



# Financial Aid News

## Receiving your aid for spring 2012

Review your VFAO account for anticipated disbursement dates at <https://mountainstate.vfao.com>.

You must complete a spring 2012 online interview through the VFAO

website to receive financial aid for spring.

Financial aid funds are directly applied toward the current term tuition, fees, and direct charges appearing on your student account; any excess

funds will be refunded to you through direct deposit or refund check.

Federal law mandates that all refunds must be sent out to the student within 14 days of the credit posting to the account.

Volume 1, Issue 1

January 2012

**Contact  
Financial Aid Office**  
800.766.6067 ext. 3240  
faid@mountainstate.edu

Student Accounts  
studentaccounts@mountainstate.edu  
304.461.3456

*Use the VFAO site to review your MSU classes, MSU account balances, scholarships or state grants, and the status of your refund check, or to sign up for direct deposit.*

**WELCOME TO THE MOUNTAIN STATE UNIVERSITY VIRTUAL FINANCIAL AID OFFICE!**

**IMPORTANT:** If you have questions regarding your MSU classes, MSU account balance, scholarships or state grants, the status of your refund check, or to sign up for direct deposit - Please call MSU directly at 1-866-497-4111 or 1-800-766-6067 (the VFAO or this site is not able to assist you with these issues)

**\*\*Please do NOT complete a spring interview until you are enrolled for the spring term. Once you have enrolled, please allow MSU a few days to complete all the needed enrollment steps, before you complete the spring interview. Thanks.\*\***

This site provides services for students applying for Federal Financial Aid.

If you are a new student to this site, please [register now](#) to gain access to the [Student Interview Center](#), [Financial Aid Estimator](#), and other resources this site offers related to your Federal Financial Aid Application process. If you have forgotten your user name or password please click [here](#) to recover your information.

It is very important when completing your interview, to include all scholarships, discounts, waivers and other sources of aid. If not reported, your awarded loans could be returned at later date.

Please use this [DIRECT LOAN](#) link to complete your FAFSA, sign your MPN, apply for a plus loan, or complete exit counseling.

Please fax any requested paperwork to the VFAO at 1-888-225-7186.

**Helpful Links**

- [Aid Information](#)
- [Visit MSU's home page](#)
- [Visit the MSU Financial Aid Office](#)
- [Visit MSU Counselor Web](#)

## Enrollment reminder



Enrolling in classes is not enough to secure your financial aid. You must also attend the classes in which you enroll. The Office of Financial Aid is required to verify that students who receive a

nonpassing grade (any grade other than A, B, C, D, or I) in any class actually began attending the class. For example, if you receive an F in a course, we will follow up to determine whether the F was

an earned F and whether or not you attended the class.

Failure to attend can be expensive. Your aid could be reduced retroactively and you could be required to repay aid you have received. If you have questions about your enrollment and eligibility for financial aid, please contact or visit the Office of Financial Aid for assistance.

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## Ask the IRS to share information for the FAFSA

### Important Note:

At the time of disbursement, if you are enrolled less than full time but at least half time, all of your financial aid funds (except direct loans) will be prorated and reduced based on your level of enrollment (you will receive aid awards proportional to the number of hours you take).

### 2012–2013 FAFSA

Available January 1, 2012, at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

To be considered for state funding, your FAFSA must be received at the federal processor before March 1, 2012.

All MSU students applying for financial aid must fill out a new FAFSA each year in the spring prior to the new academic year to be considered for financial aid in the fall and spring terms.

Filing income taxes early and giving permission for the U.S. Department of Education to use your/your parents' IRS financial information for your FAFSA will automatically populate fields on the FAFSA and streamline the financial aid process.

### Did you know?

Direct PLUS Loans are available for parents and graduate students.

Parents and graduate students who are not eligible for other types of financial aid may be interested in the unsubsidized Direct PLUS Loan. Eligibility is not based on financial need, and grad students and parents of undergraduates may borrow up to the student's cost of attendance minus other financial assistance the student receives.

Starting in January, parents who apply and receive a Direct PLUS Loan will be instructed to tell MSU how they would like the excess funds disbursed. If the Direct PLUS loan creates a credit balance on the student's account, the parent will need to tell us if the refund should go to them or to the student.

Stay tuned for details on the Direct PLUS Loan policy change.

The image shows the FAFSA website homepage. At the top, it says "START HERE GO FURTHER FEDERAL STUDENT AID" and "FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid". Below this is a navigation bar with icons for Home, About Us, Student Aid on the Web, PIN Site, and Contact Us. A search bar is on the right. The main content area features a large blue banner with the text "Get help payi" and "Submit a Free Application Start Here". Below the banner are sections for "Deadlines", "School Code Search", and "FAFSA Filing Options". A 1040 tax form is overlaid on the right side of the page.

## Consider options before dropping

### Complete withdrawal

If you withdraw completely from spring term 2012 before April 6, your aid will be prorated based on the length of time you were enrolled. If you need to repay any financial aid funds that you received, your student account will be charged.

### Attend less than full time

You must attend at least half time (6 hours for undergraduates, 3 hours for graduate students) to receive most types of financial aid. If you are attending at least half time but less than full time (6 to 11 hours for undergradu-

ates, 3 to 6 hours for graduate students), you might not be eligible for the amount of financial aid you were originally offered. If you do not enroll full time or you drop to less than full time **before January 13**, the Office of Financial Aid will adjust your cost of attendance and your financial aid. If you drop to less than full-time on or **after January 13** AND there is no adjustment to your tuition charges, your need-based financial aid will not be adjusted. However, if you have a merit-based scholarship or award that requires full-time enrollment, you should check with the scholarship provider to determine whether dropping to less than full time will affect your scholarship.

## Legislative and executive changes in 2011 will affect Direct Loan borrowers

A number of federal initiatives, through both the legislative and executive branches, are expected to impact federal financial aid in 2012. These include the Budget Control Act of 2011 and a proposed executive plan that will affect students borrowing under the Direct Loan program.

The Budget Control Act of 2011, signed into law in August, will do the following:

### Interest subsidy for graduate students

The act eliminates the in-school interest subsidy for graduate and professional students beginning July 1, 2012.

### Direct Loan repayment incentives

The language prohibits the

U.S. Department of Education from authorizing or providing repayment incentives on new loans disbursed on or after July 1, 2012. One exception: an interest rate reduction may be provided to a borrower who agrees to automatic debit for electronic loan payments.

### Pell Grants

The Pell Grant program received mandatory funding for fiscal years 2012 and 2013 under legislation, which would preserve the \$5,550 maxi-

mum grant award. However, the future of Pell funding continues under discussion by a 12-member bipartisan congressional committee that is charged with reducing the federal deficit by another \$1.5 trillion. It is unclear at this time how that will further affect financial aid, including Pell Grants.

## Executive proposal would limit federal loan repayments, giving student borrowers relief

In late October, President Obama issued an executive order that would give student borrowers who took out a loan in 2008 or later, and who will take out new loans in 2012, a chance to limit their loan payments. The order also would allow some students to consolidate their loans.

Specific details of how the plan will be implemented are still being worked out at the federal level. The order proposes to:

- Limit monthly payments to 10 percent of discretionary income (down from the cur-

rent 15 percent).

- Forgive remaining debt after 20 years (instead of the current 25 years).

The proposal would also allow students with Federal Family Education Loans and Direct Loans to consolidate them into one Direct Loan for ease of payment and savings. This special consolidation is expected to take place from Jan. 1 through June 30, 2012, allowing students to keep the terms and conditions of their initial loans.



**Late on your loans? Help is available!**

**If you are delinquent on your federal student loans, contact your loan servicer for information on deferments and/or forbearances.**



## Mountain State University

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### CONTACT:

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Mountain State University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association (312.263.0456, [www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org](http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org)). Mountain State University received a Show-Cause Order from its accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The University remains accredited. The University is working diligently to resolve the issues and concerns of the HLC. Details are available on our website <http://www.mountainstate.edu/aboutmsu/facts/accreditation/Show%20Cause%20Order.pdf>

Mountain State University is authorized under federal law to enroll nonimmigrant alien students.

Mountain State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

The Financial Aid Office is here to assist you in funding your education. We understand the process can be confusing and work to provide you the necessary information to enable you to be successful in financially supporting your dream of a college education. The process of applying for federal financial aid is a partnership between you—the student—and Mountain State University, requiring that you complete all the necessary forms and procedures.

The University will process your request in a timely manner once all the necessary information has been provided. The University staff and the staff at VFAO are dedicated to serving your needs and to helping you obtain the federal financial assistance you need to achieve your educational goals.

## Federal government contracts with six Direct Loan servicers

The U.S. Department of Education has contracted with six organizations to provide loan servicing for borrowers of Federal Direct Subsidized, Federal Direct Unsubsidized and Federal Direct Parent (PLUS) Loans. Loans are sent for servicing once a promissory note is completed and disbursement is made.

It is the intention of the Direct Loan program to have all federally held loans for an individual borrower be with one loan servicer. However, it is possible that student

and parent borrowers from the same family could have loans serviced by different organizations.

Borrowers will have their federal loans serviced by one of the six loan servicers listed below. Loans will be automatically assigned and students and parents can view a complete online loan history, including details of servicers for each loan, at [www.nslds.ed.gov](http://www.nslds.ed.gov). (Access to this site requires a Department of Education PIN.)

These are the current federally approved loan servicing providers. For more information, visit <http://studentaid.ed.gov/>.

- **Direct Loan Servicing Center (ACS)** [www.myedaccount.com](http://www.myedaccount.com)  
800.848.0979
- **FedLoan Servicing (PHEAA)** [www.myfedloan.org](http://www.myfedloan.org)  
800.699.2908
- **Great Lakes Educational Loan Services** [www.mygreatlakes.org](http://www.mygreatlakes.org)  
800.236.4300
- **MOHELA** [www.mohela.com](http://www.mohela.com)  
888.866.4352
- **Nelnet Education Planning & Financing** [www.nelnet.com](http://www.nelnet.com)  
888.486.4722
- **Sallie Mae** [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)  
800.722.1300

**Happy New Year  
from the Office of  
Financial Aid!**