

National Association of Student  
Financial Aid Administrators Presents...

# The Unexplained Side of Resources and Estimated Financial Assistance

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS

# Session Overview

- Statutory and Regulatory Definitions
- How These Items are Handled on the FAFSA
- Special Items of Question
- Guidelines for Handling Any Award



# Statutory and Regulatory Definitions

- Income
- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and other IRS-defined terms
- Untaxed Income and Benefits
- Exclusions from Income
- Other Financial Assistance
- Resources
- Estimated Financial Assistance



# Statutory Definitions (cont'd)

- Total Income (HEA Part F and section 480(a))
  - Base year income (taxed and untaxed)  
*MINUS*
  - Exclusions (collected on FAFSA Worksheet C), *EQUALS*
  - Total Income

# Statutory Definitions (cont'd)

- IRS-defined terms include:
  - Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
  - Income tax
  - Exemptions
  - Earnings from work

See applicable IRS Publications, such as IRS Publication 17 *Your Federal Income Tax*

# Statutory Definitions (cont'd)

- **Untaxed Income and Benefits** (HEA section 480(b))
  - Collected on FAFSA Worksheets A and B
- **Exclusions from Income** (HEA section 480(a)(2) and (e))
  - Collected on Worksheet C of the FAFSA
    - Some exceptions noted in Worksheet B

# Other Financial Assistance (Statutory)

- HEA section 480(j) defines “Other Financial Assistance”; basically includes all other assistance known to the school
- “Resources” is the term used for “Other Financial Assistance” under the Campus-Based regulations
- The same items are referred to as “Estimated Financial Assistance” under the FFEL and Direct Loan regulations
  - Resources and EFA generally are the same except EFA excludes AmeriCorps benefits and Chapter 30 Montgomery GI Bill benefits when determining subsidized loan eligibility



# Other Financial Assistance (Statutory) (cont'd)

- Other financial assistance not received under Title IV aid includes all scholarships, grants, loans or other assistance known to the institution including....
  - Veterans' educational benefits student will receive during the award year (HEA section 480(c))
    - 2005-2006 FAFSA questions 46 and 47
    - Report amount expected to receive during school year
    - Veterans' education benefits are not used in EFC calculation
    - HEA requires veterans' education benefits to be counted as Other Financial Assistance
  - AmeriCorps Educational Awards or Post-Service Benefits



# Other Financial Assistance (Statutory) (cont'd)

## – Tuition Prepayment Plans

- Specific treatment mentioned in HEA section 480(j)
- Distributions can be treated one of two ways
  - applied to beneficiary's expenses and reduces COA, or
  - if, for accounting purposes, the amount of the distribution must remain part of COA, then, distribution is resource and EFA

# Other Financial Assistance (Statutory) (cont'd)

## – Tuition Prepayment Plans

(cont'd)

- ED has determined that on the FAFSA, the investment value of a tuition prepayment plan is not reported as an asset of either the holder or the beneficiary. Should any portion be included in income, then that amount must be listed on Worksheet C for exclusion from the EFC calculation.



# Other Financial Assistance (Statutory) (cont'd)

- Loans that replace EFC
  - **Certain loans can be used to replace EFC**
  - **The amount of a loan used to replace EFC is excluded from resources and EFA. Any excess amount must be counted in resources and EFA.**

# Resources (Regulatory)

- Section 673.5 of the Campus-Based regulations defines Resources as:
  - Funds from Federal Pell Grants
    - Pell eligibility based on eligible student's COA, EFC, and enrollment status
    - Pell eligibility does not include consideration of other awards

## Resources (Regulatory) (cont'd)

- **William D. Ford Federal Direct Loans;**
- **Federal Family Education Loans;**
- **Long-term loans made by the school, including Federal Perkins Loans (short-term emergency loans are not resources);**
- **Grants, including Federal SEOGs, state grants, and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) living allowances;**



## Resources (Regulatory) (cont'd)

- **Waivers of tuition and fees;**
- **Fellowships or assistantships;**
- **Veterans' educational benefits;**
- **Income from insurance programs that pay for the student's education;**



# Resources (Regulatory) (cont'd)

- Net income from need-based employment
  - Section 675.2(b) defines need-based employment as employment that is awarded to a student who demonstrates a financial need
  - Taxable earnings from need-based employment such as Federal Work-Study, and need-based employment portions of fellowships and assistantships



# Resources (Regulatory) (cont'd)

- Net income from need-based employment (cont'd)
  - Non-need based employment earnings are not considered as a resource. They will be reported as income on the FAFSA for the subsequent award year and will be used in calculating that EFC.

# Resources (Regulatory) (cont'd)

- Net income from need-based employment (cont'd)
  - Section 675.25(a) states that net income is the amount of gross earnings minus any taxes and job-related costs
    - Job-related costs are what the student incurs because of the job (e.g., uniforms, transportation, room & board if during period of non-enrollment—but only if not otherwise incurred)

## Resources (Regulatory) (cont'd)

- When determining a student's eligibility for campus-based funds, an institution may exclude as a resource any portion of a subsidized FFEL/Direct Loan that is equal to or less than the amount paid under the student's Ch. 30 veterans' education (Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty) benefits and AmeriCorps post-service benefits or education awards



# Estimated Financial Assistance (Regulatory)

- Same items as “Resources” except institution must exclude Chapter 30 veterans’ education (Montgomery GI Bill—Active Duty) benefits and AmeriCorps education awards or post-service benefits from EFA when determining subsidized FFEL/Direct Loan eligibility
- 34 CFR 682.200 and 685.102



# How Items are Handled on FAFSA

- **Income and Assets**
- **Untaxed Income and Benefits**
  - FAFSA Worksheet A
  - FAFSA Worksheet B
- **Exclusions from Income**
  - FAFSA Worksheet C

# Income and Assets

- FAFSA Data Elements for reporting income and asset information
  - 2005-2006 FAFSA collects taxable income and income from work information in questions 32-39 for the student (and spouse) and in questions 70-77 for the parent(s)
  - Asset information is reported in questions 43-45 for student (and spouse) and questions 81-83 for parent(s)



# Untaxed Income and Benefits (from Statute)

- FAFSA Worksheet A
  - Earned Income Credit
  - Additional Child Tax Credit
  - Welfare benefits, including TANF (not on tax form)
  - Untaxed Social Security Benefits (from multiple sources)

# Untaxed Income and Benefits (from Statute) (cont'd)

- FAFSA Worksheet B
  - Payments to tax-deferred or sheltered pension and savings plans (paid directly or withheld)
  - Deductible IRA or Keogh, SEP, & SIMPLE payments
  - Tax-exempt interest income
  - Foreign income exclusion
  - Untaxed IRA distributions and pension payments
  - Credit for Federal tax on special fuels



# Untaxed Income and Benefits (from Statute) (cont'd)

- **FAFSA Worksheet B** (cont'd)
  - Child support received (not on tax return)
  - Housing, food, and other living allowances (not on tax return)
  - Veterans' non-education benefits
  - Money student receives or paid on student's behalf
  - Any other untaxed income or benefits



# Statutory Exclusions from Income/Benefits

- Listed on Worksheet C of the FAFSA
  - Student grant & scholarship aid reported to the IRS in student's or parent's AGI
    - Includes grant or scholarship portions of fellowships and assistantships
    - Note: *No longer just the amount over tuition, fees, books, and supplies, but any amount of aid that was in taxable income*
  - AmeriCorps educational award or post-service benefits (i.e., awards, living allowances, and interest accrual payments)

# Statutory Exclusions from Income/Benefits

(cont'd)

- Listed on Worksheet C of FAFSA (cont'd)
  - Any portion of tax credit taken under section 25A of Internal Revenue Code
    - Hope Scholarship tax credit
    - Lifetime Learning tax credit
  - Taxable earnings from need-based employment programs (e.g., FWS)
    - Includes need-based employment portions of fellowships and assistantships



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# Statutory Exclusions from Income/Benefits

(cont'd)

- **Listed on Worksheet C of FAFSA**  
(cont'd)
  - Child support paid because of divorce or separation, or as a result of a legal requirement
- *Note: Payments/services received from States for foster care or adoption assistance (Part A or E of Title IV of Social Security Act) are not listed on Worksheet C as an income exclusion, because there is a specific instruction not to include it on Worksheet B*



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# Special Items of Question

- **Hope Scholarship Tax Credit**
- **Lifetime Learning Tax Credit**
- **Student Loan Interest Deduction**
- **Deduction for Higher Ed. Expenses**
- **Employer-Provided Educ'l Assistance**
- **Series EE U.S. Savings Bonds**
- **Coverdell Education Savings Accounts**
- **Qualified Tuition Programs (529 Plans)**



# Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credit

- HEA specifically excludes Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits from:
  - Total Income (taxed or untaxed)
  - Resources and EFA



# Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credit (cont'd)

- **Hope Scholarship tax credit**
  - Up to \$1,500 for qualified tuition and related expenses paid
  - Has income phase-outs
  - Can coordinate with other tax benefits such as Coverdell Savings Accounts for uncovered expenses



# Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credit (cont'd)

- **Lifetime Learning tax credit**
  - Up to \$2,000 for qualified tuition and related expenses paid
  - Student does not need to be pursuing a degree or other credential
  - Income phase-out is same as for Hope credit
  - Can coordinate with other tax benefits such as Coverdell Savings Accounts for uncovered expenses



# Student Loan Interest Deduction

- Eliminates 60-month rule
- Higher income phase-outs
- Any interest paid (no longer just for required interest payments)
- Can deduct up to \$2,500 of interest paid
- Not treated as Resource and EFA
- Not included as Untaxed Income



# Deduction for Higher Education Expenses

- Income phase-outs
- Can claim regardless of itemization
  - formerly had to itemize to receive this type of deduction
- Beneficial to taxpayers who cannot take Hope or Lifetime because income too high
- Not treated as Resource and EFA
- Not included as Untaxed Income



# Employer-Provided Educational Assistance

- Up to \$5,250 can be provided each year
- Includes undergraduate and graduate/professional education
- Payments do not have to be for work-related courses
- Permanent exclusion through 2010
- Treated as Resource and EFA
- If in income, list on FAFSA Worksheet C

# Series EE U.S. Savings Bonds

- Value regarded as asset of the owner of the bond
- Treatment clarified in DCL GEN-04-02 (January 22, 2004)

# Coverdell ESAs

- **Coverdell Education Savings Accounts**  
(formerly Education IRAs) – see DCL GEN-04-02
  - Qualified higher education & K-12 expenses
  - Higher income phase-outs
  - Coordinate other tax & savings plans benefits
  - Contributions are after-tax (already in AGI), distributions not taxed if used for qualified expenses
  - Distributions generally not included in income in EFC calculation, but value of account reported as asset **of account owner**
  - Distributions not treated as Resources or EFA



# Qualified Tuition Programs (QTPs)

- See guidance in DCL GEN-04-02 (January 22, 2004)
- Two types of QTPs (529 Plans)
  - 529 Prepaid tuition plans (a/k/a tuition prepayment plans)
  - 529 Savings plans
- Amounts can be rolled over from one plan to another for same student or to different beneficiary

# Qualified Tuition Programs

(cont'd)

- In addition to the State plans, prepaid tuition plans can be sponsored by educational institutions
- Distributions are tax free
  - Distributions from educational institution plans were still taxable through 12/31/03



# 529 Prepaid Tuition Plans

- Owner of account designates beneficiary in which tuition benefits are prepaid on behalf of beneficiary
- IRS does not tax distributions used for qualified higher education expenses
  - Distributions from educational institution plans made on or after January 1, 2004 are tax free



# 529 Prepaid Tuition Plans

(cont'd)

- Value of prepaid plan accounts are not considered an asset in the calculation of the EFC
- Distributions are treated as resource/EFA or reduction to COA
  - If distribution is in income (and used for qualified educational expenses), list as exclusion on FAFSA Worksheet C



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# 529 Savings Plans

- Account owner designates beneficiary for which funds are deposited to assist with qualified educational expenses (not just tuition)
- IRS does not tax distributions of 529 savings plans
- Value of 529 savings plan account is reported as an asset **of the account owner** in the EFC calculation
- Distributions are not considered a resource/EFA



# Guidelines for Handling Any Award

- General Rules
- What's in a Name?
- When is an Award Taxable?
  - Taxable Income Exemption
- Rules of Thumb: Treatment of Any Award
- Flow Chart: Treatment of Any Award
- Examples (Fellowship & Assistantship, and Resident Advisor)



# General Rules

- HEA states that no financial aid can be included in the calculation of the EFC. Any amount of a student's AGI treated as a resource or EFA must be excluded from the EFC calculation, so as not to be "double counted".
- Whether an award is taxed does not affect whether it is treated as a resource or EFA



# What's In A Name?

- Award names: Scholarship, Grant, Stipend, Tuition Reduction, Waiver, Remission, Fellowship, Assistantship, Work-Study, Loan, etc.
- Regardless of what an award is called, what it is according to Federal and State guidelines determines how it is treated for Title IV purposes

## What's In A Name? (cont'd)

- If an award is considered employment according to Federal or State guidelines, it must be treated as employment for purposes of determining eligibility for Title IV aid
  - Federal and State employment rules are independent of student aid rules. Generally, employment rules entail issues such as withholding, Social Security Administration program participation, worker's compensation, and unemployment insurance eligibility.



# When is an Award Taxable?

- **IRS Publication 970** (now includes former IRS Publication 520)
  - ***A scholarship*** is generally an amount paid for the benefit of a student at an educational institution to aid in the pursuit of studies. The student may be either an undergraduate or graduate.
  - ***A fellowship*** is generally an amount paid for the benefit of an individual to aid in the pursuit of study or research



# When is an Award Taxable?

(cont'd)

- IRS Publication 970 (cont'd)
  - A scholarship or fellowship is tax-free only if:
    - The student is a candidate for a degree (or program of training leading to gainful employment in recognized occupation) at an accredited educational institution; and
    - It is used to pay qualified education expenses



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# When is an Award Taxable?

(cont'd)

- IRS Publication 970 (cont'd)
  - A qualified education expense includes tuition, fees, books, and course-related expenses (e.g. books, supplies, equipment, etc.) required of all students for the courses in a program



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# When is an Award Taxable?

(cont'd)

- **IRS Publication 970** (cont'd)
  - If the terms of the grant require its use for other purposes (such as room and board), or if the terms specifically exclude its use for tuition or course-related expenses, then the grant amount is not tax-free

# When is an Award Taxable?

(cont'd)

- **IRS Publication 970** (cont'd)
  - Cash scholarship prizes won in a contest are not scholarships if you do not have to use them for educational purposes. A scholarship prize you can use only when enrolled as a degree candidate at an educational institution is a qualified scholarship.

# When is an Award Taxable?

(cont'd)

- **IRS Publication 970** (cont'd)
  - Generally, you must include in income the part of any scholarship, fellowship, or tuition reduction that represents payment for past, present, or future teaching, research, or other services. This applies even if all candidates for a degree must perform the services to receive the degree.



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# Taxable Income Exemption

(IRS Pub. 970)

- **Health Professions Scholarships**

- Award representing payment for teaching, research or other services if received under:
  - National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program, or
  - Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship and Financial Assistance Program
- Treated as resource/EFA (includes scholarships, fellowships, tuition reduction, and stipends)
- Not taxable & not considered income
  - May have accompanying wage that is taxable
- Do not list on Worksheet C



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# Rule of Thumb # 1

- If a student receives a form of assistance because he or she is enrolled in postsecondary education, or the assistance is to pay for postsecondary education expenses, then you must determine how it should be treated in the financial aid package
  - Usually treated as resource and EFA



## Rule of Thumb # 2

- Award (or portion of award) that is treated as employment and is based upon need:
  - is considered a resource and EFA;
  - if included in AGI, then list on FAFSA Worksheet C as exclusion from calculation of the EFC



## Rule of Thumb # 3

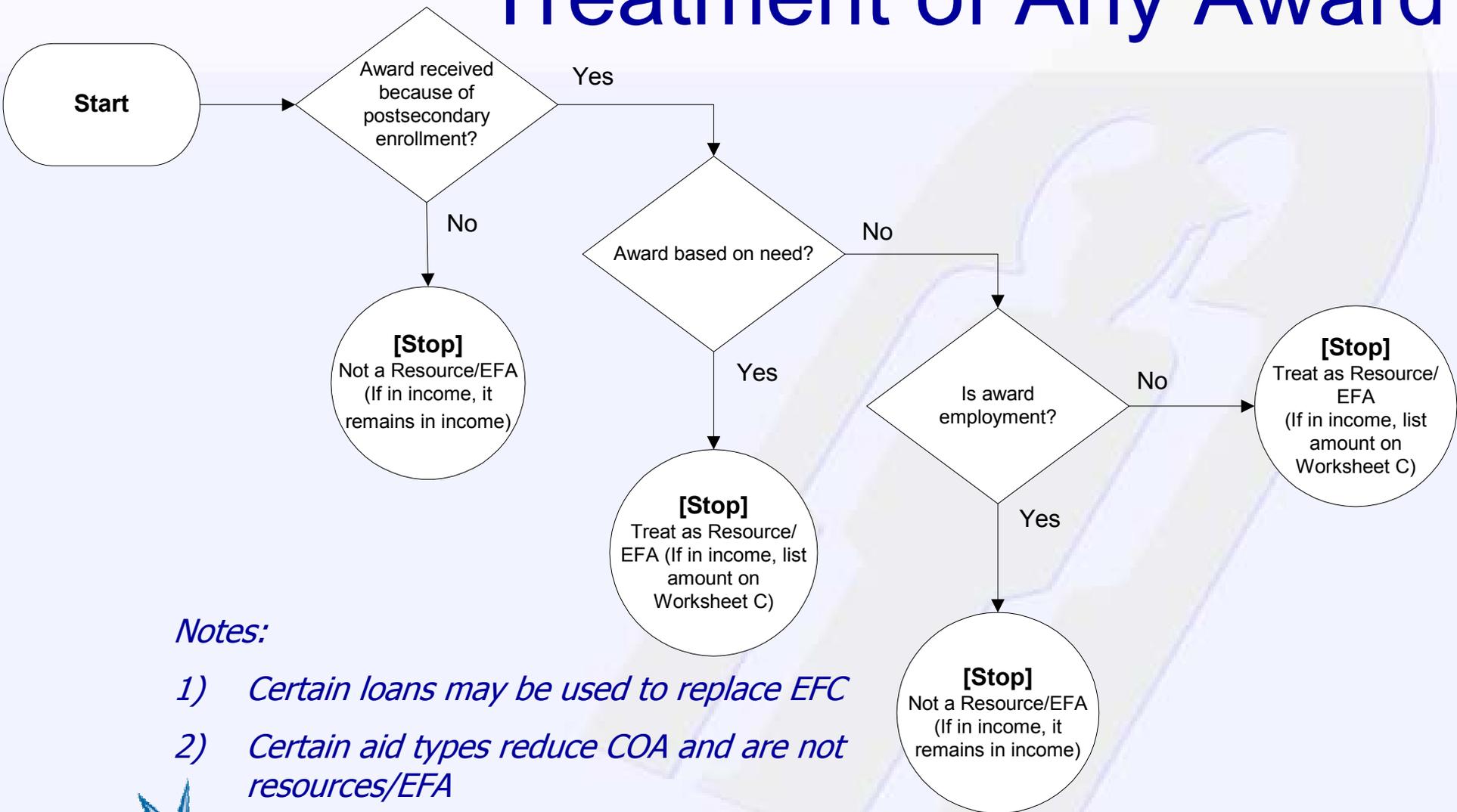
- Award (or portion of award) that is treated as employment and **not** based upon need is:
  - **not** considered a resource and EFA;
  - treated as income just like any other employment earnings of the student
    - that income should be included in the AGI on the student's next financial aid application for inclusion in the calculation of the EFC

## Rule of Thumb # 4

- Award (or portion of award) that is not employment (regardless of whether it was based on need):
  - is considered a resource or EFA;
  - if included in AGI, then list on FAFSA Worksheet C as exclusion from calculation of the EFC
- Note: ***If an award explicitly offsets a specific charge, you may exclude it from COA and as a resource/EFA (e.g., tuition waiver)***



# Treatment of Any Award



## Notes:

- 1) Certain loans may be used to replace EFC
- 2) Certain aid types reduce COA and are not resources/EFA

# Fellowships & Assistantships Example

- Graduate student receives:
  - **\$18,000 fellowship**
    - \$15,000 stipend for conducting research
    - \$3,000 tuition waiver with no stipulations
  - **\$10,000 summer assistantship**
    - Awarded on the condition that the student teach during the summer
    - The school has determined, according to federal and state rules, that the stipend is employment
  - **Neither award is based on financial need**

# Fellowships & Assistantships Example (cont'd)

- **\$18,000 fellowship**
  - School determines (based on federal and state rules) no part of fellowship (neither the \$15,000 stipend nor the \$3,000 tuition waiver) is considered employment
  - According to IRS guidelines, full stipend is taxable because it requires some form of service



# Fellowships & Assistantships Example (cont'd)

- \$18,000 fellowship (cont'd)
  - Tuition waiver is not considered taxable by IRS
  - Because no part of fellowship is employment, all of it is included as resources and EFA
  - Alternatively, amount of tuition waiver could be excluded from COA **and** resources/EFA because it explicitly covers a COA component; this treatment would not apply to the stipend amount
  - Portion reported as income (stipend) on tax return next year listed as exclusion from EFC calculation by using Worksheet C of subsequent year's FAFSA

# Fellowships & Assistantships Example (cont'd)

- **\$10,000 summer assistantship**
  - Considered employment by the school according to federal and state rules
  - Not included in resources and EFA, because it is considered non-need-based employment
  - It will be included as income on the student's tax return and in the EFC calculation for the subsequent year's FAFSA
  - This amount should **not** be reported on Worksheet C, because the award was not included as a resource and EFA

# Resident Advisor Example

- Undergrad student receives non-need-based Resident Advisor (RA) award:
  - \$300 per month stipend for residence hall duties
  - \$5,000 RA grant, which covers the cost of room and board
- School considers, according to federal and state rules, that stipend is for employment and the grant is also part of employment compensation
- Stipend is included in taxable income, but \$5,000 grant is not because of IRS exception for room/board on site



# Resident Advisor Example (cont'd)

- Monthly RA stipend:
  - Non-need-based employment
  - Treated as taxable income
  - Not a resource or EFA
  - Amount of stipend reported as taxable income remains in EFC calculation for following year (because it is non-need-based employment)

# Resident Advisor Example (cont'd)

- \$5,000 RA grant:
  - Non-need-based employment
  - Treated as untaxed income
  - Not a resource or EFA
  - Amount of RA grant included as untaxed income in EFC calculation on following year's FAFSA

# Additional Information

[www.house.gov/rules/1836\\_sum.pdf](http://www.house.gov/rules/1836_sum.pdf)

- Summary of the *Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001*

[www.irs.gov/forms\\_pubs/pubs.html](http://www.irs.gov/forms_pubs/pubs.html)

- IRS Publication 17, *Your Federal Income Tax*
- IRS Publication 590, *Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*
- IRS Publication 970, *Tax Benefits for Higher Education*



# Contact Information

Your feedback and comments are welcomed. If you have questions, you may contact:

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