



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

March 25, 2019

Honorable Tim Kaine  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kaine:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos regarding the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) and Temporary Expanded Public Service Loan Forgiveness (TEPSLF) Programs. Your letter was referred to my office, and I am pleased to respond. An identical response is being sent to the cosigners of your letter.

In response to the letter that I sent you dated October 10, 2018, you asked for a detailed accounting of existing and planned TEPSLF outreach activities, including the projected numbers of recipients or users, and the expected actual cost of each tool or initiative. In my October 10, 2018, letter I provided detailed information on the Department's outreach activities for TEPSLF.

Since that time, the Department has continued its outreach efforts to help make borrowers aware of their potential eligibility for PSLF and TEPSLF. In December 2018, the Department's office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) launched a PSLF Help Tool to help borrowers navigate the PSLF application process. This interactive tool is designed to:

- help borrowers understand more about the PSLF Program and what is needed to participate and possibly have their loans forgiven;
- help borrowers assess whether their employer qualifies for PSLF;
- help borrowers assess whether their loans qualify for PSLF;
- help borrowers decide which PSLF form to submit; and
- use the information we have about borrowers' federal student loans to explain other actions borrowers should or must take if they want to receive PSLF.

In the first month of the tool's launch (from early December 2018 to early January 2019), about 37,000 borrowers used it to generate approximately 10,700 forms, equating to an average of about 1,200 users and 346 forms per day. To date, FSA has spent over \$1 million on development, implementation, and ongoing support and maintenance of the help tool.

FSA has also conducted a variety of other outreach activities to raise general awareness about PSLF and TEPSLF, including press releases, additional website content, social media posts, an Electronic Announcement, a webinar, and a training session for financial aid administrators. The

TEPSLF web page, launched in May 2018, has received more than 458,000 visits from 387,000 users.

In May 2018, FSA conducted a targeted e-mail campaign to nearly 2,000 borrowers who had at least one Direct Loan and previously had their PSLF applications denied for not having made 120 qualifying payments. These borrowers were provided specific information about TEPSLF eligibility and the application process. FSA continues to send these e-mails on a weekly basis to any PSLF applicants denied that week. To date, FSA has sent approximately 20,000 e-mails.

FSA also has several ongoing and planned outreach efforts to assist students in understanding the benefits, eligibility, and procedures for PSLF and TEPSLF. FSA is planning a campaign to send e-mails to all Direct Loan borrowers sharing specific information about PSLF Program requirements and procedures. FSA currently plans to conduct this e-mail campaign in June and November/December 2019, when many borrowers will be focused on repayment because they will have either recently graduated or their grace period will be ending. FSA is also planning additional blog posts, webinars, and other outreach events for the coming months, including engaging community organizers to help promote PSLF to borrowers. FSA also plans to conduct organic social media outreach about the PSLF Help Tool and is researching costs and platforms to raise further awareness through paid social media.

You also requested additional data relating to TEPSLF, broken down into several categories. FSA has researched your data request and provided the available data below. All data are as of December 28, 2018, and are provided by the numbered categories in your letter.

1. Number of inquiries received seeking information about the application process for TEPSLF

The Department does not specifically track the number of inquiries related to TEPSLF or require PHEAA/FedLoan Servicing, the PSLF servicer, to do so. However, in May 2018, the TEPSLF mailbox was set up as a simple way for borrowers to apply for the program. Of the 43,203 e-mails received at the mailbox, 38,640 e-mails were requests for TEPSLF forgiveness and 2,745 of the e-mails were questions relating to TEPSLF.

2. Number of applications received

Borrowers apply for the TEPSLF program by sending an e-mail to [TEPSLF@myfedloans.org](mailto:TEPSLF@myfedloans.org). 43,203 e-mails have been submitted to the inbox from 30,596 unique e-mail addresses. Some borrowers may have submitted more than one e-mail. The servicer treats each e-mail as a unique application, although some of these e-mails are not actually requests for TEPSLF consideration. Of the 43,203 e-mails received, 42,749 were opened and reviewed by the end of 2018. This review resulted in 38,460 requests for TEPSLF forgiveness, 2,745 questions relating to the TEPSLF program, and 1,544 e-mails not related to TEPSLF.

When an e-mail requests forgiveness, the servicer first evaluates whether the borrower has submitted an application for PSLF. To request TEPSLF, the borrower must first have submitted a PSLF application for forgiveness. 28,640 of the 38,460 remaining e-mails were from

borrowers without a PSLF application on file. If a borrower does not have a PSLF application on file, the servicer notifies the borrower of this requirement and closes the TEPSLF application. In this instance, the servicer does not track if the borrower has any Employment Certification Forms (ECFs) on file.

In your letter, you requested “the number of borrowers identified in response to this question who had submitted an ECF but whose ECF was denied due to enrollment in an ineligible repayment plan.” When an ECF is received, the PSLF servicer first reviews the borrower’s account to ensure they have eligible loans and then the borrower’s employment to ensure it qualifies for PSLF. The borrower will not receive credit towards PSLF for a period of service if it does not meet these conditions. However, a period of service is never determined to be ineligible for PSLF due to enrollment in an ineligible repayment plan.

9,820 e-mails were submitted by borrowers who previously submitted a PSLF application, and these applications were reviewed for TEPSLF eligibility. These e-mails represented requests from 9,416 borrowers who were previously denied for PSLF and 404 borrowers whose PSLF applications were pending review.

3. Outstanding aggregate loan balance from all applicants

The servicer does not calculate the total balance associated with borrowers as described in question 2.

4. Number of TEPSLF applications denied

As stated above, 9,820 applications met the initial criteria of having submitted a PSLF application and, as such, were further reviewed for TEPSLF eligibility. Of these applications, 1,184 applications remain under review, and 8,374 of these applications were determined to be ineligible after subsequent review. These applications were determined ineligible for the following reasons:

INELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS	COUNT	PERCENT
Not in Repayment for At Least 10 Years	3,344	39.9%
Does Not Meet the Most Recent Payment/12 <sup>th</sup> Month Payment Criteria	1,785	21.3%
Has Ineligible Loans	1,069	12.8%
Has Not Made 120 Qualifying Payments	875	10.4%
Has Not Submitted Required Income Documentation	622	7.4%
Has Not Submitted 10 Years of	510	6.1%

Certified Employment		
Already Approved for PSLF or TEPSLF Discharge	169	2.0%
	8,374	99.9%*

\*Due to rounding, the total adds up to 99.9%.

5. Outstanding aggregate loan balance from all applicants denied TEPSLF

The servicer does not calculate the total dollar balance associated with the borrowers as described in question 4.

6. Number of TEPSLF applications approved

262 borrowers have been approved for TEPSLF.

7. Outstanding aggregate loan balance from all applicants granted TEPSLF

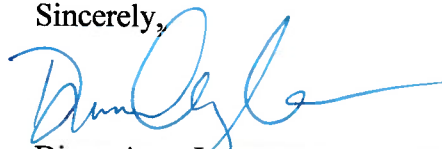
\$10.6 million in loans have been discharged for the 262 borrowers.

8. Unusual fluctuation of income

Fewer than 20 borrowers have submitted additional income information to be used for this exception.

I hope that this information is helpful to you. Should you have other questions regarding this matter, please contact the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs at (202) 401-0020.

Sincerely,



Diane Auer Jones  
Principal Deputy Under Secretary  
Delegated to Perform the Duties of Under Secretary