

10 Tips for Getting Your “Financial House in Order”

- ✓ **FAFSA.** If you intend to receive federal loans or grants during law school, you must have a completed **Federal Application for Federal Student Aid** (FAFSA) on file with the University. If you have not done so, you can complete the FAFSA online. Be sure to note the FSU school code: **001489**.
- ✓ **Student Toolkit.** FSU students can monitor the progress of their financial aid online by logging onto their **Financial Aid Student Toolkit** in your **Blackboard** account (see “View Status” link). You may also submit relevant information and complete required forms using this mechanism.
- ✓ **Master Promissory Note.** Effective Summer of 2009, Florida State University is the Federal Direct Loan Program for all Federal Stafford, and PLUS for Graduate and Professional Student loans. Thus, all federal loans will be administered through the University as opposed to private lenders. To ensure timely disbursement of your student loan funds, be sure you have electronically completed the **Federal Stafford Loan Master Promissory Note** (MPN) through your Student Toolkit or at <https://dlenote.ed.gov/empn/index.jsp>.
- ✓ **Account Refund Statement (ARS)** is required to authorize disbursement of net financial aid funds. You may complete this form online through “**Secure Apps**” in your **Blackboard** account. Disbursements will be made through the University during regular disbursement periods (starting the second week of each term).
- ✓ **Graduate PLUS Loans.** Law students now have the option to apply for a Graduate PLUS loan in their own name to assist in covering their educational costs. While the PLUS loan cannot be awarded beyond the institution's estimated Cost of Attendance, it can assist you in meeting educational expenses if this cost is more than the total of any other aid awarded. For more information, visit http://financialaid.fsu.edu/aid/loans/Plus_Grad.html
- ✓ **Loan Entrance Counseling.** Loan entrance counseling is required before Stafford, Unsubsidized Stafford, or PLUS loan funds can be disbursed by the Office of Financial Aid. If you have not fulfilled this requirement, you may do so online at www.dl.ed.gov/borrower/EntrCounselingStart.do (Complete the Combination--Stafford and PLUS loan counseling to cover both Federal Stafford and Federal PLUS loans.)
- ✓ **Prepare (and stick to) a reasonable budget.** While loans may be available to students, the question of how much to borrow is often asked. In preparing your overall budget, begin with the law school's “Cost of Attendance” (COA) for estimates of school and living expenses. Also, consider tracking your current spending habits and comparing them to the COA. You may also look into having a roommate, paying off consumer debt, or learning to cook as these related expenses are often budget-busters.
- ✓ **Keep your own financial aid file.** Keep photocopies of everything you ever submit to the Office of Financial Aid or the law school regarding your financial aid.
- ✓ **Check with your financial aid counselor** to make sure you have submitted the necessary documents. You are welcome to contact **Gail McKinney Rogers** at 850-644-1983 or via email at grogers@fsu.edu (for general questions about financial aid), or the law school's **Office of Student Affairs** at 850 644-7338 or via email at saffairs@law.fsu.edu (for questions about scholarships).
- ✓ **Be patient.** The financial aid process takes a lot of time, but it does work if you have carefully followed all the required steps.