



January 28, 2010

Dear Financial Aid Colleagues:

As you return to school to complete the 2009-2010 year and prepare for the 2010-2011 term, I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you to consider having contingency plans should the lenders that serve your students not be able to do so next year. I remind you of this not to promote one federal loan program over the other. In fact, I am not asking that you switch federal loan programs. Rather, given the continuing uncertainties in the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL<sup>SM</sup>) Program, I am asking that you be ready to participate in either program to ensure that your students have access to federal student loans for the 2010-2011 award year.

The Department of Education has gone to great lengths to update its systems and increase Direct Loan capacity. Today, we are able to support any institution that chooses to participate in the Direct Loan Program<sup>SM</sup>. All I ask is that you are equally prepared.

To assist you, the Department is offering regional training sessions at several locations beginning next month. These free, one-day sessions are designed to be easily accessible and will provide you and your colleagues with the basic skills necessary to administer the Direct Loan Program at your school, should the lenders serving your students be unable to do so.

These conferences will feature the following sessions:

- ***Direct Loan Program Basics*** - This session will focus on the Direct Loan Program from a programmatic perspective. Concepts, terminology and other information needed to understand how the program works and how to administer the program will be discussed.
- ***Direct Loan System Basics*** - This session will focus on the Direct Loan Program from a systems perspective. An overview of the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System and the functions, features, and screens of the COD Web site will be discussed. In addition, this session covers other electronic processes and systems associated with Direct Loan processing.
- ***Considerations for Direct Loan Business Practices*** - This session will focus on major processing tasks that most schools need to consider for internal

processing of Direct Loans. This session is intended to take information learned from the previous two sessions and connect that information to office processes and procedures.

- **Questions and Answers** - The last session of the day will provide participants an opportunity to think about the previous sessions and ask any remaining questions associated with Direct Loan origination and disbursement.

Below are the dates and locations for the regional training sessions:

<b>Date</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Location</b>
February 16	Dallas, TX	Sheraton Dallas
February 18	Denver, CO	Doubletree Hotel Denver
February 23	Cleveland, OH	Hyatt Regency Cleveland
February 25	New York, NY	Sheraton New York Hotel & Towers
February 22 & 23	Bayamon, Puerto Rico	American University in Bayamon
February 25 & 26	Ponce, Puerto Rico	Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Puerto Rico
March 1 & 2	Recinto de Mayaguez, Puerto Rico	Ponce Paramedical College (POPAC)
March 2	Las Vegas, NV	Rio
March 4	Anaheim, CA	Hyatt Regency Orange County
March 9	San Francisco, CA	Hyatt Regency San Francisco
March 11	Seattle, WA	Doubletree Hotel Seattle Airport
March 16	Philadelphia, PA	Hyatt Regency Philadelphia at Penn's Landing
March 18	Boston, MA	Hyatt Regency Cambridge
March 23	St. Louis, MO	Sheraton at Westport
March 24	Honolulu, HI	Ala Moana Honolulu
March 25	Chicago, IL	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place
April 6	Charlotte, NC	The Westin Charlotte
April 8	Jacksonville, FL	Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

Please visit our Web site at <http://www.fsaconferences.ed.gov> for more information on how to register for these workshops. Should you have any questions, please contact our Conference Planning Team by e-mail at [fsaconferences@ed.gov](mailto:fsaconferences@ed.gov) or by phone at 202-377-3633.

If you or your staff have not previously taken training to learn how to administer the Direct Loan Program at your institution, these workshops are for you. Space is limited, so register today.

Please ensure your students have the resources they need to continue their education at your institution next year.

Sincerely,



William J. Taggart  
Chief Operating Officer

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