

(9) Cooperating with all program reviews, investigations, and audits conducted by the Secretary relating to the agency's loan guarantee program.

(10) Taking prompt action to protect the rights of borrowers and the Federal fiscal interest respecting loans that the agency has guaranteed when the agency learns that a school that participated in the FFEL Program or a holder of loans participating in the program is experiencing problems that threaten the solvency of the school or holder, including—

(i) Conducting on-site program reviews;

(ii) Providing training and technical assistance, if appropriate;

(iii) Filing a proof of claim with a bankruptcy court for recovery of any funds due the agency and any refunds due to borrowers on FFEL loans that it has guaranteed when the agency learns that a school has filed a bankruptcy petition;

(iv) Promptly notifying the Secretary that the agency has determined that a school or holder of loans is experiencing potential solvency problems; and

(v) Promptly notifying the Secretary of the results of any actions taken by the agency to protect Federal funds involving such a school or holder.

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EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 682.410, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 682.411 Lender due diligence in collecting guaranty agency loans.

(a) *General.* In the event of delinquency on an FFEL Program loan, the lender must engage in at least the collection efforts described in paragraphs (c) through (n) of this section, except that in the case of a loan made to a borrower who is incarcerated, residing outside a State, Mexico, or Canada, or whose telephone number is unknown, the lender may send a forceful collection letter instead of each telephone effort required by this section.

(b) *Delinquency.* (1) For purposes of this section, delinquency on a loan be-

gins on the first day after the due date of the first missed payment that is not later made. The due date of the first payment is established by the lender but must occur by the deadlines specified in § 682.209(a) or, if the lender first learns after the fact that the borrower has entered the repayment period, no later than 75 days after the day the lender so learns, except as provided in § 682.209(a)(2)(v) and (a)(3)(ii)(E). If a payment is made late, the first day of delinquency is the day after the due date of the next missed payment that is not later made. A payment that is within five dollars of the amount normally required to advance the due date may nevertheless advance the due date if the lender's procedures allow for that advancement.

(2) At no point during the periods specified in paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of this section may the lender permit the occurrence of a gap in collection activity, as defined in paragraph (j) of this section, of more than 45 days (60 days in the case of a transfer).

(3) As part of one of the collection activities provided for in this section, the lender must provide the borrower with information on the availability of the Student Loan Ombudsman's office.

(c) *1-15 days delinquent.* Except in the case in which a loan is brought into this period by a payment on the loan, expiration of an authorized deferment or forbearance period, or the lender's receipt from the drawee of a dishonored check submitted as a payment on the loan, the lender during this period must send at least one written notice or collection letter to the borrower informing the borrower of the delinquency and urging the borrower to make payments sufficient to eliminate the delinquency. The notice or collection letter sent during this period must include, at a minimum, a lender or servicer contact, a telephone number, and a prominent statement informing the borrower that assistance may be available if he or she is experiencing difficulty in making a scheduled repayment.

(d) *16-180 days delinquent (16-240 days delinquent for a loan repayable in installments less frequently than monthly).* (1) Unless exempted under paragraph (d)(4) of this section, during this period the

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lender must engage in at least four diligent efforts to contact the borrower by telephone and send at least four collection letters urging the borrower to make the required payments on the loan. At least one of the diligent efforts to contact the borrower by telephone must occur on or before, and another one must occur after, the 90th day of delinquency. Collection letters sent during this period must include, at a minimum, information for the borrower regarding deferment, forbearance, income-sensitive repayment, income-based repayment and loan consolidation, and other available options to avoid default.

(2) At least two of the collection letters required under paragraph (d)(1) of this section must warn the borrower that, if the loan is not paid, the lender will assign the loan to the guaranty agency that, in turn, will report the default to each nationwide consumer reporting agency, and that the agency may institute proceedings to offset the borrower's State and Federal income tax refunds and other payments made by the Federal Government to the borrower or to garnish the borrower's wages, or to assign the loan to the Federal Government for litigation against the borrower.

(3) Following the lender's receipt of a payment on the loan or a correct address for the borrower, the lender's receipt from the drawee of a dishonored check received as a payment on the loan, the lender's receipt of a correct telephone number for the borrower, or the expiration of an authorized deferment or forbearance period, the lender is required to engage in only—

(i) Two diligent efforts to contact the borrower by telephone during this period, if the loan is less than 91 days delinquent (121 days delinquent for a loan repayable in installments less frequently than monthly) upon receipt of the payment, correct address, correct telephone number, or returned check, or expiration of the deferment or forbearance; or

(ii) One diligent effort to contact the borrower by telephone during this period if the loan is 91-120 days delinquent (121-180 days delinquent for a loan repayable in installments less frequently than monthly) upon receipt of

the payment, correct address, correct telephone number, or returned check, or expiration of the deferment or forbearance.

(4) A lender need not attempt to contact by telephone any borrower who is more than 120 days delinquent (180 days delinquent for a loan repayable in installments less frequent than monthly) following the lender's receipt of—

- (i) A payment on the loan;
- (ii) A correct address or correct telephone number for the borrower;
- (iii) A dishonored check received from the drawee as a payment on the loan; or
- (iv) The expiration of an authorized deferment or forbearance.

(e) *181-270 days delinquent (241-330 days delinquent for a loan repayable in installments less frequently than monthly)*. During this period the lender must engage in efforts to urge the borrower to make the required payments on the loan. These efforts must, at a minimum, provide information to the borrower regarding options to avoid default and the consequences of defaulting on the loan.

(f) *Final demand*. On or after the 241st day of delinquency (the 301st day for loans payable in less frequent installments than monthly) the lender must send a final demand letter to the borrower requiring repayment of the loan in full and notifying the borrower that a default will be reported to each nationwide consumer reporting agency. The lender must allow the borrower at least 30 days after the date the letter is mailed to respond to the final demand letter and to bring the loan out of default before filing a default claim on the loan.

(g) *Collection procedures when borrower's telephone number is not available*. Upon completion of a diligent but unsuccessful effort to ascertain the correct telephone number of a borrower as required by paragraph (m) of this section, the lender is excused from any further efforts to contact the borrower by telephone, unless the borrower's number is obtained before the 211th day of delinquency (the 271st day for loans repayable in installments less frequently than monthly).

(h) *Skip-tracing*. (1) Unless the letter specified under paragraph (f) of this

section has already been sent, within 10 days of its receipt of information indicating that it does not know the borrower's current address, the lender must begin to diligently attempt to locate the borrower through the use of effective commercial skip-tracing techniques. These efforts must include, but are not limited to, sending a letter to or making a diligent effort to contact each endorser, relative, reference, individual, and entity, identified in the borrower's loan file, including the schools the student attended. For this purpose, a lender's contact with a school official who might reasonably be expected to know the borrower's address may be with someone other than the financial aid administrator, and may be in writing or by phone calls. These efforts must be completed by the date of default with no gap of more than 45 days between attempts to contact those individuals or entities.

(2) Upon receipt of information indicating that it does not know the borrower's current address, the lender must discontinue the collection efforts described in paragraphs (c) through (f) of this section.

(3) If the lender is unable to ascertain the borrower's current address despite its performance of the activities described in paragraph (h)(1) of this section, the lender is excused thereafter from performance of the collection activities described in paragraphs (c) through (f) and (l)(1) through (l)(3) and (l)(5) of this section unless it receives communication indicating the borrower's address before the 241st day of delinquency (the 301st day for loans payable in less frequent installments than monthly).

(4) The activities specified by paragraph (m)(1)(i) or (ii) of this section (with references to the "borrower" understood to mean endorser, reference, relative, individual, or entity as appropriate) meet the requirement that the lender make a diligent effort to contact each individual identified in the borrower's loan file.

(i) *Default aversion assistance.* Not earlier than the 60th day and no later than the 120th day of delinquency, a lender must request default aversion assistance from the guaranty agency that guarantees the loan.

(j) *Gap in collection activity.* For purposes of this section, the term *gap in collection activity* means, with respect to a loan, any period—

(1) Beginning on the date that is the day after—

(i) The due date of a payment unless the lender does not know the borrower's address on that date;

(ii) The day on which the lender receives a payment on a loan that remains delinquent notwithstanding the payment;

(iii) The day on which the lender receives the correct address for a delinquent borrower;

(iv) The day on which the lender completes a collection activity;

(v) The day on which the lender receives a dishonored check submitted as a payment on the loan;

(vi) The expiration of an authorized deferment or forbearance period on a delinquent loan; or

(vii) The day the lender receives information indicating it does not know the borrower's current address; and

(2) Ending on the date of the earliest of—

(i) The day on which the lender receives the first subsequent payment or completed deferment request or forbearance agreement;

(ii) The day on which the lender begins the first subsequent collection activity;

(iii) The day on which the lender receives written communication from the borrower relating to his or her account; or

(iv) Default.

(k) *Transfer.* For purposes of this section, the term *transfer* with respect to a loan means any action, including, but not limited to, the sale of the loan, that results in a change in the system used to monitor or conduct collection activity on a loan from one system to another.

(l) *Collection activity.* For purposes of this section, the term *collection activity* with respect to a loan means—

(1) Mailing or otherwise transmitting to the borrower at an address that the lender reasonably believes to be the borrower's current address a collection

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letter or final demand letter that satisfies the timing and content requirements of paragraph (c), (d), (e), or (f) of this section;

(2) Making an attempt to contact the borrower by telephone to urge the borrower to begin or resume repayment;

(3) Conducting skip-tracing efforts, in accordance with paragraph (h)(1) or (m)(1)(iii) of this section, to locate a borrower whose correct address or telephone number is unknown to the lender;

(4) Mailing or otherwise transmitting to the guaranty agency a request for default aversion assistance available from the agency on the loan at the time the request is transmitted; or

(5) Any telephone discussion or personal contact with the borrower so long as the borrower is apprised of the account's past-due status.

(m) *Diligent effort for telephone contact.* (1) For purposes of this section, the term *diligent effort* with respect to telephone contact means—

(i) A successful effort to contact the borrower by telephone;

(ii) At least two unsuccessful attempts to contact the borrower by telephone at a number that the lender reasonably believes to be the borrower's correct telephone number; or

(iii) An unsuccessful effort to ascertain the correct telephone number of a borrower, including, but not limited to, a directory assistance inquiry as to the borrower's telephone number, and sending a letter to or making a diligent effort to contact each reference, relative, and individual identified in the most recent loan application or most recent school certification for that borrower held by the lender. The lender may contact a school official other than the financial aid administrator who reasonably may be expected to know the borrower's address or telephone number.

(2) If the lender is unable to ascertain the borrower's correct telephone number despite its performance of the activities described in paragraph (m)(1)(iii) of this section, the lender is excused thereafter from attempting to contact the borrower by telephone unless it receives a communication indicating the borrower's current telephone number before the 211th day of

delinquency (the 271st day for loans repayable in installments less frequently than monthly).

(3) The activities specified by paragraph (m)(1) (i) or (ii) of this section (with references to "the borrower" understood to mean endorser, reference, relative, or individual as appropriate), meet the requirement that the lender make a diligent effort to contact each endorser or each reference, relative, or individual identified on the borrower's most recent loan application or most recent school certification.

(n) *Due diligence for endorsers.* (1) Before filing a default claim on a loan with an endorser, the lender must—

(i) Make a diligent effort to contact the endorser by telephone; and

(ii) Send the endorser on the loan two letters advising the endorser of the delinquent status of the loan and urging the endorser to make the required payments on the loan with at least one letter containing the information described in paragraph (d)(2) of this section (with references to "the borrower" understood to mean the endorser).

(2) On or after the 241st day of delinquency (the 301st day for loans payable in less frequent installments than monthly) the lender must send a final demand letter to the endorser requiring repayment of the loan in full and notifying the endorser that a default will be reported to each nationwide consumer reporting agency. The lender must allow the endorser at least 30 days after the date the letter is mailed to respond to the final demand letter and to bring the loan out of default before filing a default claim on the loan.

(3) Unless the letter specified under paragraph (n)(2) of this section has already been sent, upon receipt of information indicating that it does not know the endorser's current address or telephone number, the lender must diligently attempt to locate the endorser through the use of effective commercial skip-tracing techniques. This effort must include an inquiry to directory assistance.

(o) *Preemption.* The provisions of this section—

(1) Preempt any State law, including State statutes, regulations, or rules,

that would conflict with or hinder satisfaction of the requirements or frustrate the purposes of this section; and

(2) Do not preempt provisions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act that provide relief to a borrower while the lender determines the legal enforceability of a loan when the lender receives a valid identity theft report or notification from a consumer reporting agency that information furnished is a result of an alleged identity theft as defined in § 682.402(e)(14).

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(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1078, 1078-1, 1078-2, 1078-3, 1080a, 1082, 1087)

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§ 682.412 Consequences of the failure of a borrower or student to establish eligibility.

(a) The lender shall immediately send to the borrower a final demand letter meeting the requirements of § 682.411(f) when it learns and can substantiate that the borrower or the student on whose behalf a parent has borrowed, without the lender or school's knowledge at the time the loan was made, provided false or erroneous information or took actions that caused the student or borrower—

(1) To be ineligible for all or a portion of a loan made under this part;

(2) To receive a Stafford loan subject to payment of Federal interest benefits for which he or she was ineligible; or

(3) To receive loan proceeds for a period of enrollment from which he or she has withdrawn or been expelled prior to the first day of classes or during which he or she failed to attend school and has not paid those funds to the school or repaid them to the lender.

(b) The lender shall neither bill the Secretary for nor be entitled to interest benefits on a loan after it learns that one of the conditions described in paragraph (a) of this section exists with respect to the loan.

(c) In the final demand letter transmitted under paragraph (a) of this section, the lender shall demand that within 30 days from the date the letter

is mailed the borrower repay in full any principal amount for which the borrower is ineligible and any accrued interest, including interest and all special allowance paid by the Secretary.

(d) If the borrower repays the amounts described in paragraph (c) of this section within the 30-day period, the lender shall—

(1) On its next quarterly interest billing submitted under § 682.305, refund to the Secretary the interest benefits and special allowance repaid by the borrower and all other interest benefits and special allowance previously paid by the Secretary on the ineligible portion of the loan; and

(2) Treat that payment of the principal amount of the ineligible portion of the loan as a prepayment of principal.

(e) If a borrower fails to comply with the terms of a final demand letter described in paragraph (a) of this section, the lender shall treat the entire loan as in default, and—

(1) With its next quarterly interest billing submitted under § 682.305, refund to the Secretary the amount of the interest benefits received from the Secretary on the ineligible portion of the loan, whether or not repaid by the borrower; and

(2) Within the time specified in § 682.406(a)(5), file a default claim thereon with the guaranty agency for the entire unpaid balance of principal and accrued interest.

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§ 682.413 Remedial actions.

(a)(1) The Secretary requires a lender and its third-party servicer administering any aspect of the FFEL programs under a contract with the lender to repay interest benefits and special allowance or other compensation received on a loan guaranteed by a guaranty agency, pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) of this section—

(i) For any period beginning on the date of a failure by the lender or