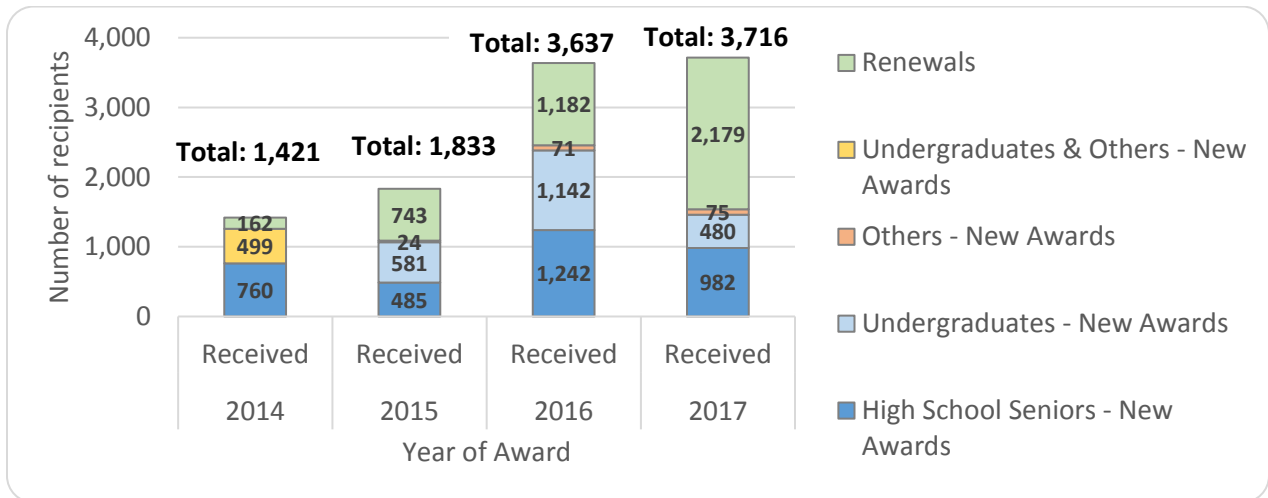


Evaluation of the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship-2017

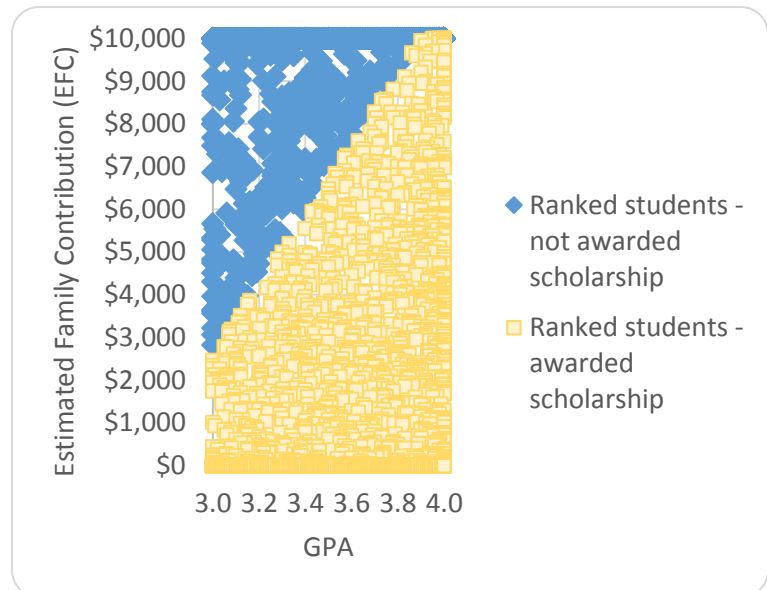
The Opportunity Scholarship is reaching more students

In award year 2017¹, a record number of students received the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship. Due to the increase in the number of awards in 2016, a large share of awards in 2017 were renewals (59 percent). Between 2016 and 2017, the number of high school seniors receiving new awards decreased by 21 percent while the number of current college undergraduates receiving new awards decreased by almost 60 percent.



Applicants with the highest rank are awarded the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship

Applicants are ranked according to their grade point average (GPA) and estimated family contribution (EFC) to college expenses. An applicant's EFC is weighted more than their GPA in determining their rank. Each year, depending on available funds, students with certain combinations of GPA and EFC will receive the award. In 2017, students with a GPA of 3.0 received the award if their EFC was below \$2,500 while students with a GPA of 4.0 received the award if their EFC was below approximately \$10,000.



¹ Award year refers to the year the student receives the award. Scholarships awarded in 2017 would be disbursed during the 2018 fiscal year.

Minorities and students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch are more likely to apply and be ranked

Over one-quarter of students who graduated from an Idaho high school with a 3.0 cumulative GPA applied and were ranked for the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship. This rate was higher for students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch than those students not eligible (33 percent versus 25 percent). And it was higher for students who identified as Hispanic, Native American, or Black/African American than for students who identified as White, non-Hispanic.

	Share of graduates with a 3.0 cumulative GPA who apply and are ranked
State of Idaho	27%
Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	33%
Not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	25%
White, non-Hispanic	26%
Hispanic	35%
Native American	39%
Black/African American	32%
Asian	22%
Other race	27%

Being offered the Opportunity Scholarship increases a student’s probability of going on to college

Each year students with a different combination of EFC and GPA are offered the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship. For instance, in award year 2015, students with a 3.3 GPA were offered the award only if they had an EFC of \$0. Students with a GPA below a 3.3 were not offered the award at any level of EFC. However, in award year 2016, all students with a GPA between 3.0 and 4.0 and an EFC below \$10,000 were offered the award due to an increase in funding. By exploiting these cross year differences in who is offered the scholarship, we are able to estimate the impact of being offered the scholarship on immediate college attendance rates. We estimate that being offered the Idaho Opportunity Scholarship increases the immediate college attendance rates for eligible students by 9 percentage points. This result is statistically significant.

When the data becomes available, we will examine the impact of receiving the scholarship on the probability a student is retained between the first and second years of college. Right now, we can only report that students who received the Opportunity Scholarship in award year 2015 had first year retention rates of 86 percent compared to retention rates of 72 percent for all first year college students and retention rates of 82 percent for first-year college students who had applied for the Opportunity Scholarship but had not been offered.