

October 2021: Public Service Loan Forgiveness Limited Waiver Opportunity

On Oct. 6, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced a change to PSLF program rules for a limited time as a result of the COVID-19 national emergency. Throughout the pandemic, ED has provided a variety of benefits to borrowers.

Now, for a limited period of time, borrowers may receive credit for past payments made on loans that would otherwise not qualify for PSLF.

New Rules for Qualifying Payments

Under the new rules, any prior payment made will count as a qualifying payment, regardless of loan type, repayment plan, or whether the payment was made in full or on time. All you need is qualifying employment.

This change will apply to student loan borrowers with Direct Loans, those who have already consolidated into the Direct Loan Program, and those who consolidate into the Direct Loan Program by Oct. 31, 2022.

Parent PLUS loans are not eligible under the limited PSLF waiver. There are two requirements to receive additional qualifying payments:

1. **Full-time employment.**

You must have worked full-time for a qualifying employer when prior payments were made. If you were employed in more than one qualifying part-time job at the same time, you will be considered full-time if you worked a combined average of at least 30 hours per week. You can receive credit only for payments made after Oct. 1, 2007, since that is when the PSLF Program began. If you haven't already, you must file a [Public Service Loan Forgiveness \(PSLF\) & Temporary Expanded PSLF \(TEPSLF\) Certification & Application \(PSLF form\)](#) for any period for which you may receive additional qualifying payments.

2. **Loan consolidation.**

If you have Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program loans, Federal Perkins Loans, or other types of federal student loans that are not Direct Loans, you must consolidate those loans into the Direct Loan program by Oct. 31, 2022.

What PSLF requirements are waived?

Here's what's changed and what's unchanged as of Oct. 6, 2021.

Previous Requirements

- Repay under an IDR plan
- Make 120 qualifying payments

Waived Changes

- Past payments under any plan count
- Past ineligible loan payments may count toward 120 total payments

Unchanged Requirements

·Employed by government, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, or other not-for-profit organization that provides a qualifying service

·Work full-time

·Have Direct Loans or consolidate into Direct Consolidation Loans

How to Find Out If You Qualify for Additional Payments

The action you take will depend on the types of loans that you have outstanding. Find out what type of loans you have, then read the next steps for that type below.

Here's how to see what loans you have:

1. [Visit Aid Summary](#) (you'll be asked to log in to your account in order to view the page).
2. Scroll down to the Loan Breakdown section.
3. In the Loan Breakdown section, you'll see a list of each loan you have taken out, even if you have paid the loan off or consolidated it into a new loan.
4. If you expand View Loans, then click the View Loan Details arrow next to a loan, you'll see a more detailed name for that loan. Direct Loans begin with the word "Direct." Federal Family Education Loan Program loans start with "FFEL," and Perkins Loans include the word "Perkins" in the name. Parent PLUS loans are not eligible under the limited PSLF waiver.

Now that you know what types of loans you have, read on to see what actions you may need to take to receive additional qualifying payments.

Next Steps Based on Your Loan Types

Borrowers With At Least One FFEL Program Loan, Federal Perkins Loan, or Certain Other Federal Student Loan

Who's in This Group

You are part of this group if you have outstanding FFEL and/or Perkins loans, even if you also have outstanding Direct Loans.

How to Qualify

Consolidate your FFEL Program loans and Perkins Loans into a Direct Consolidation Loan by Oct. 31, 2022. This is important, because you cannot receive credit for payments under this limited-time period if you consolidate after that date. After the consolidation is complete, you must then [submit a PSLF form](#) to your loan servicer.

Next Steps

·Verify your loan types in your [Aid Summary](#).

- Verify eligible employment by completing Step 1 of the PSLF Help Tool.
- If an employer is eligible and you have at least one loan that is not a Direct Loan, request a Direct Consolidation Loan by Oct. 31, 2022.
- Submit a PSLF form with the PSLF Help Tool by Oct. 31, 2022.

PSLF Help Tool Update Coming Soon

The [PSLF Help Tool](#) will be updated in the coming months to process applications for users with FFEL and Perkins loans. In the meantime, employment can still be verified in Step 1 of the Help Tool, and loan consolidation can still be requested, but a PSLF application through the tool may not be available in the short term.

Direct Loan Borrowers Who Have Not Submitted an Employment Certification Form (ECF) or PSLF Form

Who's in This Group

You are a part of this group if you have only Direct Loans but are not assigned to FedLoan Servicing, or if you are assigned to FedLoan Servicing and have never submitted a form for the PSLF Program.

How to Qualify

If you have not yet indicated that you are pursuing PSLF, now is the time to apply, because you can't receive credit under these flexible rules unless [you file a PSLF form](#) by Oct. 31, 2022.

Next Steps

- Verify your loan types in your [Aid Summary](#).
- Verify eligible employment and if eligible, submit a PSLF form with the PSLF Help Tool by Oct. 31, 2022.

Direct Loan Borrowers Who Have Already Submitted an ECF or PSLF Form

Who's in This Group

You are a part of this group if you have only Direct Loans and all of those loans are assigned to FedLoan Servicing.

How to Qualify

If you took out only Direct Loans or consolidated other federal loans into a Direct Loan, and you've previously submitted an ECF or [PSLF form](#), you may automatically receive credit for prior payments under these conditions: The form you submitted was determined to be a qualifying employer, but you originally did not receive credit because you didn't have the right

kind of loan, weren't in the right repayment plan, made the payment late, or did not pay the full amount due.

If you're in this group, the only reason to submit a PSLF form is if you haven't previously had your employment certified. For example:

- If you worked full-time for a qualifying employer from 2008–2010 but did not submit a form for that period because you did not yet consolidate your loans, you'll still need to submit a PSLF form to get credit for those payments. The form must be submitted by Oct. 31, 2022.

- However, if you were in the same situation but submitted a form that was denied because you had the wrong type of loan, those payments will automatically be counted as qualifying payments in the coming months.

Next Steps

- Verify your loan types in your [Aid Summary](#).

- If you have unverified employment periods, verify eligible employment and if eligible, submit a PSLF form with the PSLF Help Tool by Oct. 31, 2022.