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CHANGES TO APPLICATION CYCLE MEAN EARLY FAFSA AVAILABILITY

September 26, 2016



The Lindenwood University Financial Aid Office has launched an informational campaign to educate students and their family members about changes to the application cycle for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the primary form used by the federal government, states, and colleges to award grants, scholarships, work study, and student loans. Beginning Oct. 1, 2016, each year's form will become available three months earlier than it had previously. This means students can file their 2017-18 FAFSA as early as Oct. 1, 2016, rather than beginning on Jan. 1, 2017.

The change is designed to better align the financial aid and college application processes and to give students more time to apply for aid. The earlier deadline also means that families will use income and tax information from two years prior, rather than one year. For example, for the 2017-2018 FAFSA, families will use 2015 tax information instead of 2016 information. This allows families to file a FAFSA before they file their previous year's taxes.

"This major change is expected to be a huge benefit for students and families when it comes to exploring their potential colleges and financial aid options," said Candice Brooks, senior financial aid officer at Lindenwood. "Families will be able to file earlier

and more accurately, and being able to use tax information from two years prior means more people will be able to conveniently use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to import their tax information directly into their FAFSA.”