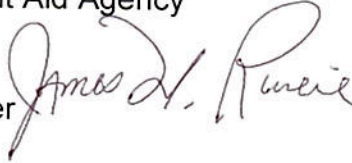


To: Director, State Student Aid Agency

From: James W. Runcie

Chief Operating Officer



Date: March 27, 2017

Subject: Request for Consideration of State Grant Deadline Flexibility

We are aware that several state student aid agencies have provided deadline and other administrative flexibilities to students as a result of the suspension of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Data Retrieval Tool (DRT), as described below. We thank those agencies and urge others to do the same if possible.

On March 3, 2017, the IRS suspended the DRT. This tool allows students and parents to electronically access, review, and transfer their relevant tax return information directly from the IRS into their online FAFSAs. The decision to suspend the DRT was made so that the IRS could take needed steps to ensure the privacy and security of their systems and of the tax return information that is provided through the DRT. We are working with our colleagues at the IRS to resolve these issues as quickly as possible. At this time, the IRS anticipates the online data tool will be unavailable for at least several more weeks.

In the meantime, the online FAFSA remains operational and applicants can continue filing the FAFSA as they normally would by manually providing the requested financial information for their 2017–18 FAFSAs from copies of their 2015 tax returns. However, in some instances, a family may have difficulty accessing their 2015 tax returns or may have to request a copy from their tax preparer. In other instances, the family may need to request a *Tax Return Transcript* from the IRS. For these reasons, we are asking your agency to consider providing flexibility with regard to application deadline dates or other administrative requirements where students and families may need a little more time to comply. We are aware of at least two states that have extended their deadlines for these reasons.

We thank you in advance for any assistance you can provide to your students and their families and look forward to continuing our partnership to ensure that all eligible students can benefit from both federal and state student assistance programs.