

## **Financial Awareness Counseling Attachment to June 2012 Electronic Announcement**

This document highlights the availability of Financial Awareness Counseling that will be available on the [StudentLoans.gov Web site](http://StudentLoans.gov) beginning July 7, 2012. We cover the information in the following order:

- Financial Awareness Counseling Overview
- Changes to the Entrance Counseling Report
- Financial Awareness Counseling – System-Generated Responses and School Options

If you have any questions about this document, contact the COD School Relations Center at 800/848-0978 for Direct Loans. You may also e-mail [CODSupport@acs-inc.com](mailto:CODSupport@acs-inc.com).

### **Financial Awareness Counseling Overview**

The new Financial Awareness Counseling module will provide students the basics of financial management, show students their current federal student loan debt (and their current student loan debt if they enter information about their private student loans), and provide students an estimate of what their student loan debt is likely to be at the time they leave school.

***IMPORTANT: While Financial Awareness Counseling contains some of the same information in Entrance and Exit Counseling, it does not meet the regulatory requirements for Entrance or Exit Counseling.***

The Financial Awareness Counseling will include topics such as:

- *Understand Your Loans* – This section will allow logged-in users to see their existing federal student loan debt based on the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) data. Users can enter additional loans that are not reflected in the NSLDS. Outside the log-in, users can enter their student loans.
- *Manage Your Budget* – This section includes an in-school budgeting tool that compares living expenses vs. a user's current income. The user can export his or her data to an Excel spreadsheet.
- *Plan to Repay* – This section includes a budgeting tool which compares living expenses vs. estimated income after leaving school and calculates monthly payment amounts for each of the basic repayment plans. This section also includes a tool that allows the user to see the effect of paying extra towards their loans to reduce their overall debt and the amount of interest paid over time.
- *Avoid Default* – This section provides tips on how to postpone repayment or lower monthly payments, if needed.
- *Make Finances a Priority* – This section discusses the development of a financial plan and making financial decisions.
- *A Summary Page* – This page gives a summary of the data used and/or entered and can be printed.

### **Changes to the Entrance Counseling Report**

We will rename the Entrance Counseling Report, currently available via the school's COD Reporting Newsbox on the [COD Web site](http://COD Web site), to "Counseling Report." The Counseling Report will provide information about a student who completed counseling via the StudentLoans.gov Web site and selected the school to receive information about the counseling session. It will contain both Entrance Counseling and Financial Awareness Counseling information. The Counseling Type Indicator values are:

**Financial Awareness Counseling**  
**Attachment to June 2012 Electronic Announcement**

- S – Subsidized/Unsubsidized Entrance Counseling
- P – Subsidized/Unsubsidized/PLUS Entrance Counseling
- L – Financial Awareness Counseling

A student's information will be reflected on the report even if the school does not opt to receive system-generated responses (see below).

**Financial Awareness Counseling – System-Generated Responses and School Options**

Beginning July 7, 2012, we will modify the COD System to send Financial Awareness Counseling information in a COD System-generated response when a student completes the counseling session on the StudentLoans.gov Web site. The responses for Financial Awareness Counseling will be sent in the same message class as Entrance Counseling (CRECMYOP). Financial Awareness Counseling will be identified in the <CounselingType> tag with a value of "StudentLoanCounseling."

We will add new options to the COD Web site's School Options Information page to allow a school to select how it receives system-generated responses for Financial Awareness Counseling information. The new options are:

- ***Receive Response for Financial Awareness Counseling*** – This option will allow a school to select if it wants to receive a response when a student completes Financial Awareness Counseling. The school can select Yes (Y) or No (N); default value is Y.

**Note:** If a school updates this option to N, a student will still be able to complete the counseling, but the completion information will not be sent to the school. To access this information, a school will need to perform a search for an individual student using the COD Web site's Counseling Search page or view it via the Counseling Report.

- ***Financial Awareness Counseling Response Frequency*** – This option will allow a school to determine how often it receives its Financial Awareness Counseling responses. The school can select Daily or On-Demand; default value is On-Demand.

If a school selects Daily, the school will receive responses for the Financial Awareness Counseling sessions completed each day.

If a school selects On-Demand, the school will need to take an action and request the responses to be sent. A school can request all counseling responses completed since the last request, those completed for a specific date range, or those completed by a specific student.

**Note:** If a school does not select the option to receive system-generated responses (selects 'N' for the option above), the frequency option will not appear.