



NEWS RELEASE

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Iowa College Aid Announces Commitment to Expand College Access at White House Event *National summit for college access and success focuses on college completion, K-16 partnerships*

Des Moines, IA., December 4, 2014 – Today, Karen Misjak, executive director of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, joins President Obama, the First Lady and Vice President Biden along with hundreds of college presidents and other higher education leaders to announce new actions to help more students prepare for and graduate from college.

The White House College Opportunity Day of Action helps to support the President’s commitment to partner with colleges and universities, business leaders and nonprofits to support students across the country to help our nation reach its goal of leading the world in college attainment.

Iowa College Aid’s commitment is to build community capacity to increase college attainment through its College Changes Everything initiative, a collective impact approach that leverages and coordinates local efforts to build systems and community support for increasing postsecondary education and training. Beginning December 15, 2015, Iowa communities have an opportunity to apply for \$5,000-\$10,000 planning and technical assistance grants to solidify local college access and success collaboratives. College Changes Everything engages key stakeholders from across different sectors in Iowa communities to work towards a common goal – increasing the community’s college attainment rate to 60 percent by 2025. Currently eight Iowa communities – Burlington, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Marshalltown, Ottumwa and Waterloo – are participants or partners in College Changes Everything.

“Iowa’s economic future depends on us producing more college graduates,” said Misjak. “College Changes Everything takes a unique approach to addressing workforce needs and increasing the educational attainment of our state. By engaging key stakeholders and building upon the strengths and long-term plans of each partner, College Changes Everything is a catalyst for sustainable local network development.”

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Today's participants in the White House College Opportunity Day of Action were asked to commit to new action on one of four areas: building networks of colleges around promoting completion, creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness, investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative and increasing the number of college graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Expanding opportunity for more students to enroll and succeed in college, especially low-income and underrepresented students, is vital to building a strong economy and middle class. Today, only 9 percent of those born in the lowest family income quartile attain a bachelor's degree by age 25, compared to 54 percent in the top quartile.

Those interested in learning more about the White House College Opportunity Day of Action can live stream the event from the White House's [blog](#) or follow the [@WhiteHouse](#), [@FLOTUS](#), and [@ReachHigher](#) Twitter accounts for coverage. More information on Iowa College Aid and the College Changes Everything initiative is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

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About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa's students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$70.0 million annually, conducts research and distributes higher education data, and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being used to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa's students and families. More information is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.