

Student Aid Alliance



Support FY 2010 Appropriations for the Federal Student Aid Programs

Without the partnership between the federal government, states, institutions and families, millions of students would not be able to go to college. We call on the 111th Congress to continue its bipartisan support of the federal student aid programs – which combine grant, work-study, and loan programs to enable low-income students to succeed. The **Student Aid Alliance** is a coalition of organizations representing students, parents, colleges and universities, and others, who believe that all qualified students should be able to go to college, regardless of their financial resources.

The Pell Grant Maximum should be \$5,550. The Student Aid Alliance greatly appreciates the increases in the Pell Grant maximum award provided in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for FY 2009, and asks that sufficient appropriations be provided to ensure a \$5,550 grant in FY 2010. We support this historic level of grant assistance. We also appreciate the \$200 million increase for the **Federal Work Study** Program provided for FY 2009 and FY 2010 through ARRA.

SEOG funding should be increased to \$1 billion. The Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) program provides up to an additional \$4,000 in grant assistance to Pell Grant recipients in order of need. SEOG expands college options for these students. By law, colleges and universities match one-to-three the federal SEOG funds, and often far exceed this matching level, multiplying the federal investment in low-income students.

The Perkins Loan Program Federal Capital Contribution should be increased to the newly reauthorized level of \$300 million; and loan cancellations should be increased to \$125 million. There is renewed interest in this campus-based, low-interest, federal student loan program, with the administration's proposal to restructure Perkins, and make major investments in its success. While congressional committees deliberate the possibilities for the future of Perkins Loans, we ask appropriators to increase funding for the program in FY 2010, which will allow institutions to provide more loans to low-income students in these tough economic times.

Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnerships (LEAP) should be increased to \$200 million. The LEAP program consists of two critical components – LEAP and GAP. The Federal LEAP program has been the foundation of state-matched need-based grants since 1972, generating more than \$840 million for student grants each year. Over half of LEAP recipients are from families with incomes under \$20,000. The newly authorized Grants for Access and Persistence (GAP) program will allow states to create robust



partnerships with institutions of higher education, businesses, and philanthropic organizations to provide low-income students with additional need-based grants; increase participation in early intervention programs that provide information, mentoring and outreach services to students in middle and secondary schools; and provide early assurance of aid eligibility. This program can play a critical part in meeting the goals of the proposed Access and Completion Incentive Fund.

TRIO program funding should be increased to \$968 million. The TRIO programs are designed to help low-income, first-generation college students prepare for, enter, and graduate from college. TRIO Programs help students overcome non-financial barriers to higher education through support services. Two-thirds of TRIO students come from families with incomes of less than \$34,000 where neither parent graduated from college. The TRIO programs currently serve over 840,000 students in all 50 states and some U. S. territories.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) should be increased to the authorized level of \$400 million. GEAR UP provides students from low-income schools with the necessary academic skills and aspirations to successfully prepare for and succeed in college. The program uses a K-16 approach designed to increase student academic preparation and performance; create systemic education reform; and leverage additional matching resources beyond the federal investment, including businesses. With a foundation of early academic interventions, a strong academic core program, parental and community involvement, GEAR UP has served millions of low-income students in 48 states, four territories, and the District of Columbia since 1998.

Graduate level programs should be increased to \$77 million. Supporting the need based graduate education programs that will create the next generation of scholars, faculty, and experts in a wide spectrum of fields will help address pressing national issues and the challenge our economic downturn. Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need should be funded at \$41 million. The Jacob Javits Fellowship program should be funded at \$16 million. The Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program should be funded at \$5 million. The Patsy T. Mink program should be funded at \$15 million.