

for school administrators on issues affecting the financial aid community

accessupdate



Register Now for Access Group's 2008 Conference

Combining the beauty of the desert with outstanding educational sessions, Access Group's 2008 Graduate and Professional Financial Aid Conference is an event you won't want to miss!

- **Don't wait** – register today at www.accessgroup.org/conf2008.
- **Explore** the conference Web site for details about registration fees, general and concurrent sessions, and other information.
- **Watch** for your registration booklet arriving in the mail!
- **Questions?**
 - E-mail your questions to conf2008@accessgroup.org.
 - Call your account executive at 800-227-2151.

We'll see you in Arizona!



"Walk for Wheels" Conference Charity Event

Put your best foot forward for charity! Walk, stroll or run with your colleagues and Access Group staff on a serene 2.5-mile path to benefit children of the Gila River Indian Community.

The money we raise will help purchase bikes, helmets and protective gear for the Boys and Girls Clubs of East Valley, Gila River Branch. And Access Group will match the registration fees of everyone who participates in the "Walk for Wheels" event!

Your "Walk for Wheels" registration fees or donations will be used as follows:

- \$35 – toward a bike, helmet, protective gear
- \$25 – toward a bicycle
- \$10 – toward a helmet, protective gear

In addition, lanyards made by children in the Gila River Indian Community will be sold for \$6 at the Conference Registration Desk. The sale of these one-of-a-kind creations, perfect for badge holders, support local programs for athletics, computer skills, career development and substance abuse prevention.

Last Call – Vote for the Winning Video!

You still have time to help pick the winning video in Access Group's "One Less Worry" law school scholarship contest. The 10 finalists, selected from nearly 100 entries by a panel of judges from Access Group, were evaluated on creativity, humor, realism, quality and overall appeal. They are posted for viewing at www.youtube.com/onelessworry.

Please take a look and then cast your vote at www.accessgroup.org/onelessworry. Voting closes on August 22 at 11:59 p.m. ET, and the scholarship winner will be announced by September 1.

Thank you for your help.

Can Private Student Loan Shopping Hurt Credit Scores?

According to a recent article in *The New York Times*, consumers who comparison shop for private student loans could end up damaging their credit scores. That's because Fair Isaac, the company that develops the credit scoring models used by the three national credit bureaus, doesn't treat student loan borrowers the same as car and home shoppers. People looking for mortgage and auto loans can shop around within a relatively short period of time and don't see their credit scores suffer. But private student loan applicants, or the parents who often co-sign the loans, may not get the same break. Inquiries may or may not affect the score, depending upon a variety of factors.

According to Fair Isaac, Access Group qualifies for the Rate Shopping Behavior calculation exception. As a result, inquiries made within the past 30 days do not impact a credit score obtained by us from any of the three credit bureaus.

But the fact is that inquiries represent only two of the five factors that comprise the New Credit component of the FICO score calculation, and these five factors collectively contribute only approximately 10% of the total credit score. So, in most cases, the opportunity to save money on a private student loan by shopping around and being an informed consumer will usually outweigh the small possible negative effects of inquiries on the shopper's credit score.

Read the complete article [Danger Lurks When Shopping For Student Loans \(The New York Times\)](#).

eAccess Tip of the Month

Initiate from a PLUS Pre-Approval

It's fast and easy to initiate a PLUS loan from a PLUS pre-approval record.

Enter the Social Security number of the student in the global Search by SSN field or from Loan Inquiry to recall any PLUS Pre-Approval requests. From "Pre-approval View," click Initiate Loan (found within the Credit Status box). The loan application will display with the borrower's information pre-populated. Complete the certification fields and submit.

For more information, see the eAccess *User Guide* or the Help Menu in eAccess. Your internal account executive is also happy to answer your questions.

CampusDoor® Contact Information

Access Group is currently providing the private School-Certified Loan in association with CampusDoor®.

For Financial Aid Offices – 866-912-3326

Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET
West Coast Representative available until 6:00 p.m. ET

CampusDoor Lender Code: 999444

CampusDoor Loan Program Codes:

B01 (Undergrad), B02 (Grad)

Private Guarantor Code: C01

Help Tools and User Guides for School Administrators:

[The Application Training Guide](#) is offered in the Campus Connection Center at <http://ccc.campusdoor.com>.

For Access Group Borrowers – 866-930-1543

Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. ET

Extended Hours:

June 2 – September 30, 2008

Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 p.m. ET

Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. ET

Saturday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET

Help Tools and User Guides for Borrowers

- www.campusdoor.com
- A Student's Guide to Financial Aid (CD-ROM)
- Financial Aid Tips – monthly e-mail reminders

Help Your New Students Become Wiser Borrowers

With the new school year quickly approaching, Access Group offers resources that can help get entering students on the right financial track.

“The sooner you get students thinking about ways to reduce their spending so they can minimize borrowing, the better,” says Jeff Hanson, Access Group’s director of borrower education services. “We offer tools you can use to help your students become wiser borrowers and achieve their financial goals.”

Resources Available

Encourage students to use our online calculators to compare interest rates, estimate loan repayment, and plan a realistic in-school budget. And our online loan ledger is a handy way for them to keep track of their student loans!

Print and distribute informational fliers from our WiseBorrower® Education Series, posted as PDFs on our Web site. Some good topics to help entering students get off on the right financial foot are:

- Be Thrifty: Save on Spending
- Budget Planning: Managing Costs During Graduate School
- Financing Your Education: Questions to Ask Before You Borrow
- Good Credit: Its Impact on Borrowing Student Loans and on Your Financial Future
- Good Financial Habits: A Guide to Achieving Your Dreams
- Lender’s Language: Terms Every Borrower Should Know
- Make the Money Last: Manage Your Financial Aid Funds
- The Big Chill: Sticking to Your Budget
- Planning for Your Financial Future: A Bibliography

Order a supply of our free printed materials. The following are popular with students:



- “Good Credit” – A brochure about the importance of maintaining a healthy credit history; includes information on identity theft, credit scoring and credit resources.
- “Avoid ID Theft” – A brochure detailing ways to deter, detect and defend against identity theft.
- “Credit Card ABCs” – A wallet-sized plastic card with reminders about using credit cards wisely and where to get advice about unmanageable credit card debt.
- “How Much Does That Latte Really Cost?” This colorful flier illustrates how daily, inexpensive purchases using borrowed student loan funds can have an impact when it’s time to repay those loans.

Schedule an educational presentation by Access Group staff to student groups on your campus. Contact your external account executive to make arrangements.

Tailored for entering students, the following presentations cover money management, budget planning, credit, and identity theft:

- Money Matters – Strategies for Borrowing and Spending Wisely
- BYOB! Build Your Own Budget – Strategies for Successful Personal Budget Planning
- Becoming Credit-Wise: Understanding Your Credit History and Credit Score
- Becoming Credit-Safe: Protecting Yourself from Identity Theft

To learn more about Access Group borrower education resources, order materials or schedule a presentation, please contact your account executive.

Private Loan Rates

Access Group's 2008-2009 School-Certified Private Loan in association with CampusDoor® is based on the Prime Rate index plus a per annum percentage margin.

Access Group's older private loans are based on the 3-month LIBOR index plus a per annum percentage margin.

The current indexes for the third quarter 2008 (7/1/2008 – 9/30/2008) are:

- Prime: 5.00%
- 3-month LIBOR: 2.681%

Go to "Interest Rates" at AccessGroup.Org for current indexes, federal interest rates and an interest rate comparison calculator.

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800-282-1550

AccessGroup.Org
NeedAccess.Org

Access Group
Federal Stafford Loans
Federal PLUS Loans
Lender Code: 808851

CampusDoor®
Lender Code: 999444

To subscribe to this newsletter, e-mail your name and your school's name to your internal account executive or to schoolservices@accessgroup.org.

Need Access® Financial Aid Service

Need analysis service
for graduate and
professional schools



Need Access: More than just Need Analysis

Sure, you can assess financial need and award institutional funds with Need Access. But you can also create budgets, track documents and much more!

Here are just a few of the features Need Access users have at their fingertips:

- Paperless process for need analysis
- Customizable student and parent application data
- User-friendly editing functions for need analysis recalculations
- Downloadable student application data and calculations that can be exported to Excel spreadsheets or other formats
- Easy-to-create budgets, document tracking and much more!
- Compatibility with most FAM systems
- Free training and technical support for your staff

To learn more about how Need Access can streamline your need analysis process, call your account executive at 800-227-2151.

