



Statement Addressing the President’s Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Priorities

WEST CHESTER, PA, March 12, 2019 — AccessLex Institute opposes several provisions in the President’s 2020 budget proposal, released yesterday, that would modify key components of the federal financial aid system.

If the proposed changes were adopted by Congress, critical resources would be directed away from students pursuing higher education to other priorities. This would mean that access to an advanced degree—and the subsequent personal, professional, and societal benefits that come with attaining one—will be ever more closely tied to one’s access to personal financial resources.

AccessLex supports repayment simplification and auto-enrolling severely delinquent borrowers into Income-Driven Repayment (IDR) plans; however, we oppose changes that make it harder for borrowers to repay their student loans, especially ones that penalize graduate and professional borrowers. Enacting a 25 percent monthly payment increase and a 20 to 50 percent increase to borrowers’ years in repayment would add substantial new financial burdens for borrowers. Also, eliminating the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, which provides a financial incentive for law graduates and other professionals to both enter and persist in critical, underserved fields, would create fewer and less experienced resources for persons who rely on these vital services.

“As advanced education becomes more necessary and costs naturally rise, Congress and the Administration should be working to help students meet their educational and workforce goals,” said Christopher P. Chapman, President and Chief Executive Officer of AccessLex Institute. “Unfortunately, many of the policies proposed in this budget would make obtaining a degree more expensive and harm the American economy. AccessLex Institute stands ready to work with Congress and the President on devising policies that improve access to and the affordability of graduate and professional education.”

As Congress contemplates policy proposals that could change financing for those seeking an advanced degree through reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, it should develop a bipartisan framework that improves access to advanced education, particularly for historically underrepresented minorities and economically disadvantaged students. Policies that increase affordability for all students and maintains the incentive for advanced degree holders to enter, and persist in, public service professions should be maintained.

See our guiding principles for Higher Education Act Reauthorization [here](#).

See our full set of Higher Education Act policy recommendations [here](#).