



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

FINANCIAL AID DEVELOPMENTS

By Kim Slote, Assistant Associate

CAMPUS-BASED PROGRAMS

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Feb. 2, 2021: Application for Participation in the Work Colleges Program. Information outlined covers how schools can apply for participation in the Work Colleges Program, which is part of the Federal Work Study Program, for the 2021-2022 award year. Deadlines and contact information are available in the announcement, with instructions on how to apply.

CIVIL MONETARY PENALTIES

The USDE issued a [Federal Register Notice](#) Feb. 3, 2021: RULES and Regulations: Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties for Inflation. The Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 requires the amounts for the civil monetary penalties be adjusted for inflation annually. This notice provides the updated amounts for 2021 by category. These adjusted CMPs are applicable only to civil penalties assessed after Feb. 3, 2021, whose associated violations occurred after Nov. 2, 2015.

REFERENCE GUIDES

Updated reference guides were published by the USDE in the month of Feb. The listed guides and the dates of publication are

linked to the corresponding electronic announcements.

- [Volume 3 – Calculating Awards and Packaging \[2020-2021 Federal Student Aid Handbook\] – Feb. 4, 2021](#)
- [Application and Verification Guide \[2021-2022 Federal Student Aid Handbook\] – Feb. 17, 2021](#)
- [Volume 2 – School Eligibility and Operations \[2020-2021 Federal Student Aid Handbook\] – Feb. 25, 2021](#)
- [Appendices A-G \[2020-2021 Federal Student Aid Handbook\] – Feb. 26, 2021](#)

FEDERAL SCHOOL CODE LIST

On Feb. 4, 2021, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): 2021-2022 Federal School Code List of Participating Schools (Feb. 2021). The updated [2021-2022 FSC List of Participating Schools](#) is now available on the IFAP website. The unique codes on this list are assigned by the USDE to schools participating in the Title IV federal student aid programs. Students enter the FSC on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid for each school they wish to receive the processed application results. Instructions are provided in the



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announcement for schools that need to correct or update their FSC on the list.

DIRECT LOAN PROGRAM

An [Electronic Announcement](#) was published by the USDE Feb. 5, 2021: Direct Loan Closeout Information for 2019-2020 Program Year. The announcement provides important reminders and outlines institutional responsibilities related to Direct Loan closeout for the 2019-2020 program year. To be successfully closed out, an institution must-

- Have an Ending Cash Balance of \$0 and Total Net Unbooked Disbursements of \$0 internally, and as reflected on the School Account Statement, and
- Complete the School Balance Confirmation form on the COD website.

The deadline for the Direct Loan closeout for the 2019-2020 program year is Friday, July 30, 2021. For more information regarding the Direct Loan closeout process, review the Frequently Asked Questions attached to the electronic announcement.

TECHNICAL

Three technical updates were published by the USDE in February. The electronic announcements are linked below with the dates of publication.

- [Mandatory Software Upgrade – Deadline Extension to June 5, 2021 to Maintain Access to the SAIG – Feb. 12, 2021](#)
- [Next Gen FSA – StudentAid.gov Website Enhancements Starting Feb. 2021 – Feb. 22, 2021](#)
- [Next Gen FSA – FSA Partner Connect Website Launch Planned for Late March 2021 – Feb. 25, 2021](#)

COHORT DEFAULT RATES

The USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#) Feb. 22, 2021: FY 2018 Draft Cohort Default Rates Distributed Feb. 22, 2021. FY 2018 Draft Cohort Default Rate notification packages were distributed to all eligible domestic and foreign schools. Instructions are provided in the announcement for making Incorrect Data Challenges and Participation Rate Index Challenges. The period for challenging a school's FY 2018 Draft Cohort Default Rate began March 2, 2021.



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CORONAVIRUS

On Feb. 23, 2021, the USDE published an [Electronic Announcement](#): SNAP benefits for eligible students during the COVID-19 pandemic. More students are temporarily eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, due to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. The new eligibility will be in effect until 30 days after the Coronavirus public health emergency ends. This electronic announcement provides information regarding the expanded eligibility and instructions on where to go for further instructions.