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Tip^{of} the Week

Want an easy way to obtain forms, brochures, and other printed materials? It's as simple as a click of your mouse. You choose the publication and TG does the rest. Visit www.tgslc.org/publications/index.cfm

Federal updates

ED approves new teacher loan forgiveness forms

Last week, ED released Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) GEN-05-02, announcing the availability of the revised Teacher Loan Forgiveness Application and Teacher Loan Forgiveness Forbearance Form. The previous versions of the forms expired October 31, 2004; however, ED has allowed FFELP participants to use the expired forms until the revised forms became available.

Changes to the forms

Because of certain provisions of the Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act (Act) signed by President Bush on October 30, 2004 (see *Shoptalk Online*, [Edition 279](#)), significant changes have been made to the teacher loan forgiveness forms. The revised forms include new eligibility criteria brought about by the Act that, if met, may increase benefits (up to \$17,500) for a borrower who:

- Served full time for five complete, consecutive years at an eligible Title I secondary school teaching mathematics, science, or special education, or at an eligible Title I elementary school teaching special education.
- Received his or her first student loan between October 1, 1998, and October 1, 2005.
- Meets the definition of a “highly qualified” teacher as defined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Implementation

FFELP participants may begin distributing the revised forms for immediate use. Beginning July 1, 2005, only the revised forms may be provided to borrowers. However, in some instances, the previous version of the forms may continue to be processed after that date. For example, a borrower who submits the previous application after July 1 and is eligible for the increased loan amount will either need to provide the required certifications to supplement the previous version of the application, or complete the new version of the application.

Availability

TG has posted the revised Teacher Loan Forgiveness Application and Teacher Loan Forgiveness Forbearance Form on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/forms/frms_disforg.cfm.

More information

If a borrower believes that he or she may qualify for either the standard or the increased forgiveness amount, the borrower should call TG customer assistance at (800) 845-6267 for additional information and instructions. To access DCL GEN-05-02, visit the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site at: www.ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/GEN0502.html. Watch for a series of questions and answers to aid with implementing the new teacher loan forgiveness forms in next week’s edition of *Shoptalk Online*.

ED releases updated unpaid refund discharge application

ED recently published Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) GEN-05-03/FP-05-03 announcing the approval of the Loan Discharge Application: Unpaid Refund for use in the FFELP and the Federal Direct Loan Program.

The Loan Discharge Application: Unpaid Refund is used to evaluate discharge eligibility for borrowers who did not receive refunds to which they were entitled from their schools.

Program participants may begin distributing the revised form immediately. Beginning July 1, 2005, only the revised form may be provided to borrowers. However, the previous version of the form may continue to be processed after that date.

More information and questions

The Loan Discharge Application: Unpaid Refund is available for download on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/forms/frms_disforg.cfm. To access GEN-05-03/FP-05-03, go to the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site at www.ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/GEN0503.html.

For questions regarding the unpaid refund discharge application, call Rose Ortiz-Juarez in TG's compliance administrative operations at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4775, or send an e-mail message to rose.ortiz@tgslc.org.

TG updates

Rattled by RT4? Attend TG's free RT4 telephone conference

TG invites you to join a free telephone conference on the return of Title IV funds (RT4) entitled "RT4 Basics and Beyond" on Thursday, March 17, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. (CST).

TG is hosting the telephone conference to help new and seasoned financial aid officers demystify the RT4 calculation and to empower them with some suggestions on how to improve the RT4 process within their offices. During the conference, Kelly Kaelin, TG senior policy advisor, will:

- Provide some general principles of the RT4 process.
- Explain the elements of an RT4 calculation.
- Provide recommendations on how to avoid some of the more common RT4 findings in a program review.

A brief question-and-answer session will follow the presentation. Questions may be submitted in advance of the event to sheila.casey@tgslc.org. The telephone conference is free of charge and open to participants from any institution.

To register

To register and get further details, contact Premiere Teleconferencing at (800) 289-0579 and reference confirmation number 7746253.

More information

For more information about the event, visit www.tgslc.org or contact Sheila Casey at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4576, or by e-mail at sheila.casey@tgslc.org.

TG publishes new report on state of student aid

TG has released a new edition of the *State of Student Aid and Higher Education in Texas*. The report contains data on college costs for the 2004-2005 academic year,

the sources and types of financial aid available in the state, and the indebtedness of Texas college students, as well as information on Texas educational attainment levels and the state's rapidly changing demographics.

The report presents 92 one-page fact sheets that provide insight on how student aid in Texas compares to other states and to the nation as a whole. The report offers data analyses on several topics:

- State demographics
- Educational attainment
- College costs
- Paying for college
- Grant aid
- State loan programs
- FFELP loans guaranteed by TG
- Student debt
- Defaults and collections

Changes to the new report include the addition of data on Texas college graduation rates, the percent of Texas aid recipients from low-income families, and the number of needy Texas students who are not receiving state grants.

"With the Texas Legislature meeting for its biennial session and Congress preparing to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, it is important for policymakers, the financial aid community, and the public to have access to current and accurate information on the state of higher education in Texas," said George Torres, TG assistant vice president for congressional and legislative relations. "The *State of Student Aid and Higher Education in Texas* provides an in-depth overview of student financial aid in Texas that can be used for reference and policy development purposes."

For valuable perspectives on trends and issues in higher education and the student financial aid industry, be sure to check out the new report from TG. The report is available on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/pdf/sosa.pdf.

Trends and issues

TG co-sponsors chat event on distance education, financial aid

How distance education affects a student's financial aid options will be the topic of an upcoming *Mapping Your Future*[™] (MYF) online chat event scheduled for

Tuesday, March 8, at 2 p.m. (CST) on the *Mapping Your Future* Web site, www.mapping-your-future.org.

MYF, a public-service, nonprofit organization providing college, career, financial aid, and financial literacy information and services, will offer this special chat event. Experts from across the country will answer questions during the chat, which is designed to help students and their families understand the types of online and distance education, as well as their effect on financial aid eligibility.

Anyone with Internet access can join the chat by visiting the MYF Web site. At the time of the event, visitors should go to mapping-your-future.org and select the chat session at the top of the home page.

Other special chat events are scheduled during the year:

- April 12, 2005: Deferments, forbearances, and default prevention
- May 10, 2005: Loan consolidation, forgiveness, cancellation, and discharge
- August 9, 2005: College admissions and standardized tests
- September 13, 2005: Debt management strategies

MYF is a national, collaborative, public-service project of financial aid industry partners that provide free college, career, financial aid, and financial literacy services to students, families, and schools.

Legislative update

The February 25 edition of TG's *Legislative Report* includes updates on a provision of the initial FY 2006-2007 Texas state appropriations bill draft developed by the Legislative Budget Board that proposes to decrease appropriations for the TEXAS Grant program and increase appropriations for the Texas B-On-Time Programs; the higher education- and student financial aid-related bills that have been pre-filed for consideration during the 79th Texas Legislative Session; and a congressional update on federal legislation affecting higher education and student financial aid, including Pell grants and the GEAR UP Program, among others. Keep up with the latest developments by reading the full report on *TG Online* at www.tgslc.org/lege_report/index.cfm.

This, that, and the other

Here is a little something to think about over your morning cup of joe. A handful of college professors around the nation have begun offering courses that study coffee and its effect on society. A sociology professor in Kentucky called it an "academic epiphany" when he realized he was forming relationships with other regulars at his morning coffee shop that he may otherwise never have known. According to the article, 15 students enrolled in his class "The Café and Public Life," which focuses "not only on coffee as a drink, but how its consumption has changed society

through the ages." To read the article, visit
www.cnn.com/2005/EDUCATION/02/25/coffee.class.ap/index.html.



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To ask questions about *Shoptalk Online*, please contact Communications at (800) 252-9743, ext. 4732 or communications@tgslc.org.

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