

Media Contact:  
Ashley J. Martinez  
(813) 974-8606  
[amartinez@floridacollegeaccess.org](mailto:amartinez@floridacollegeaccess.org)

PRESS RELEASE  
FLORIDA C.A.N.!  
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, ALN 190  
Tampa, FL 33620



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**Florida CAN announces College Ready Florida statewide initiatives**  
*Schools, districts, communities can register now to host college access initiatives during 2016 – 2017 school year*

**Tampa, FL** – Florida College Access Network (Florida CAN) is pleased to announce the official launch of College Ready Florida, a suite of statewide initiatives designed to build a college-going culture and help all high school students—especially low-income students and those who are the first in their families to go to college—continue their educations beyond high school.

“Florida’s most valued resource is our students,” said Laurie Meggesin, Executive Director of Florida CAN. “The College Ready Florida initiatives ensure our students have the knowledge, resources and support they need to plan, be prepared and be successful in the postsecondary or career training that helps them reach their potential.”

Over the past year, in partnership with schools, districts and community organizations, Florida CAN successfully piloted three programs that aim to boost college-going rates for high school seniors:

- **Apply Yourself Florida** (Florida College Application Week), part of the American College Application Campaign, aspires to position every graduating senior to apply to at least one postsecondary institution (2-year or 4-year college, certificate program, or vocational school). Schools and communities select any week during the month of October to coincide with the application deadlines for some state universities.

– more –

- **Florida FAFSA Challenge** strives to boost the number of Florida seniors completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which helps students qualify for financial aid like Pell Grants to pay for their college expenses. The challenge encourages all Florida schools and districts to set a FAFSA completion goal 5% higher than their rate of last year, or alternatively, set a goal that better fits their school's unique circumstances. The next Florida FAFSA Challenge begins when the 2017-18 FAFSA application opens on October 1, 2016.
- **Florida College Decision Day**, Florida's adoption of the First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Initiative's College Signing Day, recognizes and celebrates high school seniors for their postsecondary plans and encourages all students to prepare early for college. Florida College Decision Day is held annually on or around May 1st to coincide with the date most seniors must inform colleges of their plans to enroll.

Registration for [Apply Yourself Florida](#) and the [Florida FAFSA Challenge](#) is now open. To sign up or learn more, please visit the [Florida Initiatives](#) page of the Florida CAN website or contact Arianna Pineiro, Florida CAN's Special Projects Coordinator at [apineiro@floridacollegeaccess.org](mailto:apineiro@floridacollegeaccess.org).

College Ready Florida is made possible thanks to the support of the [Helios Education Foundation](#) and [Swift Family Foundation](#).

### **About 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](http://www.floridacollegeaccess.org).

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