



## THIS WEEK

**U. S. Department of Education Small Business Outreach Conference:** On February 23, FSA representatives made several presentations on small business opportunities at the U. S. Department of Education Small Business Outreach Conference in Washington, D.C. The goal of the conference is to educate small businesses about ED and inform them of opportunities and how to compete.

## FSA IN THE FIELD

**Massachusetts State Tax Refund Offset Program:** FSA met 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 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 presented at the SASFAA Annual Conference in Birmingham, AL.

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

**Student Aid on the Web:** For the week ending February 14, *Student Aid on the Web* recorded 357,624 visits, 6,230,897 hits and 695,023 page views, representing increases of 208.5%, 66% and 57.1% respectively over the prior year.

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, has recorded 21,206 accounts.

**Customer Service Call Center Statistics:** For the week ending February 14, the Customer Service Call Center received 456 inquiries, posted 15 items to FSA Tech and posted 12 items to IFAP.

**Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP.gov) Web site Usage:** For the week ending February 14, [www.ifap.ed.gov](http://www.ifap.ed.gov) received 70,540 visits and 2.4 million hits. IFAP's Subscription service continues to grow with membership increasing by almost 9% during January to 4,420 members.

**Schools Portal Usage:** For the week ending February 14, [www.fsa4schools.ed.gov](http://www.fsa4schools.ed.gov) received 13,648 visits and 1.2 million hits.

**Financial Partners (FP) Portal:** For the week ending February 13, the FP Portal received over 53,870 hits and almost 2350 visits.

**FAFSA on the Web:** FAFSA on the Web application volume increased 25% over last year and will record the 1.5 millionth 2004-05 FAFSA on the Web application today, 1 week earlier than last year. On February 18, FAFSA on the Web logged the 7.5 millionth 2003-04 FAFSA application setting a record for the number of online applications received in a year.

**Students.gov:** In January, students.gov logged 289,243 visitors and 6.5 million hits - an increase of 45% from December. January 2004 traffic was 123% higher than January 2003, reflecting the overall dramatic increase in students.gov site traffic.

## **FSA PERFORMANCE METRICS**

**Application Activities through February 8, 2004:** The Central Processing System (CPS) has processed 912,736 applications for the 2004-05 cycle, a 4.5% increase over the 2003-04 cycle.

**Program Disbursements:** Through the week ending February 14, annual Pell and Direct Loan disbursements reached \$9.8 billion and \$9.6 billion respectively for the 2003-04 academic year. Through the week ending February 17, annual FFEL disbursements reached \$20.9 billion for the 2003-04 academic year. Through December, annual Direct Consolidation Loan disbursements reached \$1.74 billion.

**Total Default Recoveries:** Through February 13, total FSA Default Recoveries for FY04 reached \$537.3 million, an increase of 26% from this time last year. Total non-consolidation recoveries reached \$462.9 million, an increase of 50%. Combined Recoveries from our private collection agency efforts have reached \$424.4 million, up 23% 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 14, 2004:** Year to date, the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) has received 1.038 million calls, a 9.5% decrease over last year. Service levels have increased with 99.0% of calls completed, a 0.2% increase over last year, and the average speed to answer reduced by 77.8% over last year to 2.0 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**

**"Judge Judy" TV show:** In a recent episode of the "Judge Judy" TV show, a defendant admitted to obtaining Stafford subsidized and unsubsidized loans and using the funds for non- school related expenses. FSA forwarded the issue to the OIG office for further investigation.

**E-Gov/eLoans:** On February 17, FSA representatives met with Harvard's National Center for Digital Government to discuss the initial findings of their e-government initiatives study. Harvard interviewed e-Loans team members in early February about the efficiency and effectiveness of cross-government workgroups. The interviews were the third step in a multi-year study.

That same day, Government Computer News interviewed FSA representatives on the status of the eLoans project, the challenges faced by the team throughout the process and the experience of collaborating with citizens, private sector associations, and other government agencies to create the GovLoans Web site.

Later that day, FSA and OM met with GAO to discuss the eLoans initiative. GAO is preparing testimony on the current status of the E-Gov initiatives for a House Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations, and the Census hearing scheduled for late March.

**GovLoans.gov:** On February 17-18, Human Factors International conducted usability interviews with likely users of the GovLoans.gov Web site to obtain feedback about the site's features and functionality. The interviews were conducted at the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Usability Lab using a prototype of the GovLoans.gov site.

**Cohort Default Rates sent to Guaranty Agencies:** FSA released the draft FY 02 Cohort Default Rates to all guaranty agencies on February 17, 2004. The FY 02 rates released today represent the most current data available. The Department anticipates releasing the final rates to the public in September.

**FSANow:** The January edition of *FSANow* 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:

March 10-12            Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel  
Spring Conference

March 15-16           South Dakota Association of Student Financial Aid

March 22-24           Pacific Islands Financial Aid Association Annual Conference

**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](#)*