



EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES

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Redesigning State Financial Aid: Principles to guide state aid policymaking

While a college education is more important than ever, financing the cost can be daunting. This is especially the case for today's college students who are often older, attend part time and are challenged with state financial aid programs designed to serve students right out of high school.

The Education Commission of the States, with support from USA Funds, is addressing this critical issue during a two-year, intensive project focused on bringing state financial aid policies in alignment with college completion goals. Through advancing principles to guide state aid policymaking, providing a 50-state policy database and supporting states through targeted technical assistance, Education Commission of the States is examining promising practices in state financial aid and assisting states in advancing policy.

The project launches today with a panel discussion featuring higher education policy experts at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., and the release of a new report: [*Redesigning State Financial Aid: Principles to Guide State Aid Policymaking*](#).

"Our goal with this project is to support intentional aid redesign conversations at the state level," said Brian Sponsler, director of Education Commission of the States' Postsecondary and Workforce Development Institute. "The principles discussed in our new report serve as a set of guideposts for state policymakers, institutional professionals and community leaders as they seek to improve state financial aid policies and programs to best serve students and our communities."

The project is designed to help educate stakeholders about the guiding principles in reimagining their state financial aid programs and offer policymakers resources to help examine and implement necessary policy changes. Learn more at www.statefinancialaidredesign.org.

Some highlights from the report:

- 29 financial aid programs will only fund students who enroll full time.
- 43 programs define the duration of the award by a set number of terms or years, as opposed to anchoring eligibility to the length of time needed to complete a program at varying enrollment intensities.
- 33 programs link aid eligibility to college entrance exams like the SAT or ACT or a high school grade point average -- traditional college readiness measures that are of little relevance for adults returning to higher education after time in the workforce.

For questions, contact ECS Director of Communications Amy Skinner at askinner@ecs.org or (303) 299. 3609.