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TO: Directors of Financial Aid  
Texas Public and Private Institutions of Higher Education

FROM: DeChà Reid  
Director, Financial Aid Services

DATE: August 22, 2016

RE: FY2017 Welcome and Updates

As we begin the new fiscal year, the Office of Student Financial Aid Programs (SFAP) would like to provide institutions with a few updates and resources that can be used throughout the upcoming year.

### **2016-2017 Program Guidelines**

We are excited to introduce a new look to the annual Program Guidelines. This year, we are providing a comprehensive document that outlines the majority of the state financial aid programs in a standardized format. This change which will allow schools that administer multiple programs to have a reference tool, accessible in one place. Some of the highlights in the new document layout include an interactive table of contents, an award amount summary chart and hyperlinks within the document that direct the user to important forms that the institution often needs to administer their programs.

Another change to the guidelines is the addition of hyperlinks directly to the Texas Education Code (TEC) and the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). Using these links ensures that institutions can easily access the program statute and rules when administering state financial aid programs.

The guidelines will be available in an individual format for administrators that only wish to view one program at a time. All versions of the 2016-17 guidelines will be available by **August 31, 2016** on the Student Financial Aid Programs Website:

<https://www1.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/SpecialPrograms/MainMenu.cfm>.

### **New Toll-Free Number**

SFAP is thrilled to provide a toll-free number exclusively for institutions. Starting **October 3, 2016**, financial aid administrators will have the opportunity to speak to our dedicated customer service representatives regarding questions about state grants, loans, work-study, waivers, and exemption programs. The new number will be 1-844-792-2640.

### **Funds Request**

Institutions participating in the Toward EXcellence, Access, and Success (TEXAS Grant), Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG), and Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) programs are highly encouraged to begin submitting a Funds Request Form (FRF) and Top Ten Percent (Top 10%) Scholarship Funds Request Files (FRF) now in order to begin processing payments on the first day of the 2017 fiscal year, September 1, 2016. An updated set of instructions was created for each of the funds request processes to guide institutions through the online procedure of requesting program funds. Instructions can be found by visiting the [SFAP Information Website](#).

**Note:** Please remember to submit a summer update file for any student who failed to meet SAP at the end of the FY16 (2015-16) reporting period, but who regained eligibility through summer school to receive a 2016-17 award.

### **Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)**

Financial Aid Services (FAS) is requesting feedback from institutions for the 2017-18 TASFA. Your input and suggestions on TASFA is very important as it will allow FAS to make changes that will be beneficial to students as well as assist institutions with processing. Please forward your suggestions to [Grantinfo@thecb.state.tx.us](mailto:Grantinfo@thecb.state.tx.us) by **August 31, 2016** so that we may take your feedback into consideration for updates and enhancements on the 2017-18 TASFA. The 2017-18 TASFA will be available on **October 3, 2016**.

### **Training Opportunities**

SFAP has a new dedicated Training and Communications team that was created to be a direct resource for the institutions. The focus of this team will be to streamline reporting processes, standardize communications, and develop training opportunities to deliver to the institutions. Training is vital to the success of state aid administration and the Training and Communications team is requesting feedback on future training needs at your institution. A survey will be available to institutions on the [SFAP Information Website](#).

For any questions or concerns throughout the year, please contact Financial Aid Services at (800) 242-3062 or [Grantinfo@thecb.state.tx.us](mailto:Grantinfo@thecb.state.tx.us).

cc: Ken Martin, Assistant Commissioner  
Charles W. Puls, Deputy Assistant Commissioner