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MEDIA ALERT
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Florida data fuels White House push to get college aid to more high school students

Citing research from the Florida College Access Network, President Obama visits Miami high school, describes plan to let schools know which students have not yet completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Miami—To announce an executive order intended to get more high school seniors to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), President Barack Obama touted the work of a Florida high school and drew on research from the [Florida College Access Network](#) at an event in Miami on Friday, March 7. He and First Lady Michelle Obama were greeted with screams by students of Coral Reef Senior High School, which he praised for having 71 percent of its students complete the financial aid form last year.

The names of high school seniors attending Miami-Dade schools who have not completed the FAFSA by spring are confidentially provided to school administrators, who can then have counselors and teachers encourage and assist students to complete the form. [This process is part of data-sharing pilot project between the U.S. Department of Education and Miami-Dade schools](#) that President Obama announced he would now make available to any state whose governor approves. “For years, we’ve been hearing from school administrators and counselors that what they really need to improve FAFSA completion rates is to know which students haven’t completed the form,” President Obama said. “That way schools can save time and get to those students’ needs in a timely manner.”

Coral Reef Senior High School was identified last year as a top performer of FAFSA completion in the [Florida FAFSA Finish Line](#), an online interactive map that tracks Florida high school FAFSA completion rates throughout the school year. The web site is produced by the Florida College Access Network (Florida C.A.N.!), whose [policy brief on federal financial aid](#) was cited, nearly verbatim, in the President's afternoon remarks at the high school. "Last year, almost half of high school graduates in Florida didn't fill out the FAFSA form," said President Obama. "And as a result, they lost out on over \$100 million in Pell grants. Think about that. \$100 million that could have helped Florida students help pay for college was just left on the table."

"Many deserving students miss out on college because they do not understand the FAFSA or they don't think they will be eligible to receive money for college," said Troy Miller, Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst at Florida C.A.N.! "We applaud the President's decision to allow school administrators access to the names of FAFSA non-completers. If counselors and other school staff are able to help these students complete the FAFSA, potentially tens of thousands more Florida high school seniors could gain access to higher education."

About the Florida College Access Network

The mission of the Florida College Access Network is to create and strengthen a statewide network that catalyzes and supports communities to improve college & career preparation, access, and completion for all students. Our Big Goal is to increase the percentage of Florida residents who hold a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential to 60% by the year 2025. For more information, visit www.floridacollegeaccess.org.