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Officials unveil universal scholarship application

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By Rob Moritz
Arkansas News Bureau

LITTLE ROCK — State officials announced a universal scholarship application today designed to replace the separate forms students had filled out for the state's 21 separate scholarship programs.

"It's easy, painless ... it takes five to six minutes," Jim Purcell, director of the [Arkansas Department of Higher Education](#) ^[1], told a crowd of students at Wilbur D. Mills High School in Little Rock.

"This is the key, this application is here for you," Purcell said after demonstrating how to complete the online questionnaire.

Purcell said he noticed the need for a universal application two years ago when he became higher education director and found out the state had 21 scholarships and students had to complete applications for each individually.

By answering just a few simple questions, including age, grade-point average, ACT scores and family income level, the student will quickly be matched with the various scholarships for which they may qualify, he said.

Gov. Mike Beebe said the YouUniversal Arkansas Financial Aid System will save counselors, students and parents time when looking for possible scholarships.

"This application will make it easier for Arkansans to find the financial aid they need to obtain a degree," Beebe said, praising the Legislature for approving the program and \$800,000 in funding last year.

Lajuana Green, director of counseling services for the Pulaski County Special School District, told reporters later many students may have missed out on scholarships in the past because of the volume of applications.

"There were just an array of applications that you would have to complete and various deadlines that you would have to remember," Green said, adding students, parents and counselors all had to complete portions of each individual application.

"All of that has been combined into this one application and that's what makes this so unique," she said.

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