U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces Final Student Loan Forgiveness and Borrower Assistance Actions

Total approved student debt relief reached $189 billion for 5.3 million borrowers

The Biden-Harris Administration today announced its final round of student loan forgiveness, approving more than $600 million for 4,550 borrowers through the Income-Based Repayment (IBR) Plan and 4,100 individual borrower defense approvals. The Administration leaves office having approved a cumulative $188.8 billion in forgiveness for 5.3 million borrowers across 33 executive actions. The U.S. Department of Education (Department) today also announced that it has completed the income- driven repayment payment count adjustment and that all borrowers will now be able to see their income-driven repayment counters when they log into their accounts on StudentAid.gov. Finally, the Department took additional actions that will allow students who attended certain schools that have since closed to qualify for student loan discharges.

"Four years ago, President Biden made a promise to fix a broken student loan system. We rolled up our sleeves and, together, we fixed existing programs that had failed to deliver the relief they promised, took bold action on behalf of borrowers who had been cheated by their institutions, and brought financial breathing room to hardworking Americans—including public servants and borrowers with disabilities. Thanks to our relentless, unapologetic efforts, millions of Americans are approved for student loan forgiveness," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "I'm incredibly proud of the Biden-Harris Administration's historic achievements in making the life-changing potential of higher education more affordable and accessible for more people."

From Day One the Biden-Harris Administration took steps to rethink, restore, and revitalize targeted relief programs that entitle borrowers to relief under the Higher Education Act but that failed to live up to their promises. Through a combination of executive actions and regulatory improvements, the Biden-Harris Administration produced the following results for borrowers:

Fixed longstanding problems with Income-Driven Repayment (IDR). The Administration has approved 1.45 million borrowers for $57.1 billion in loan relief, including $600 million for 4,550 borrowers announced today for IBR forgiveness.

IDR plans help keep payments manageable for borrowers and have provided a path to forgiveness after an extended period. These plans started in the early 1990s, but prior to the Biden-Harris Administration taking office, just 50 borrowers had ever had their loans forgiven. The Administration corrected longstanding failures to accurately track borrower progress toward forgiveness and addressed past instances of forbearance steering whereby servicers inappropriately advised borrowers to postpone payments for extended periods of time. These totals also include borrowers who received forgiveness under the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) plan prior to court orders halting forgiveness under the SAVE plan.

Today, the Department also announced the completion of the IDR payment count adjustment, correcting eligible payment counts. While the payment count adjustment is now complete, borrowers who were affected by certain servicer transitions in 2024 may see one or two additional months credited in the coming weeks, The Department is also launching the ability for borrowers to track their IDR progress on StudentAid.gov. Borrowers can now log in to their accounts and see their total IDR payment count and a month-by-month breakdown of progress.

Restored the promise of Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF). The Administration has approved 1,069,000 borrowers for $78.5 billion in forgiveness.

The PSLF Program provides critical support to teachers, service members, social workers, and others engaged in public service. But prior to this Administration taking office, just 7,000 borrowers had received forgiveness and the overwhelming majority of borrowers who applied had their applications denied. The Biden-Harris Administration fixed this program by pursuing regulatory improvements, correcting long-standing issues with tracking progress toward forgiveness and misuse of forbearances, and implementing the limited PSLF waiver to avoid harm from the pandemic.

Automated discharges and simplified eligibility criteria for borrowers with a total and permanent disability. The Administration has approved 633,000 borrowers for $18.7 billion in loan relief.

Borrowers who are totally and permanently disabled may be eligible for a total and permanent disability (TPD) discharge. The Biden-Harris Administration changed regulations to automatically forgive loans for eligible borrowers based upon a data match with the Social Security Administration (SSA). This helped hundreds of thousands of borrowers who were eligible for relief but hadn't managed to navigate paperwork requirements. The Department also made it easier for borrowers to qualify for relief based upon SSA determinations, made it easier to complete the TPD application, and eliminated provisions that had caused many borrowers to have their loans reinstated.

Delivered long-awaited help to borrowers ripped off by their institutions, whose schools closed, or through related court settlements. The Administration has approved just under 2 million borrowers for $34.5 billion in loan relief.

For years, students had sought relief from the Department through borrower defense to repayment—a provision that allows borrowers to have their loans forgiven if their college engaged in misconduct related to the borrowers' loans. The Department delivered long-awaited relief to borrowers who attended some of the most notoriously predatory institutions to ever participate in the federal financial aid programs. This included approving for discharge all remaining outstanding loans from Corinthian Colleges, as well as group discharges for ITT Technical Institute, the Art Institutes, Westwood College, Ashford University, and others. The Department also settled a long-running class action lawsuit stemming from allegations of inaction and the issuance of form denials, allowing it to begin the first sustained denials of non-meritorious claims.

Today, the Department also approved 4,100 additional individual borrower defense applications for borrowers who attended DeVry University, based upon findings announced in February 2022.

"For decades, the federal government promised to help people who couldn't afford their student loans because they were in public service, had disabilities, were cheated by their college, or who had completed decades of payments. But it rarely kept those promises until now," said U.S. Under Secretary of Education James Kvaal. "These permanent reforms have already helped more 5 million borrowers, and many more borrowers will continue to benefit."

The table below compares the progress made by the Biden-Harris Administration in these key discharge areas compared to other administrations.

Borrowers approved for forgiveness

	Prior Administrations	Biden-Harris Administration
Borrower Defense (Since 2015)	53,500	1,767,000*
Public Service Loan Forgiveness (Since 2017)	7,000	1,069,000
Income-Driven Repayment (all-time)	50	1,454,000
Total and Permanent Disability (Since 2017)	604,000	633,000

*** Includes 107,000 borrowers and $1.25 billion captured by an extension of the closed-school lookback window at ITT Technical Institute.**

Additional actions related to closed school discharges

The Department today also announced additional actions that will make more borrowers eligible for a closed school loan discharge. Generally, a borrower qualifies for a closed school discharge if they did not complete their program and were either still enrolled when the school closed or left without graduating within 120 days before it closed. However, the Department has determined that several schools closed under exceptional circumstances that merit allowing borrowers who did not complete and were enrolled in the school more than 120 days prior to its closure to qualify for a closed school discharge. Generally, eligible borrowers will have to apply for these discharges, but the Secretary has directed Federal Student Aid to make borrowers aware of their eligibility, and to pursue automatic discharges for those affected by closures that took place between 2013 and 2020 and who did not enroll elsewhere within three years of their school closing.

These adjusted eligibility windows are:

- **To May 6, 2015, for all campuses owned at the time by the Career Education Corporation (CEC), which have since closed. That is the day CEC announced it would close or sell all campuses except for two brands. This affected the Art Institutes, Le Cordon Bleu, Brooks Institute, Missouri College, Briarcliffe College, and Sanford-Brown.**
- **To October 17, 2017 for all campuses owned at that point by the Education Management Corporation (EDMC), and that later closed. That is the day EDMC sold substantially all of its assets to Dream Center Educational Holdings. The decision affects borrowers who attended the Art Institutes, including the Miami International University of Art & Design, and Argosy University.**
- **To December 16, 2016, for campuses owned by the Education Corporation of America (ECA) on that date that closed. ECA operated Virginia College, Brightwood College, EcoTech, and Golf Academies and started on the path to closure after its accreditation agency lost federal recognition and ECA could not obtain accreditation elsewhere.**
- **To April 23, 2021, for Bay State College. That is the day this Massachusetts-based college began to face significant accreditation challenges, which eventually led to the school losing accreditation and closing in Augst 2023.**

Borrowers who want more information about closed school discharge, including how to apply, can visit StudentAid.gov/closedschool.

A state-by-state breakdown of various forms of student debt relief approved by the Biden-Harris Administration is available here.

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