



Last Minute Financial Aid Tips for College Students: Money Still Available Through Federal Government, College Department Chairs, Work Study Programs

LINCOLN, Neb., Sept 08, 2006 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- As college students begin the fall semester, many of them may think it's too late to obtain financial assistance. Nelnet (NYSE: NNI), a leading education planning and financing company, has tips on how to find last-minute dollars to make your education more affordable.

As a student, you should first make sure you are getting all the money to which you are entitled by reviewing your financial aid award letter carefully. If you suspect any inaccuracies, you should inform your financial aid office right away. In addition, if you're an in-state student, it is especially important to make sure that the "permanent address" listed in the award letter is correct. This could save you a bundle as there are usually out-of-state surcharges assessed for students in such categories.

If you are currently receiving aid through the Federal Pell Grant program, you may be entitled to receive more funding. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which was signed into law last February, provides qualified Pell Grant recipients additional money through the Academic Competitive Grants and SMART Grant programs. The amount of supplementary funds for which you may be eligible is determined in part by your academic level:

- * Freshmen are eligible for an additional \$750
- * Sophomores are eligible for an additional \$1,300
- * Juniors and Seniors are eligible for up to \$4,000

In addition, you should stop by your financial aid office to see if there are any other options available for students, including tuition payment plans. "Thousands of potential dollars fall through the cracks every year just because students do not ask for more money on top of their initial student loans and financial aid," said Nelnet spokesperson Eric Solomon.

If you qualify for Federal Work Study, you should also ask about off-campus jobs, which sometimes pay more than those located on campus and which may be a better fit for you in terms of preparing for a future career. Many financial aid and/or campus student employment offices have partnerships with outside organizations needing part-time workers.

After the financial aid office, you should visit your department chairs to ask about the availability of merit-based scholarships that have not been offered or may have recently been returned by students who will not be attending school. Solomon says this source of funding is usually unadvertised due to the last-minute nature of such attendance decisions.

If you are unsuccessful in finding last-minute aid, make sure to plan early for next year. There are millions of scholarships available. Nelnet's planning Web site, www.nelnet.net/collegeplanning, provides a database of more than 1.6 million scholarships worth more than \$6 billion.

If you have further questions about obtaining money or need college planning advice, call toll-free 1.866.866.7372 to speak to a knowledgeable Nelnet College Planning Counselor.

Nelnet is one of the leading education finance companies in the United States and is focused on providing quality products and services to students and schools nationwide. Nelnet ranks among the nation's leaders in terms of total net student loan assets with \$22.4 billion as of June 30, 2006. Headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, Nelnet originates, consolidates, securitizes, holds, and services student loans, principally loans originated under the Federal Family Education Loan Program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Additional information is available at www.nelnet.net.

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