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An all-time low: Bright Futures projected to drop 80,000 scholarships and cut \$347 million by 2017-18

The popular student aid program is set to award the smallest number of scholarships to high school graduates in its 17-year history. What happened to Florida's flagship financial aid program? Find out in this new policy brief.

Tampa—Making higher education affordable to Florida students has been an often-stated priority of state leaders this legislative session. Yet the state's flagship student aid program, Bright Futures, is projected to award the lowest number of scholarships to graduating high school seniors in its history.

Starting this spring, the number of first-time scholarship recipients will drop by almost half, resulting in 20,000 less high school seniors qualifying for the popular program compared to last year. In fact, new estimates show that over the next four years, as many as 80,000 students will miss out on \$347 million in scholarships due to cuts scheduled to begin this year. What once provided financial help to 1 in 3 high school graduates en route to college will now only benefit less than 1 in 8 starting this fall.

Amid shrinking state investments in student financial assistance, [a new policy brief released today by the Florida College Access Network](#) takes a closer look at why the state's flagship student aid program has changed so dramatically in such a short time. The brief also maps out potential solutions to create student aid policies that

match our state's vision to increase its economic base through improving financial access to higher education.

“The value and need for a highly skilled and educated workforce have been highly touted by our state's leaders in Tallahassee this session,” said Florida C.A.N.! senior researcher and policy analyst Troy Miller. “If these sweeping cuts to financial aid are enforced as scheduled, our state will find itself at a competitive disadvantage. We need to take steps forward, not backward, in growing Florida's talent pool, including fully leveraging our state's financial aid resources to encourage and accelerate access and attainment of postsecondary education and training. If we do not, Florida students and their families will soon face a new and unfortunate reality when it comes to college affordability.”

POLICY BRIEF

College Affordability Adrift: Florida's Bright Futures Program Faces \$347 Million in Cuts by 2017 -18

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.