

Access Group's monthly newsletter for financial aid administrators

accessupdate

February 2009



Don't Wait! Register Today for a Spring Workshop!

Don't miss out on our 2009 Access Group workshops! With a new focus and great sessions, these workshops give you a good reason to get out of the office for a day of learning.

Our 2009 workshop sessions feature three helpful segments:

Industry Update on the FFELP Community

- The process of funding a FFELP loan
- Changes that lie ahead
- Impact on Access Group and the entire FFELP community

The Borrower Experience

- Explore a typical borrower experience from approval through repayment
- Find out the many ways Access Group communicates with borrowers during the life of their loans
- Learn about Access Group's online tools and resources that can help students become wiser borrowers

Strategies for Loan Repayment

- Learn new ways to help students determine which repayment plan is the best choice for them
- Discuss repayment strategies based on actual case studies
- Develop a counseling checklist and get the tools you need to advise your students

As always, these free workshops are held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and include continental breakfast and lunch.

Please share this information with other school administrators, such as admissions, career planning and placement staff at your school who may benefit from attending an Access Group workshop.

For more details and to register, please visit www.AccessGroup.Org/Workshops or call your account executive at 800-227-2151 for more information.

Access Group's 2009 Workshop Schedule

March 10	University of Richmond School of Law	Richmond, VA
March 11	Vanderbilt University at the University Club	Nashville, TN
March 17	Nova Southeastern University	Ft. Lauderdale, FL
March 18	Suffolk University School of Law	Boston, MA
March 24	University of Pennsylvania Medical School	Philadelphia, PA
March 24	Golden Gate University School of Law	San Francisco, CA
March 25	University of California, Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA
March 26	Northwestern University, Kellogg Conference Center	Chicago, IL
March 31	City University of New York	New York, NY
April 1	Catholic University School of Law	Washington, DC

New Dates . . . More Convenience!

2009 Graduate and Professional Financial Aid Conference Sunday, November 15 – Tuesday, November 17

JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes – Orlando, Florida!

If you've thought about attending the Access Group Conference in the past but felt it was just too close to Thanksgiving, we understand – and we've done something about it!

This year, we've scheduled the conference **four days earlier**, so you'll have more time between the event and Thanksgiving. That translates into lower airfares and less stress as you rush from conference to office to holiday!

Plus, with a Sunday evening kick-off, you can use the weekend to explore all the wonderful, magical attractions the Orlando area has to offer before the conference starts – without taking additional time out of the office.

Mark your calendars now!



Call for Session Proposals!

If there's a topic you'd like to see covered ... a session you'd like to present ... a fabulous speaker you've heard and would like to recommend, please tell us! Send your suggestions to ismith@accessgroup.org.

Reminder Memos

PLUS Loan Increases

For PLUS loans, Access Group's original credit approval is valid for 180 days from the date a borrower's credit report was obtained. To verify the date the report was pulled, visit AccessGroup.Org, click on "Loan Inquiry," then "Search by SSN" and enter the borrower's Social Security number. When you identify the loan, you'll see the date the application was received and when credit was obtained.

For Access Group to process an increase on an existing PLUS loan, the date of the credit inquiry must be verified. It is also important to take note if the loan was approved single-signature and an endorser was not necessary. If the credit inquiry date is within the 180 day window and the borrower was approved single-signature, your account executive can accept your request to increase the certification, make sure the guarantee is increased, and schedule the disbursement of the additional funds. A new loan application will be needed if the single-signature credit approval has expired, or if the loan has an endorser. As always, the internal account executives are available to assist you through the process.

Getting Borrower Authorization

If your office initiates PLUS loans on behalf of your students and your expectation is that Access Group should pull credit prior to the borrower signing the MPN, you must obtain authorization from the borrower.

For entering students, we suggest that you include an authorization statement in your awarding process whereby students provide express consent that you can initiate the credit inquiry. If your office is not already doing this, check with your school's legal counsel about wording for the authorization form. For returning students, authorization is not necessary because of the language within the MPN itself.

Holiday Closing

In observance of Presidents' Day, Access Group offices will be closed on Monday, February 16. Our Voice Response Unit will be in service, as will eAccess and My Account at AccessGroup.Org.

Exit Counseling Resources for You and Your Students

Access Group offers exit counseling support online, in person, and in print:

Online Exit Counseling Sessions – Specifically intended for graduate and professional student borrowers, our exit counseling session complies with federal requirements and offers graduating students 24-hour access so they can complete the session online without additional visits to your office.

To set up an online exit counseling session for your school, choose “Entrance/Exit Counseling” from the eAccess global navigation.

Exit Counseling On Campus – Access Group account executives are also available to visit your campus and assist with your exit counseling program. Call your external account executive to make arrangements.

2009 Income-Based Repayment Worksheet – You can download a worksheet to help determine whether a borrower is eligible for Income-Based Repayment. This worksheet reflects the new HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2009 and is posted on the Debt Management Handouts page under Debt Management in the Financial Aid Administrators section of AccessGroup.Org.

eAccess Tip of the Month

Searching for student information?

eAccess offers a variety of ways to search for student information. Each search produces a results grid that will appear on the page below the search parameters box. Some tips for navigating and using the results grid:

- You can sort by a particular piece of data by clicking any of the column headers.
- You can look for a particular student in a list of records by typing the SSN (in the input box above the results column headers) and that loan record will be sorted to the top of the list.
- You can select or deselect all records at once by clicking the “Select All,” “Deselect All” hyperlink above the column headers of the search results grid.

Need Access® 2009 – 2010 Update

Thank you to all who participated in our beginner and refresher training courses for Need Access recently.

As a follow-up, be sure to refer to the 2009-2010 Need Access Counselor User Manual posted at www.accessgroup.org/needaccess/instruct.htm.

Our Need Access technical support team is also ready to help! Call the Need Access Help Line, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. ET at 800-282-1550, ext. 6457.

Access Group, Inc.

5500 Brandywine Parkway
P.O. Box 7430
Wilmington, DE
19803-0430

Toll-free lines:

School Services

800-227-2151
800-449-8204 (fax)

Customer Contact Center

800-282-1550

AccessGroup.Org

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Technical Assistance

800-282-1550, ext. 6457

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

For information about
Access Group loan programs
and rates, please visit
AccessGroup.Org.

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

