforts to promote financial literacy. Colleges and universities across the state have engaged thousands of students to utilize SALT, which offers well-timed, neutral financial education resources, advice and self-paced courses designed from the student's point of view. Students also have access to live one-on-one counseling from trained advisors who can answer students' questions objectively and advocate on their behalf. FAME's newest effort will extend SALT in Maine for an additional two years, and will be offered at all interested Maine colleges at a significantly reduced cost, made possible by financial support from FAME and ASA. In addition, all Maine high school students will have access to a customized saltmoney.org site, including interactive money management lessons, a scholarship search tool, and resources to assist in college planning. <u>GEAR UP</u> : FAME is very pleased to report that the University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) has been awarded a \$20 million, seven-year GEAR UP Grant. GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, helps at-risk middle and high school students in Maine prepare for and be successful in post-secondary education. This grant is projected to serve up to 7,600 students annually from 63 high-poverty, rural schools in 26 school districts.

<b>ME (cont.)</b>	As one of the grant's external partners, FAME will be working closely with Syntiro, a Readfield based non-profit who is responsible for grant administration. FAME's College Access and Financial Education team will support the grant's goals to improve students' and families' knowledge of post-secondary education, financial literacy and the options available to them by conducting financial literacy and financial aid sessions in all 26 school districts over the next seven years. <u>State of Maine Grant</u> : FAME is in the exploration phase of developing a tiered state grant award structure to encourage persistence and completion.
<b>MA</b>	For the past four years, the Department of Higher Education has focused its efforts on an outcome-based initiative, the Vision Project, which seeks to make Massachusetts a leader in producing the best educated citizenry and workforce in the nation, and to be a national leader in research that drives economic development. Activities to track our progress are focused on seven outcomes: College Participation, College Completion, Student Learning, Elimination of Disparities, Workforce Alignment, Preparing Citizens, and Research (to drive economic development). We have gained buy-in from the Governor and the Legislature, which ultimately has resulted in better funding for related activities/initiatives that will help to achieve the goals under each of the seven outcomes. Massachusetts will continue to remain focused on various components of the Vision Project over the next few years, which can be viewed as a strategic plan or blueprint for public higher education. More information on the Vision Project, such as annual reports, institutional dashboards, can be accessed at: <a href="http://www.mass.edu">www.mass.edu</a> .
<b>MN</b>	The Minnesota Dream Act was first implemented during the 2013-14 aid year. This law allowed undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition rates and state financial aid programs. For that year, 350 students applied. We have approximately 550 applicants thus far for the 2014-15 aid year.
<b>MS</b>	Mississippi's Education Achievement Council created a State Aid Study Committee a couple of years ago. The Study Committee recommended a number of changes to broaden access to the state's need-based aid program, such as simplifying the application, updating the required high school curriculum, and increasing the income eligibility threshold. Many of the recommendations resulted in legislative changes, so we've seen considerable growth in the program. The Study Committee is continuing to meet, but will spend the next year looking at: 1) How state aid could be awarded more effectively to incentivize completion; and 2) How state aid could be used to encourage adults to return to college for credential/degree completion.

<b>MO</b>	The joint (House and Senate) Committee on Education is beginning a study of our three major student aid programs. They propose to look at their impact on access, persistence, and graduation. In addition, the Department is beginning a statewide strategic planning initiative which will likely include information about and proposals for improving state student aid.
<b>NV</b>	The Nevada System of Higher Education will be pursuing a state-funded need-based financial aid program in the upcoming 2015 Legislative session.
<b>NJ</b>	We are planning on matching state grant applications with income information gathered from the State Treasury Office.
<b>NM</b>	In 2014, New Mexico launched a new initiative focusing on the health care needs surrounding New Mexico. One component was to improve rural health in New Mexico by increasing medical provider coverage in underserved areas in the state. The key advantage is New Mexico has been extremely successful at recruiting and retaining health professionals to work in New Mexico's neediest communities. The state was successful in the expansion in several Health Loan for Service and Loan Repayment programs. In addition, the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) is proposing an amendment to the Nursing Educator Fund in the 2015 Legislative Session to expand the ability of registered nurses to apply with the intent to practice as a nurse educator. New Mexico will continue to conduct a comprehensive review of all state-wide financial aid programs to determine their effectiveness and to recommend possible policy changes.
<b>NY</b>	We have introduced a STEM scholarship program.
<b>ND</b>	The North Dakota University System and the state-owned bank, the Bank of North Dakota, have begun discussions on opportunities to assist upper low-income to middle income families afford higher education. Additionally, the two entities are working toward a state-wide financial literacy campaign proposal. Although both of these ideas are in their infancy, I hope to have positive information to share in 2015 on the opportunities we are creating for our students in North Dakota.
<b>OK</b>	Oklahoma is in the eighth year of a unitized data project collecting individual financial aid data from state institutions in order to assist in making the state aid programs more effective and efficient.
<b>OR</b>	Major redesign and refocus of the Oregon Opportunity Grant, the state's need-grant program. Expansion of FAFSA Completion Project to more high schools and community colleges. Expansion of OSAC's ASPIRE program to more high schools. Several community colleges are also interested in participating. Expansion of College Goal Oregon to include more sites and to become a year-round event that includes FAFSA Completion as a major focus.

<b>PA</b>	<p>The Governor recommended a new merit-based program funded with a \$5 million appropriation for 2014-15. The Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program (RTSS) provides awards of up to \$2,000 for full-time students and \$1,000 for part-time students (in conjunction with any State Grant awards) who have a GPA of at least 3.25, are at least a second-year student, and have a family income that does not exceed \$110,000. Since awards for eligible students are expected to exceed financial resources available, awards will be made on a first-come, first-served basis using the FAFSA and State Grant Form completion date as the determinant. The Pennsylvania Targeted Industry Program (PA-TIP) is being supported with PHEAA business earnings of \$6 million for 2014-15, an increase of \$1 million from 2013-14 to meet growing demand. PA-TIP assists students enrolled in short-term vocational programs in the fields of energy, advanced materials and diversified manufacturing, and agriculture and food production. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry provides data on employment outcomes for graduates. Beginning with the 2015-16 award year, PHEAA will no longer permit PA State Grants to be used at schools in non-reciprocal states. This will reduce the eligible states to Delaware, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia. There are some limited exceptions for unique programs of study. Approximately 5,200 students will lose awards as a result of this action with an award value of \$1.8 million. That savings is being used to extend the application deadline date to August 1 for non-renewal students applying to Open Admission institutions in Pennsylvania.</p>
<b>RI</b>	<p>Not aware of any new programs at this time.</p>
<b>SC</b>	<p>The major "new" activity the Commission is involved with has nothing to do directly with the Tuition Grants Program or the students served by the Program. The government for the State of South Carolina has undertaken a major initiative involving information Security and Data Protection which is consuming staff member's time and agency resources. The Commission was required to completely revamp its website and many of its processes this year with additional procedural and administrative changes to come.</p>
<b>SD</b>	<p>South Dakota is continuing to work at growing the modest state investment in need-based funding as well as taking part in the National College Application Campaign with a number of pilot schools this year.</p>
<b>VT</b>	<p>Dual enrollment, early college, Vermont Strong, aspiration work, S40, etc.  <u>Dual Enrollment</u> - Funded by the state allows high school students to take up to 2 college courses free of charge at participating colleges while they are enrolled in high school. In 2015, they will start a book/fees/travel stipend that VSAC will administer. Starting in 2016, local school districts will need to pay for 1/2 of the cost of the course and the state will fund the second half. This program enhances high school offerings for students that have maxed out courses at their</p>

<p><b>VT (cont.)</b></p>	<p>local high school and serves as an introduction to college to increase aspiration rates. <u>Early College</u> - Vermont has six colleges (5 public and 1 private) that allow students to simultaneously complete their freshman year of college and their senior year of high school. The colleges accept the state aid to education that would have been sent to the local high school in lieu of tuition and fees. This program allows Vermonters to go to school for one year free of charge. <u>Vermont Strong</u> - This legislation was passed this past spring. It is a loan forgiveness program to incent Vermont students to go to school in Vermont and stay in Vermont to work. It is currently under construction. <u>Aspiration Work</u> - VSAC was granted authority to move \$100,000 from our grant program to an Aspiration Pilot. We selected one of the lowest performing high schools, in terms of aspiration, to offer a pilot program to try and increase the aspiration rate of their seniors. This pilot is also under construction. <u>Naviance</u> - VSAC is working closely with the Agency on Education to offer a career and planning tool that also facilitates a personalized learning process for students that Vermont state law is requiring all schools to have in place by next year. VSAC negotiated a state-wide contract that allows us to offer to all Vermont schools at a greatly reduced price. <u>S40</u> - A task force created by the Vermont Legislature to explore returning higher ed funding to the levels we had in 1980.</p>
<p><b>VA</b></p>	<p>Virginia has had considerable discussion about how better to utilize state financial aid programs to meet state goals for progression and completion. The proposals so far have been far-flung ("pay-it-forward" and a proposal to fully fund student need for a large number of needy students) but I suspect that we will see the definition of full-time for state aid be increased to 15 credit hours as well as require completion of 30 hours per year in order to maintain eligibility for our most generous program. There continues to be interest in the measurable success of other programs that encourage/support progression and completion. Virginia was successful in securing the new GEAR UP grant. In addition to tracking 6,000 middle school students, the grant will also allow us to identify 200 homeless students.</p>

<b>WA</b>	The Legislature adopted the Council's proposed educational attainment goals of 100% high school graduation or equivalent and 70% of adults hold a postsecondary credential. The Strategic Action Plan to reach the goals includes proposals to close the funding gap in State Need Grant, fulfill the obligations in College Bound Scholarship, and reinvest in State Work Study. It also includes the development of an Affordability Framework to approach higher education funding. The Council implemented a State Need Grant for undocumented students using a third party application - over 2,000 students applied. A Legislative workgroup is exploring the long-term viability of the College Bound Scholarship (early commitment aid program).
<b>WV</b>	Marketing 15 to finish campaign, trying to establish a statewide financial aid night calendar, also have a financial aid night recorded webinar that we will post on our website, received new GEAR UP grant, had one of our vehicles wrapped with "File Your FAFSA" logo, continuing statewide default management contract with public schools.

### INFORMATION SOURCES

<b>AK</b>	Stephanie Butler Director of Program Operations Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education Juneau, AK 99811 Phone: 907-465-6743 Email: <a href="mailto:Stephanie.butler@alaska.gov">Stephanie.butler@alaska.gov</a>
<b>AZ</b>	Dr. April Osborn Executive Director Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education 2020 N. Central Avenue; Suite 650 Phoenix, AZ 85004 Phone: 602-258-2435, Ext. 106 Email: <a href="mailto:alosbor2@azhighered.gov">alosbor2@azhighered.gov</a>
<b>AR</b>	Philip Axelroth Financial Aid Program Coordinator Arkansas Department of Higher Education 423 Main Street; Suite 400 Little Rock, AR 72201 Phone: 501-371-2052 Email: <a href="mailto:phil.axelroth@adhe.edu">phil.axelroth@adhe.edu</a>

<b>CA</b>	<p>Bryan Dickason  Senior Programs Manager  Program Administration and Services Division  California Student Aid Commission  P.O. Box 419030  Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9030  Phone: 916-464-8919  Email: BRYAND@csac.ca.gov</p>
<b>CT</b>	<p>Mark E. French  Director of Student Financial Aid  State of Connecticut  Office of Higher Education  61 Woodland Street  Hartford, CT 06105-2391  Phone: 860-947-1856  Email: mfrench@ctohe.org</p>
<b>DC</b>	<p>Kenneth L. Howard, L.P.C.  Operations Manager  Higher Education Financial Services  Postsecondary &amp; Career Education  Office of the State Superintendent of Education  Government of the District of Columbia  810 1st Street NE, 3rd Floor  Washington, D.C. 20002  Phone: 202-727-2824  Email: kenneth.howard@dc.gov</p>
<b>FL</b>	<p>Brian W. Underhill  Director, State Scholarship and Grant Programs  Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)  Florida Department of Education  Phone: 850-410-5185  Email: Brian.Underhill@fldoe.org</p>
<b>ID</b>	<p>Joy LaRue  Scholarships Program Manager  Office of the State Board of Education  650 W. State Street #307  P.O. Box 83720  Boise, ID 83720-0037  Phone: 208-332-1595  Email: Joy.Larue@osbe.idaho.gov</p>

<b>IL</b>	<p>Michael Solomon  Manager, Policy Analysis  Illinois Student Assistance Commission  500 West Monroe, 3rd Floor  Springfield, IL 62704  Phone: 217-524-7933  Email: michael.solomon@isac.illinois.gov</p>
<b>IN</b>	<p>Mary Jane Michalak  Associate Commissioner, Student Financial Aid  402 West Washington Street, W462  Indianapolis, IN 46204  Phone: 317-234-5664  Email: mjmichalak@che.in.gov</p>
<b>IA</b>	<p>Todd Brown  Director of School Services  Iowa College Student Aid Commission  430 East Grand Avenue, Floor 3  Des Moines, IA 50309-1920  Phone: 515-725-3405  Email: Todd.Brown@iowa.gov</p>
<b>KS</b>	<p>Diane Lindeman  Director of Student Financial Assistance  Kansas Board of Regents  1000 S. W. Jackson; Suite 520  Topeka, KS 66612-1368  Phone: 785-296-4749  Email: dlindeman@ksbor.org</p>
<b>KY</b>	<p>Rebecca Gilpatrick  Director of Student Aid Services  Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority  P.O. Box 798  Frankfort, KY 40601  Phone: 502-696-7394  Email: RGILPATR@kheaa.com</p>

<b>LA</b>	<p>Dr. Sujuan W. Boutte  Executive Director  Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance  602 N. 5th Street  Baton Rouge, LA 70802  Phone: 225-219-7294  Email: <a href="mailto:sujuan.boutte@la.gov">sujuan.boutte@la.gov</a></p>
<b>ME</b>	<p>Claude D. Roy  Education Services Officer  Finance Authority of Maine  P.O. Box 949, 5 Community Drive  Augusta, ME 04332-0949  Phone: 207-620-3507  Email: <a href="mailto:croy@famemaine.com">croy@famemaine.com</a></p>
<b>MA</b>	<p>Dr. Clantha McCurdy  Senior Deputy Commissioner  Access and Student Financial Assistance  Massachusetts Department of Higher Education  454 Broadway, Suite 200  Revere, MA 02151  Phone: 617-391-6098  Email: <a href="mailto:cmccurdy@osfa.mass.edu">cmccurdy@osfa.mass.edu</a></p>
<b>MN</b>	<p>Ginny Dodds  Manager, State Financial Aid Programs  Minnesota Office of Higher Education  1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350  St. Paul, MN 55108  Phone: 651-355-0610  Email: <a href="mailto:Ginny.Dodds@state.mn.us">Ginny.Dodds@state.mn.us</a></p>
<b>MS</b>	<p>Jennifer Rogers  Director of Student Financial Aid  Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning  3825 Ridgewood Road  Jackson, MS 39211  Phone: 601-432-6791  Email: <a href="mailto:jrogers@ihl.state.ms.us">jrogers@ihl.state.ms.us</a></p>

<b>MO</b>	<p>Leroy Wade  Deputy Commissioner  Missouri Department of Higher Education  P.O. Box 1469  Jefferson City, MO 65102  Phone: 573-751-2361  Email: Leroy.Wade@dhe.mo.gov</p>
<b>NV</b>	<p>Renee Davis  Director of Student Affairs  Nevada System of Higher Education  2601 Enterprise Road  Reno, NV 89512  Phone: 775-784-3447  Email: renee_davis@nshe.nevada.edu</p>
<b>NJ</b>	<p>Jason Chavez  Associate Director, Grants &amp; Scholarships  New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority  4 Quakerbridge Plaza, P.O. Box 540  Trenton, NJ 08625-0540  Phone: 609-588-3273  Email: Jason_Chavez@hesaa.org</p>
<b>NM</b>	<p>Heather Romero  Financial Aid Manager  New Mexico Higher Education Department  2048 Galisteo Street  Santa Fe, NM 87505-2100  Phone: 505-476-8410  Email: heather.romero@state.nm.us</p>
<b>NY</b>	<p>Frank Ballmann  Director, Federal Relations Services  New York State Higher Education Services Corporation  1100 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. 12th Floor  Washington, DC 20036  Phone: 202-721-1186  Email: frank.ballmann@hesc.org</p>

<b>ND</b>	<p>Brenda Zastoupil  Director of Financial Aid  North Dakota University System  1815 Schafer Street; Ste. 202  Bismarck, ND 58501  Phone: 701-224-2451  Email: <a href="mailto:brenda.zastoupil@ndus.edu">brenda.zastoupil@ndus.edu</a></p>
<b>OK</b>	<p>Irala K. Magee  Director of Scholarship and Grant Administration  Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  P.O. Box 108850  Oklahoma City, OK 73101-8850  Phone: 405-225-9378  Email: <a href="mailto:imagee@osrhe.edu">imagee@osrhe.edu</a></p>
<b>OR</b>	<p>Susan Degen  Administrator, State Grants and Government Affairs  Oregon Office of Student Access and Completion  1500 Valley River Drive, Suite 100  Eugene, OR 97401  Phone: 541-687-7451  Email: <a href="mailto:Degen_s@osac.state.or.us">Degen_s@osac.state.or.us</a></p>
<b>PA</b>	<p>Christine Zuzack  Vice President, State Grant and Special Programs  Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency  1200 North Seventh Street  Harrisburg, PA 17102-1444  Phone: 717-720-2368  Email: <a href="mailto:czuzack@pheaa.org">czuzack@pheaa.org</a></p>
<b>RI</b>	<p>Michael Joyce  Director of Program Administration  Scholarship and Grant Division  Rhode Island Education Assistance Authority  560 Jefferson Boulevard  Warwick, RI 02886  Phone: 401-736-1172  Email: <a href="mailto:mjoyce@riheaa.org">mjoyce@riheaa.org</a></p>

<b>SC</b>	Earl Mayo Director South Carolina Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission 800 Dutch Square Boulevard, Suite 260A Columbia, SC 29210-7317 Phone: 803-896-1122 Email: earl@sctuitiongrants.org
<b>SD</b>	Dr. Paul Turman Vice President for Academic Affairs South Dakota Board of Regents 306 East Capitol Avenue; Suite 200 Pierre, SD 57501-2545 Phone: 605-773-3455 Email: Paul.Turman@sdbor.edu
<b>VT</b>	Marilyn Cargill Vice President of Financial Aid Services and Research Vermont Student Assistance Corporation P.O. Box 2000, 10 East Allen Street Winooski, VT 05404 Phone: 802-542-2201 Email: cargill@vsac.org
<b>VA</b>	Lee Andes Assistant Director of Financial Aid State Council of Higher Education for Virginia 101 North 14th Street James Monroe Building, 10th Floor Richmond, VA 23219 Phone: 804-225-2614 Email: LeeAndes@schev.edu
<b>WA</b>	Rachelle Sharpe Director, Student Financial Assistance Washington Student Achievement Council 917 Lakeridge Way, SW P.O. Box 43430 Olympia, WA 98504-3430 Phone: 360-753-7872 Email: RachelleS@wsac.wa.gov

<b>WV</b>	Brian Weingart Senior Director of Financial Aid West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission 1018 Kanawha Boulevard East, Suite 700 Charleston, WV 25301-2827 Phone: 304-558-4618 Email: <a href="mailto:bweingart@hepc.wvnet.edu">bweingart@hepc.wvnet.edu</a>
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