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Department of Education Funding Updates

By Carina Zaragoza

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has begun to accept applications for various grant programs for the upcoming fiscal year. Notices have been made public via financial aid organizations and associations, such as Higher Education Washington Inc. and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. Information about institutional grants can be found on the Department of Education website.

First, the DOE has recently announced it will take action to help colleges prepare for emergencies of any and all types. The DOE will be issuing a funding notice to higher education institutions on or near March 17 regarding funding for emergency management programs. The funds are part of the Emergency Management for Higher Education grant program. Officials estimate roughly 18 grants of \$300,000 will be awarded per institution. The tentative application deadline for schools will be April 30.

The purpose of the Emergency Management for Higher Education grant program is to help institutions of higher education (IHEs) develop or review and implement all-hazards emergency management plans. IHEs must submit project plans to enhance current or implement new emergency management plans to be eligible for grants.

The program outlines a four-phase framework of emergency management at IHEs, which includes:

1. Prevention/Mitigation
2. Preparedness
3. Response
4. Recovery

Among the responsibilities IHEs have are developing an institution-wide emergency management plan; training campus staff, faculty, and students; ensuring coordination across all relevant departments within the IHE; coordinating with local and state government emergency management efforts; and developing a written plan that incorporates the medical, mental health, communication, and transportation needs of those with disabilities, special needs, and other circumstances (such as cultural or language barriers). The funds from the

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Emergency Management for Higher Education grant program are designed to assist with these responsibilities.

Also, the DOE is now accepting Title III applications. Title III is the DOE's Strengthening Institutions grant program. Grants awarded through Title III are provided to help programs become self-sufficient as well as assist institutions with expanding their programs to low-income students. The grants can also be used for administrative purposes, construction and maintenance, and improvement of academic programs.

Title III grants are awarded through the basic Strengthening Institutions program, or certain types of institutions (Tribal, Hispanic-Serving, Asian American, and Native American Pacific) can compete for special grants. The deadline for IHEs to apply for Title III grants is April 9 (or April 30 if an institution is applying only for cost-sharing).

Finally, the DOE has established deadlines for colleges to apply for campus-based aid. Campus-based aid comprises Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Work-Study, and Education Opportunity (EOP) Grants. The DOE announced the deadline for the 2008-2009 academic year, and the notice makes no changes to the programs.

On the Net

Higher Education Washington Inc.

U.S. Department of Education

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

Strengthening Institutions Program (Title III)

Campus-Based Aid Deadlines