

Nathan Deal
GOVERNOR



Georgia Student Finance Commission
Georgia Student Finance Authority
Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation
GAcollege411

Timothy A. Connell
PRESIDENT

January 22, 2013

RE: Change in Student Application Method for State and Lottery Funded Programs

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to inform you about an important change to the method by which students can apply for any state or lottery funded student aid program administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC).

Pursuant to provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1, GSFC is required to verify the lawful presence in the United States of all applicants for State Program Funds prior to receipt of such benefit. In order to comply with the law in a manner that is most administratively efficient for all parties, applicants for State Program Funds will now be required to complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), regardless of whether the student is applying for any federal assistance, to determine eligibility for student aid.

This change affects any student who is to receive State Program Funds in Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 (Summer Term of calendar year 2013) and beyond. The change also affects invoices paid by GSFC on or after July 1, 2013. This includes **ALL** programs, regardless of the source of the invoice. To prepare for the change, we are taking the following actions:

- Communications are being prepared for financial aid offices, admissions offices, high schools, other administrators and current recipients of state program funds.
- All program pages on GAcollege411.org and GSFC.org will be updated as appropriate to inform students of the change and the actions they need to take (if any).
- A message will be added to the "What's New" section of GAcollege411.org.
- 2012-2013 program regulations will note the FAFSA requirement for approval by the GSFC's Board of Commissioners on February 1.
- Messaging will be added to GSFAPPS to remind students that they must reapply using the FAFSA.
- Invoicing logic will be modified so that all students meet the FAFSA application requirement beginning July 1, 2013.
- All existing GSFAPPS applications will expire on June 9, 2013 and the GSFAPPS process will be discontinued on that date.

GSFC will continue to accept applications submitted via GSFAPPS until June 8, 2013. Students may be invoiced under these applications until the deadline date and for FY 2013 funds only.

As you can see, we are making every attempt to provide all stakeholders with as much advance notice as possible. While it may be duplicative, we respectfully ask that you also notify your students of the upcoming change. In order to assist you with the transition and/or answer any questions you might have, we will hold two statewide conference calls on the following dates:

- Friday, January 25, 2013 at 1:00 PM
- Thursday, January 31, 2013 at 9:00 AM

The conference call information is as follows:

Call in number: (800) 882-3610
Guest code: 7564754

I am very sensitive to the scope of this change. However, I believe in the long run, this change will result in a simpler and easier process for all concerned. Future communications will be sent as needed. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Tracy Ireland at tracyi@gsfc.org or (770) 724-9066.

Sincerely,



Timothy A. Connell