May 9, 2008

This edition of the COD Processing Update will remain on the COD Web site until a new edition is posted. We will notify schools via a COD Web Message when a new edition has been posted.

Direct Loan Program

COD News

Direct Loan Bulletin 08-11 Released (05/01/08)
Direct Loan Bulletin 08-11 was released to schools from the COD School Relations Center today and is posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site. This bulletin is the second in a series of Direct Loan closeout bulletins that informs schools of the closeout deadline for the 2006-2007 Program Year.

If you would like to be added to or removed from the Direct Loan Bulletin distribution list, please submit an e-mail to CODSupport@acs-inc.com with the subject line of "DLB Distribution".

Reports and Data Requests

This section contains important notices regarding reports and/or data requests. While we encourage you to review this section, note that some schools may not be impacted by the information presented below.

NOTICES

- Direct Loan Rebuild File—   Schools in need of this file should contact the COD School Relations Center.

Weekly Reminders

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The electronic files for the CBTs and simulations, as well as instructions for downloading and using these files, are available on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site. Under the "Tools for Schools" section, click on COD Computer-Based Training.

The CBTs and simulations are as follows:

COD System Web Site CBT

The COD System Web site CBT simulates the COD System and functionality available to a school administrator. In the updated COD System Web site CBT, there are eight lessons with text and an open format to guide a user through each area of the COD System Web site simulation. The user can explore basic navigation and functions of the COD Web site and practice locating and creating information in a safe environment with tips for assistance.

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If you have any questions or comments about the CBTs and simulations, contact the COD School Relations Center. If you e-mail your question or comment to CODSupport@acs-inc.com, please include "CBT Question/Comment" in the subject line.

Grant Programs
ACG, National SMART Grant, Pell Grant, and TEACH Grant

COD News

TEACH Grant Operational Implementation Guidance – Implementation of SAR Comment Code 282 [02/12/08 (Updated 05/02/08)]
The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (the CCRAA), Pub. L. 110-84, authorized the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program for implementation beginning with the 2008-2009 Award Year. The TEACH Grant Program provides up to $4,000 a year in grant assistance to a student who agrees to serve for at least four years as a full-time teacher in a high-need field in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves students from low-income families. A TEACH Grant recipient who does not complete the required teaching within a specified timeframe, or fails to meet certain other requirements of the TEACH Grant Program, will be required to repay the TEACH Grant as a Direct Unsubsidized Loan under the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program.

Note: For policy information on all of the provisions of the CCRAA, including the TEACH Grant Program, refer to Dear Colleague Letter GEN-08-01 on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site. For information on Federal Student Aid's Regulatory and Legislative Update – Spring 2008 training workshops, which will include a CCRAA module, refer to Dear Colleague Letter ANN-08-02 on the IFAP Web site.

Implementation of SAR Comment Code 282

On May 5, 2008, Federal Student Aid will implement new Student Aid Report (SAR) comment code 282, indicating that the applicant has not been given the opportunity to answer the TEACH Grant question added for 2008-2009 to FAFSA on the Web. This includes applicants who file a paper Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as well as those students for whom the application is generated by a school in FAA Access to CPS Online or through the Electronic Data Exchange (EDE) process. In these cases going forward, the resulting SAR and Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) will include comment code 282.

Also on May 5, 2008, Federal Student Aid will begin inserting a TEACH Grant Fact Sheet with paper SARs generated as a result of applications or corrections filed using a paper FAFSA, the FAA Access to CPS Online Web site, or through the EDE process. Federal Student Aid will also insert the TEACH Grant Fact Sheet with paper SAR Acknowledgements generated as a result of submitting applications or corrections through the FAA Access to CPS Online Web site or the EDE process.

For complete information, refer to the May 1, 2008 Electronic Announcement posted on the IFAP Web site.

Reminders

Operational Implementation Overview – Federal Student Aid provided a high-level overview of how it will implement functionality for processing TEACH Grant awards in an April 9, 2008 Electronic Announcement posted on the IFAP Web site. Over the next several months, Federal Student Aid will supplement this high-level overview through updates to technical references and guides as well as numerous operational communications posted on the IFAP Web site. For complete information, refer to the April 9th Electronic Announcement.

COD Technical Reference Updates – Federal Student Aid has posted updated sections of the 2008-2009 COD Technical Reference that reflect TEACH Grant implementation information. The next updates are scheduled for May 2008.

CCRAA School Testing – Federal Student Aid plans to implement COD System functionality that will support the processing of TEACH Grant Program awards for the 2008-2009 and subsequent award years during the period June 27-28, 2008. Implementation of TEACH Grant processing requires changes to the COD Common Record Extensible Markup Language (XML) schema. For this reason, it is important to Federal Student Aid to offer and conduct testing for participants before they send data to the "live" production environment using COD Common Record XML Schema Version 3.0a. The new testing opportunity—COD CCRAA School Testing for the 2008-2009 Award Year—will impact the previously published schedule for COD School Testing for the 2008-2009 Award Year. For complete information about both school testing opportunities, refer to the April 24, 2008 Electronic Announcement posted on the IFAP Web site. This information is also covered in the 2008-2009 COD Technical Reference.

2007-2008 Verification Status Code "W" Warning Message (04/23/08)
On April 22, 2008, Federal Student Aid began processing a text message (PGTX08OP) as well as a Reconciliation Report (PGRC08OP) to schools that have one or more Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant) student records still reported with a verification status code of "W". The message is a warning that disbursements to all students with a verification status code of "W" will be considered overawards and reduced to a zero dollar amount ($0.00), even though the disbursements were previously accepted in the COD System. The reduction of the affected disbursements is scheduled to occur on May 22, 2008.

Note Regarding Verification Deadline:

Some of the student records included in the Reconciliation Report may be for students who are still within the allowable timeframe for submitting verification documentation/completing the verification process as will be specified in a forthcoming "Notice of Deadline Dates for Receipt of Applications, Reports, and Other Records for the 2007-2008 Award Year." This notice will be published in the Federal Register and subsequently posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site.

Following the May 22, 2008 reduction, if a school needs additional time to complete verification for an individual student in accordance with the allowable timeframe in the Federal Register notice, the school may resubmit a disbursement record with a value greater than zero ($0.00) until September 30, 2008. After September 30, 2008, the COD System will no longer accept "W" as a valid verification status code for 2007-2008 Pell Grant awards.

For complete information, refer to the April 23, 2008 Electronic Announcement on the IFAP Web site. If you have questions about the warning message or about reporting verification status codes to the COD System, contact the COD School Relations Center.

Current Issues

Updated Impact Information – YTD Disbursement Amount Not Returned When Actual Disbursements Equal Zero [04/30/08 (Updated 05/06/08)]
On April 30, 2008, Federal Student Aid informed the community of an issue with returning Year-to-Date (YTD) Disbursement Amount information in the <YTDDisbursementAmount> tag of the Common Record Response for certain Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant) awards. Upon further research, Federal Student Aid has determined that this issue is broader in scope and also impacts 2008-2009 Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) awards and 2008-2009 National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant) awards.

For Pell Grant, ACG, and National SMART Grant awards, the <YTDDisbursementAmount> tag is located in the Response Section of the Award Block and should include a value that is equal to the sum of all actual disbursements (Disbursement Release Indicator or DRI equals "True") for the specific award. Accordingly, this tag should be returned in all cases, including when the sum of all actual disbursements is equal to zero ($0.00).

Since March 15, 2008, the COD System has not returned the <YTDDisbursementAmount> tag when the sum of all actual disbursements is equal to zero ($0.00) for one of the following reasons:

- Only anticipated disbursements (DRI equals "False") are reported for the award.

- An adjustment to an award results in the sum of all actual disbursements for that award equaling zero ($0.00).

The issue affects Pell Grant awards for all award years, 2008-2009 ACG awards, and 2008-2009 National SMART Grant awards.

Federal Student Aid plans to implement a code fix in May 2008. In the meantime, a school that needs to verify the YTD disbursement amount for an affected Pell Grant, ACG, or National SMART Grant award can request a Reconciliation Report via the COD Web site or by submitting the batch data request for the appropriate program/award year message class via the Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG).

Federal Student Aid apologizes for the inconvenience caused by this issue. If you have any questions, contact the COD School Relations Center.

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NEW!

ACG and National SMART Grant Resources (05/09/08)
As a reminder, the Department of Education (the Department) has posted a number of Dear Colleague Letters and Electronic Announcements that communicate regulatory, policy, and operational information related to the implementation of the Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (National SMART Grant) programs. In addition, Federal Student Aid has updated the 2006-2007 COD Technical Reference, the 2007-2008 COD Technical Reference, and posted the 2008-2009 COD Technical Reference. A school should refer to the communications posted on the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Web site and to the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 COD technical references for complete information about the ACG and National SMART Grant programs.

More specifically, the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 COD technical references cover all aspects of the operational implementation of the ACG and National SMART Grant programs. This includes information on the following key aspects of ACG and National SMART Grant processing:

- Financial Award ID and Financial Award Number (Award Sequence Number)
  Volume II, Section 1 "Implementation Guide"

- Citizenship and Student Level Code
  Volume II, Section 1 "Implementation Guide"

- Message Classes
  Volume II, Section 2 "Message Classes"

- Common Record Layout
  Volume II, Section 3 "Common Record Layout"

- Reports Generated by COD System
  Volume VI, Section 8 "COD Reports"

- Eligibility/Payment Reason and Rigorous High School Program Code for ACG
  Volume VI, Section 9 "Rigorous Secondary School Programs of Study, and Eligible Majors"

- Major/Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code for National SMART Grant
  Volume VI, Section 9 "Rigorous Secondary School Programs of Study, and Eligible Majors"

If your school needs help locating information related to the operational implementation of the ACG and National SMART Grant programs, contact the COD School Relations Center.

Note for EDExpress Users: Volume III of the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 COD technical references provides additional guidance for schools that use EDExpress in combination

with another system. If your school needs help locating information related to EDExpress, contact CPS/SAIG Technical Support at 880/330-5947 or by e-mail at CPSSAIG@ed.gov.