



## THIS WEEK

**Massachusetts State Tax Refund Offset Program:** FSA is meeting this week with the Massachusetts Governor's Chief Policy Director and American Student Assistance (ASA), the state's guaranty agency, to discuss the state tax refund offset program. This program entitled the Department to garnish tax refunds of delinquent Massachusetts student loan borrowers. A follow-up meeting will then be held with the Massachusetts Higher Education Chancellor and General Counsel to further discuss and perhaps resolve the state tax refund offset issue.

**Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SASFAA):** On February 15-19, FSA representatives are presenting at the SASFAA Annual Conference in Birmingham, AL.

**California Partnership Meeting:** On February 18, FSA is participating in the semi-annual California Partnership Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss with partner agencies issues related to oversight of schools in the state of California.

## FSA IN THE FIELD

**Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers:** On February 9, FSA representatives presented at the Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers Conference.

**Student Aid Awareness, Make High School Count:** On February 9, FSA partnered with third-party servicer, Student Aid Administrators, to provide information on planning and paying for college to junior high school students in Storm Lake, IA. The Iowa Association of Financial Aid Administrators (IASFAA) Outreach Committee arranged the event, which included break-out sessions for the students and parents.

**Georgia Default Prevention Task Force Meeting:** On February 12, FSA representatives attended the Georgia Default Prevention Task Force Meeting in Macon, GA to discuss default prevention projects for Georgia colleges and universities.

**Coalition of African American Professional and Community Organizations:** On February 13, FSA representatives presented to the Coalition of African American Professional and Community Organizations at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Career Expo and College Fair.

**Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (SEAOPP) Conference:**

On February 11-14, FSA representatives made a presentation on Default Prevention at the SEAOPP conference in Biloxi, MS.

**"Come in From the Cold College Fair":** On February 7, FSA representatives provided federal student aid information during the first "Come in From the Cold College Fair". The fair, sponsored by the Montgomery College Educational Opportunity Center, attracted more than 100 visitors who obtained financial aid and college admission information from FSA and local college representatives.

**Feria Educativa Sponsored By National Partners in Hispanic Education:** On February 6 - 7, FSA in partnership with The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans participated in the third Feria Educativa sponsored by National Partners in Hispanic Education and Hostos Community College in the Bronx, New York. Acting Deputy Secretary Hickok and Deputy Undersecretary/Senior Policy Advisor, Office of English Language Acquisition Kathleen Leos addressed the impact of No Child Left Behind on Hispanic communities and the barriers facing parents and students within the education system.

**College Goal Sunday:** On Sunday, February 8, FSA staff members volunteered their time to participate in College Goal Sunday, a multi-regional event designed to assist students and parents with completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The volunteers served at three different sites in the Washington, DC metropolitan area as well as at Anne Arundel Community College and Delaware State University. Parents and students received one-on-one help with both the paper and electronic application, in addition to receiving information about the college access and the financial aid process.

***Student Aid on the Web*** set a Sunday record logging 49,939 visits for the day due in part to the College Goal Sunday activities. In addition, My FSA, the *Student Aid on the Web* feature that offers students and their families a single source of *free* information on choosing a career, selecting a college and identifying resources to pay for higher education, set a new account record. On February 4, the 20,000th MyFSA account was established.

**Customer Service Call Center Statistics:** For the week ending February 7, the Customer Service Call Center received 418 inquiries, posted nine items to FSA Tech and posted five items to IFAP.

**Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP.gov) Web site Usage:** For the week ending February 7, [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov) received 74,600 visits and 2.0 million hits.

**Schools Portal Usage:** For the week ending February 7, [www.fsa4schools.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4schools.ed.gov) received 13,664 visits and 1.2 million hits.

**Financial Partners Portal:** For the week ending January 30, the Portal received almost 50,300 hits and 2,367 visits. For the month of January, usage averaged 12,570 hits and 550 daily visits, a new record.

## **FSA PERFORMANCE METRICS**

**Application Activities through February 8, 2004:** The Central Processing System (CPS) has processed 912,736 applications for the 2004-2005 cycle, a 4.5% increase over the 2003-2004 cycle.

**Program Disbursements:** Through the week ending February 7, annual Pell and Direct Loan disbursements reached \$9.4 billion and \$9.4 billion respectively for the 2003-2004 academic year. Please note, last week we incorrectly reported year-to-date Pell volume as \$9.8 billion when it should have been \$8.9 billion. Through the week ending February 3, annual FFEL disbursements reached \$18.3 billion for the 2003-2004 academic year. Through December, annual Direct Consolidation Loan disbursements reached \$1.74 billion.

**Total Default Recoveries:** Through February 6, total FSA Default Recoveries for FY04 reached \$492.7 million, an increase of 21% from this time last year. Total non-consolidation recoveries reached \$420.5 million, an increase of 44%. Combined Recoveries from our private collection agency efforts have reached \$413.6 million, up 24% over the same period in FY03.

Guarantor Recoveries through December 31, 2003, reached \$850.8 million, an increase of 12.8% from December 2002. Total guarantor non-consolidation recoveries were at \$368.7 million, an increase of 11.6%. Total combined FSA and Guarantor recoveries through December 31, 2003, were \$1.17 billion, an increase of 13.9% from the first quarter of FY03. Total combined FSA and Guarantor non-consolidation recoveries reached \$640.7 million, an increase of 22.5%.

**1-800-4-FED-AID through February 7, 2004:** Year to date, the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) has received 877,652 calls, a 9.1% decrease over last year. Service levels have increased with 99.0% of calls completed, a 0.1% increase over last year, and the average speed to answer reduced by 70.8% over last year to 2.3 seconds.

**Direct Loan Servicing Call Center Phone Activity through February 6, 2004:** Year to date, the Direct Loan Servicing Centers received 700,796 calls to the Interactive Voice Response System, a decrease of 9.92% from 2003. Of those calls received, Borrower Services representatives handled 511,911, a decrease of 12.40% from 2003. The average speed of answer was 3.07 seconds, a decrease of 67.06% from 2003. The resolve rate for the Voice Response System was 26.79%, an increase of 9.35% from 2003. The Abandoned Call Rate was 0.13%, a decrease of 68.46 % from 2003.

## **FSA INDUSTRY ISSUES**

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** On February 11, FSA received the one millionth 2004-05 FAFSA on the Web application, a week earlier than last year and only six weeks into the 2004-2005 cycle. Year to date, electronic applications have increased 25% over last year.

**Consolidation Applications:** For the four months ending January 31, approximately 80% of the 131,592 consolidation applications submitted were in electronic format.

**Update on Common Services for Borrowers (CSB):** The CSB transition team has begun sessions to

charter six of the 13 integrated product teams (IPTs). The six IPTs are Loan Consolidation, CSB Web, Siebel, Common Services, Common Database Repository and Data Mart. Loan Consolidation has been chartered; the CSB Web charter is expected by the end of the week.

**EDEXpress Basics Web-Based Training (WBT):** On March 17, 2003, FSA launched EDEXpress Basics, a self-paced, online training tool that teaches basic skills required to access and navigate the EDEXpress and EDconnect software. As of Monday, February 9, EDEXpress Basics had 1,495 registered users. This represents almost 500 new users in the last four months.

**E-Gov/eLoans:** On February 10, the eLoans partner agencies met to discuss workgroup updates and next steps for moving forward. The GovLoans team demonstrated the GovLoans.gov site prototype. The prototype incorporates the final GovLoans site architecture and design and will be used for citizen user interviews, as well as a demo to lender associations during the week of February 17, 2004.

**FSANow:** The January edition of FSA*Now* is out on a desktop near you. Look for it on [FSAnet!](#)

### **IN THE WEEKS AHEAD**

**Presentations at Regional and State Financial Aid Administrator Conferences:** FSA representatives will be making presentations at the following state financial aid administrator conferences in the coming weeks:

February 22-24      Pacific Islands Financial Aid Association Annual Conference

**U. S. Department of Education Small Business Outreach Conference:** On February 23, FSA representatives will make a presentation on small business opportunities with FSA's private collection agencies and the recently awarded Common Services for Borrowers contract. The goal of the conference is to educate small businesses about ED and inform them of opportunities and how to compete.

**EDEXpress Application Processing Training:** On February 24-26, FSA representatives will attend the Train-the-Trainers session to prepare to conduct EDEXpress Application Processing Training for schools around the country.

**National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP):** From March 14 - 17, FSA representatives will make several presentations at the NCHELP Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC.

*Did we forget something? If you have additional news to report, please e-mail [FSA Communications](#).*