

access update

for school administrators on issues affecting the financial aid community

January 2005

**Exciting News
for 2005-2006**

Access Group Is a Single Source for No-Fee Federal and Private Loans

In a continuing effort to meet the education financing needs of graduate students and schools, Access Group is pleased to present exciting news about our loan programs for the 2005-2006 academic year.

- Access Group continues to pay the origination fee on behalf of all Federal Stafford Loan borrowers, as well as offer payment incentives for on-time or auto-debit payments with every loan, including Federal Consolidation Loans.
- Beginning this spring, Access Group also will offer **private loans, including cosigned loans, with no fees.**
- For our national program, borrowers with the best credit will qualify for an interest rate of 3-month LIBOR + 2.75%, and most borrowers will qualify for the interest rate of LIBOR + 3.95%.
- Even credit-challenged student borrowers will still be eligible for no-fee loans. They may qualify for single-signature loans or cosigned loans, both at LIBOR + 6.45% with no fees. In addition, the Sponsored Access® Loan, also with no fees, and an interest rate of LIBOR + 2.75% or + 3.95%, will be an option for students whose credit makes them ineligible for a loan on their own.
- Another new feature for 2005-2006 loans is a cosigner release. Borrowers who have successfully remitted 24 consecutive months of on-time payments and who meet minimum credit criteria may release their cosigners from the loan. This new option will make a cosigned loan more attractive for students and their cosigners.

Our loan programs can expand access to education for a broad population of your students. And, Access Group borrowers have access to a range of online services when they:

- Visit accessgroup.org for online loan application, account status, interactive calculators, WiseBorrowerSM Curriculum, and much more.
- Go to FederalConsolidation.Org for federal loan consolidation information and application.

For more details about our 2005-2006 loan programs, call your Account Executive at 800-227-2151.

Access Group Workshops Are Coming

It won't be long before the start of our Financial Aid Workshops, which are scheduled to begin in early March 2005. We conduct these annual "spring workshops" to update you about our loan programs and services, as well as provide information to help you and your staff in the upcoming processing year. Look for more information to follow in the February *Access Update* and on accessgroup.org.

Holiday Closing

In observance of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., Access Group offices will be closed on Monday, January 17. Although our offices will be closed, our Voice Response System will be in service, as will eAccess, Account Access, and Loan OnLine at accessgroup.org.



Jocelyn Allen

School Services Spotlight

Jocelyn Allen can see both sides of the student lending coin. An External Account

Executive for the SASFAA region who rejoined Access Group in September 2004 after a brief hiatus, Jocelyn's also served in financial aid at two universities. She even chaired Access Group's Conference Planning Committee when she was a school customer.

As much as she liked working directly for a university, Jocelyn enjoys visiting with the many schools and people in her SASFAA region, regarding her customers as friends and not simply as clients.

With her background, Jocelyn knows what her customers go through and how she can best meet their needs. She has a reputation at Access Group for being assertive on behalf of her customers. "When she knows what a school needs, she'll make sure they get it," says one co-worker admiringly.

Senior Account Executive Bill Rodgers also admires Jocelyn. Bill, who made his first sales call to Jocelyn when she was at Nova Southeastern University in Florida and is now her supervisor, says, "I knew Jocelyn was special when I first saw the personalized cartoons on her office wall. She told me that when her brother was a student without much money for gifts, he contacted well-known comic artists to draw cartoons to give her each Christmas. His efforts spoke volumes to me about the way she cares for her family — and her friends, clients, and co-workers."

In addition to her return to Access Group, Jocelyn is also very excited about her new house, west of Fort Lauderdale and north of Miami, which she shares with her husband Terry. While she bemoans the still-white walls, she is covering as much of them as possible through her favorite hobby — collecting vintage posters. She looks for posters related to travel or music in particular; her favorite one, advertising an Italian wine, dates from 1916. If she's as dedicated to this hobby as she is to her schools, her empty walls are sure to become as full and as interesting as any art gallery.

2005 Conference: First Call for Suggestions

Planning for the 2005 Access Group Graduate and Professional Financial Aid Conference will soon be underway, and we welcome your thoughts and suggestions for topics or speakers. You can find the Conference Session Proposal Form at accessgroup.org/conf2004. Jot down your suggestions and send the form by fax to 800-449-8204. Or, e-mail your ideas to Virginia Gould at vgould@accessgroup.org.

Please submit your suggestions by March 31, 2005.

As a reminder, notes from the 2004 conference general and discipline-specific sessions are available at accessgroup.org/conf2004.

Access Group and Equal Justice Works Will Sponsor Forum

To help prepare future attorneys for a career in public interest law, Access Group and Equal Justice Works are joining forces to sponsor:

Mission Possible: Strategies for Achieving a Career in Public Interest Law

Saturday, February 5, 2005

9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

New York University School of Law

During this half-day forum, pre-law and law students living in the greater New York City area are invited to learn what it takes to get a job in public interest law, review strategies for affording such a career in the New York City area, and hear from recent graduates who are surviving and thriving as attorneys in the public sector. If successful, similar programs will be offered in other cities in the future.

For more information, contact Jeffrey E. Hanson, Access Group's Director of Borrower Education Services at 800-282-1550, ext. 4196.

Borrower Education

Another Cool Tool for Borrowers

Last month, Access Group released a new calculator to help students determine the lowest interest rate when comparing rates based on different financial indexes. Using the Interest Rate Comparison Calculator, students can enter a spread for LIBOR, Prime, or the 91-day T-bill and calculate what the final percentage rate will be. Students can then see that LIBOR + 2.55% might actually be a lower rate than Prime + 0%.

“Providing borrowers with tools to help make good financial decisions is another way Access Group fulfills its mission as a trusted advisor to schools and borrowers,” states Curtis Johnson, Access Group’s Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

You can find out more about this new calculator for yourself at accessgroup.org/calculators. To put a link to this tool on your school’s Web site, go to accessgroup.org/education_pr/loaninfo.htm for easy instructions.

Consolidation Corner

Tools To Help You Educate Your Students

Access Group reminds you of the educational resources we offer you and your students regarding federal loan consolidation:

- **FederalConsolidation.Org**
This Web site provides extensive information about FFELP loan consolidation, including special calculators and an online application.
- **“Facts and Fallacies: The Truth about Federal Loan Consolidation”**
This piece is available as a PDF at accessgroup.org/education_pr/facts_fallacies.htm for distribution to students in print or by e-mail.
- **Brochure for students — “Federal Consolidation Loans from Access Group”**
Order a supply of these free brochures at accessgroup.org/materials.
- **WiseBorrowerSM Curriculum**
Coming soon! A unit on federal loan consolidation is being developed as another in our series of WiseBorrower online tutorials for students.
- **Presentations by Access Group staff**
Staff are available to provide group presentations to your students on this topic. Contact your Account Executive for more information.

Need Access 2005-2006 Is Underway

What is Need Access? It’s a financial aid application tool offered by Access Group that school administrators use to assess financial need and award institutional funds.

Need Access collects information from graduate and professional school students by means of an online application. The questions posed and information gathered depend upon the schools selected by the student. After a student completes and submits the application to Access Group, our Need Access Processing Center makes the data available to the schools designated by the student.

Using the Need Access Counselor, school administrators are able to edit data, recalculate student need, print applications, track financial aid documents, and monitor funds, as well as customize packaging, letters, and reports.

If you don’t currently use Need Access but are interested in this product, please contact your Account Executive for more information.

Need Access News

- **New for your students!** Access Group has prepared an informational brochure about Need Access that you can order at accessgroup.org/materials.
- The Need Access Counselor user’s manual is being updated and will be sent to participating schools later this month.
- **Welcome!** Access Group is pleased to announce two new Need Access school participants for 2005-2006: University of Pennsylvania Law School and Vanderbilt University Law School.

January 2005 Meeting Calendar

Access Group staff will be attending these events as the new year begins:

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|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| January 12-15 | Professional Development Conference for Health Professions Financial Aid Administrators | Los Angeles, CA |
| January 30- February 2 | Michigan Student Financial Aid Association Annual Meeting | Lansing, MI |

3-Month LIBOR for First Quarter 2005

The current index effective for January, February, and March 2005 is **2.410%**.

The interest rate charged on a borrower's private loan from Access Group will equal this index rate plus the percentage spread applicable to the loan as indicated on the borrower's disclosure statement.

Reminder: The effective 3-month LIBOR rate is always available in the "Loan Terms" section of *accessgroup.org*. Also on our site is information about LIBOR for students and school administrators, including a 10-year comparative history of LIBOR, Prime, and T-bill rates.

New! Our Interest Rate Comparison Calculator helps students determine the lowest interest rate when comparing rates from different indexes. Try it for yourself at *accessgroup.org/calculators*.

Federal Stafford Loan Interest Rates

Federal Stafford Loans borrowed on or after July 1, 1998, will have the following rates in effect from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005:

- In school, grace, deferment: 91-day T-bill (1.07%) + 1.7% = **2.77%**
- In repayment, forbearance: 91-day T-bill (1.07%) + 2.3% = **3.37%**
- Maximum rate = 8.25%

Our Mission ...

to provide education financing to the broadest range of eligible students, positively influence education financing practices, and provide services valued by students and schools.

Access Group, Inc.
1411 Foulk Road
P.O. Box 7430
Wilmington, DE
19803-0430

**Toll-free lines:
School Services**
800-227-2151

Customer Contact Center
800-282-1550

General fax:
302-477-4080

**Toll-free School
Services fax:**
800-449-8204

accessgroup.org
**Federal Stafford Loan
Lender Code: 808851**

If you have questions regarding this or any other publication provided by Access Group, call 800-227-2151, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET.

To subscribe to an electronic version of this newsletter, send your name and your school's name to accessupdate@accessgroup.org.

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