



FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENTS

By Kim Slote, policy analyst

TRAINING

Dear Colleague Letter [ANN-16-12](#) was published by the USDE July 1, 2016: Training Workshops-Fundamentals of Federal Student Aid Administration. The training workshops are scheduled for July 2016 through June 2017 at one of the USDE's regional training facilities. Each in-person workshop is four and one half days in length. All participants wishing to register for and attend a Fundamentals of Federal Student Aid Administration workshop must successfully complete an online course titled 'Introduction to Federal Student Aid' first. The online course can take up to 20 hours to complete. Three workshops are available this year exclusively for schools with clock-hour programs. The DCL has a number of questions and answers outlining who should register and how, along with a schedule and location of all the in-person training workshops.

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) July 1, 2016: 2016 FSA Training Conference for Financial Aid Professionals. The 2016 FSA Training Conference will be held November 29 through December 2, at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Conference hours will begin Tuesday at 8 am and end Friday at 3 pm. Some of the topics for this year's conference program

will include changes and updates to the following:

- Student loan repayment options
- FAFSA
- Verification
- Cash management
- Loan reconciliation
- Federal regulations
- Direct Loans

Registration and lodging information can be found at <http://fsaconferences.ed.gov>. Program and session information will be posted in the near future.

CASH MANAGEMENT

On July 1, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Cash Management Electronic Announcement #2: Posting Contract Information and Providing Contract URL to the Department of Education. As a result of the Program Integrity and Improvement final regulations published [Oct. 30, 2015](#), all institutions with a Tier One or Tier Two arrangement must post any contracts or agreements established with a third-party servicer or financial institution to the institution's website. This information must be posted no later than Sep. 1, 2016. Institutions must also provide the USDE the URL to this posted



FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENTS

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information, so that it can be included in a centralized database that will be accessible to the public. Additional instructions are provided in the announcement regarding these requirements.

A [Federal Register Notice](#) was issued by the USDE July 15, 2016: Comment Request; Cash Management Contract URL Collection. The USDE is requesting comments on this new information collection. Comments are due on or before Sep. 13, 2016.

FSA FEEDBACK SYSTEM

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE July 1, 2016: Federal Student Aid Launches Online Feedback System. The FSA Feedback System is an online portal that allows students, parents, borrowers and others to submit complaints or compliments and to report possible suspicious activity in relation to their federal student aid program experiences. The information provided through the system will help improve delivery and oversight of the federal financial aid programs and will allow for more timely and meaningful resolution to customer issues. The online portal is located at StudentAid.gov/feedback.

FEDERAL NEED ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) July 5, 2016: Federal Need Analysis Methodology for the 2017-2018 Award Year. This announcement provides an update to the [Federal Register Notice issued May 24, 2016](#). The “Education Savings and Asset Protection Allowance” table was missing information in error. The missing row reflects information for parents of dependent students where the age of the older parent is “25 or less” and is provided in the announcement.

CAMPUS BASED PROGRAMS

On July 6, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): eCampus-Based Electronic Signature Reminder. Schools are encouraged to utilize the eSignature option for the Chief Executive Office signature on the following forms:

- FISAP
- Lobbying form
- Work Colleges Application
- Work Colleges Expenditure Report
- Expenditure Report for Title IV Aid to Students with Intellectual Disabilities



FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENTS

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Additional information is available in the [June 26, 2014 Electronic Announcement: Implementation of Electronic Signature and Two Factor Authentication for eCampus-Based Website.](#)

TECHNICAL

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE July 12, 2016: Availability of MyStudentData Download Record Layout for 2017-2018 FAFSA on the Web. This FAFSA on the Web function allows students to download processed results from their Free Application for Federal Student Aid into a machine-readable, plain text file. The record layout will assist software vendors in designing new tools for students to maximize the usefulness of the data. Instructions for how to access the record layout are provided in the announcement.

On July 29, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Issue Alert: EDEExpress 2016-2017, Release 2.0 Update Available to Resolve Issue with Modifying Direct Loan Actual Disbursements Using External Change Import. Upgrades provided in this version help resolve a software issue in the Direct Loan module from the prior release. Information on this issue is outlined in the announcement. The new EDEExpress 2016-2017 version is available for download at <https://fsadownload.ed.gov>.

STUDENT AID INTERNET GATEWAY

A [Federal Register Notice](#) was issued by the USDE July 14, 2016: Comment Request; Student Aid Internet Gateway Enrollment Document. The USDE is proposing an extension of an existing information collection. Comments are due on or before Sep. 12, 2016.

HEAL PROGRAM

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) July 14, 2016: HEAL Program Information - Maximum HEAL Program Interest Rates for Quarter Ending Sep. 30, 2016. The “Current Maximum Interest Rates” section of the [HEAL Interest Rates](#) page of the [HEAL Program Area](#) on the IFAP website has been updated with the maximum HEAL Program interest rates for the quarter ending Sep. 30, 2015.

REFERENCE GUIDES

The updated reference guides below were published by the USDE in July. The guides listed are linked with the corresponding electronic announcement with the date of publication.

- [2017-2018 Expected Family Contribution Formula Guide – July 14, 2016](#)



FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENTS

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- [Volume 4 – Processing Aid and Managing FSA Funds \[2016-2017 Federal Student Aid Handbook\] – July 20, 2016](#)
- [Volume 3 – Calculating Awards & Packaging \[2016-2017 Federal Student Aid Handbook\] – July 21, 2016](#)
- [2017-2018 EDE Technical Reference \(Final\) – July 25, 2016](#)
- [2016-2017 COD Technical Reference \(July 2016 Update\) – July 28, 2016](#)
- The Federal Servicer Results for the Quarter Ending May 31, 2016
- The Explanation for the Quarter Ending May 31, 2016
- The Federal Servicer Allocations in effect through Feb. 28, 2017

LOAN SERVICING

On July 15, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Loan Servicing Information – Performance Metrics for Jan. 1, 2016 through May 31, 2016 and Allocation Information in Effect Through Feb. 28, 2017. This announcement provides the results for servicer performance in customer satisfaction. Each servicer's allocation of future loan volume is determined by these results when applicable. Links in the electronic announcement provide the following information:

- The Federal Servicer Results for the Quarter Ending March 31, 2016
- The Explanation for the Quarter Ending March 31, 2016
- An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE July 21, 2016: Loan Servicing Information – Federal Loan Servicer Team Change. VSAC Federal Loans will no longer operate as a vendor in the federal student loan servicer team. Direct Loan accounts currently assigned to VSAC Federal Loans will be transferred to Nelnet, a Title IV Additional Servicer. Transfer of accounts will occur in several groups in August 2016. Borrowers affected will be notified before and after the transfers occur. A list of questions and answers are provided in the announcement for more information.
- [Gainful Employment Electronic Announcement #83 – How to Submit Supporting Documentation for Draft Completers List Corrections – July 15, 2016](#)

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

Three Electronic Announcements were published in July 2016 regarding Gainful Employment. Links to these announcements with dates of publication are as follows:



FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENTS

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- [Gainful Employment Electronic Announcement #84 – Reminder: Confirming Final Submission of GE Completers List Corrections by July 28, 2016](#)
- [Gainful Employment Electronic Announcement #85 – Alternative Earnings Survey Resources Now Available – July 26, 2016](#)
- [G-845 to be sent to Los Angeles DHS-USCIS Field Office – July 19, 2016](#)

IRS ‘GET TRANSCRIPT ONLINE’ TOOL

On July 26, 2016, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): Availability of the IRS ‘Get Transcript Online’ Tool. The IRS relaunched its ‘Get Transcript Online’ tool on June 7, 2016, which is available at www.irs.gov. You can find the tool under the “Tools” tab by clicking “Get a tax transcript”, then selecting “Get Transcript Online”. This tool uses a new enhanced two-step, multi-factor authentication process requiring users to register before submitting a transcript request. Additional information is provided in the announcement on how to register and request a transcript.

VERIFICATION

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE July 29, 2016: 2017-2018 Verification Suggested Text Package. There are three appendices attached to the announcement explaining important information related to verification. The topics are provided below.

- APPENDIX A: 2017-2018 Suggested Verification Text

FORMS

The listed Electronic Announcements represent forms and application materials that have been updated and made available by the USDE in July 2016, along with the dates of publication. The announcement on the G-845 form indicates a new address where the completed forms must be sent.

- [Notice of the updated Draft 2017-2018 Federal Student Aid Application Materials – July 18, 2016](#)
- [eCampus-Based Application for the Fiscal Operations Report for 2015-2016 and Application to Participate for 2017-2018 Now Available – July 25, 2016](#)
- [Renewal of Private Education Loan Applicant Self-Certification form for use by institutions and private educational loan lenders – July 27, 2016](#)



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- APPENDIX B: Table of 2017-2018 Verification Items
- APPENDIX C: 2017-2018 Verification Tracking Groups, FAFSA Information Required to be Verified

Institutions are not required to use the USDE's suggested text and formats for verification documents, with the exception of the "Statement of Educational Purpose" in Appendix A. Institutions must use the exact language provided by the USDE for the "Statement of Educational Purpose".