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NEWS RELEASE

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**PHEAA's Board of Directors Extends Rules Relief through
the Summer 2020 Term in Response to COVID-19**

Harrisburg, PA (April 23, 2020) – PHEAA's Board of Directors took action today to extend temporary modifications made to agency-administered Pennsylvania student aid programs through the summer 2020 term to ensure that students do not experience any disruption or reduction of funding due to operational changes made by postsecondary schools in response to COVID-19.

PHEAA's Board previously authorized the Agency to temporarily modify, suspend, or relax certain program requirements for Pennsylvania schools and their students for the 2020 winter and spring terms. Today's action extends this relief through the summer 2020 term.

"Our student aid programs are intended to empower students to achieve a higher education, not to hold them back due to the unexpected consequences of a school's pandemic response," said Representative Mike Peifer, PHEAA Board Chairman. "As this health crisis continues, we need to act swiftly – and in the student's best interests - to provide as much stability as possible for each student's higher education funding plan."

Affected Pennsylvania student aid programs include:

- PA State Grant Program
- PA Targeted Industry Program (PA-TIP)
- Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program (RTSS)
- Institutional Assistance Grant (IAG) Program
- Matching Funds Programs
- Higher Education of the Disadvantaged (Act 101) Program
- Higher Education for Blind or Deaf Students Program
- Pennsylvania Internship Program

"COVID-19 continues to create significant stress and uncertainty for students and families throughout Pennsylvania," said Senator Wayne D. Fontana, PHEAA Board Vice Chairman. "At the same time, postsecondary schools are struggling to adapt to a new normal that lacks precedent, so we need to ensure that our programs are flexible enough to maintain effectiveness regardless of shifting circumstances that are beyond the student's control."

(more)

An example of relief that could assist thousands of students is the temporary waiver of the PA State Grant Program's eligibility distinction between traditional in-classroom students, who currently qualify for a \$4,123 maximum award, and distance education students, who qualify for a \$3,092 maximum award, or 75 percent of a traditional award. This waiver is holding harmless thousands of initially in-classroom recipients who could have otherwise lost their higher award amount.

Additionally, the May 1 PA State Grant application deadline has been extended by 2 weeks to May 15 to provide students with more flexibility. This deadline applies to all renewal applicants and first-time applicants who plan to enroll in colleges, universities, or a college transfer program at 2-year public or private colleges (except community colleges and designated Pennsylvania Open Admission institutions).

To apply for a PA State Grant, applicants must first complete the 2020-21 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). Applicants can access this form online at PHEAA.org/FAFSA or fafsa.gov. Completing the FAFSA online saves time and reduces application and processing errors.

In addition to completing the FAFSA, first-time applicants must also submit a completed PA State Grant Form (SGF). First-time applicants who submit the FAFSA® online will be automatically redirected to the SGF by following the onscreen prompts on the confirmation page. First-time applicants who have already submitted their FAFSA, but have not completed the SGF, will receive an email directing them to PHEAA's secure Account Access site for completion. Both applications are free to submit.

Students and parents are encouraged to visit pheaa.org/about/COVID-19.shtml to learn more about COVID-19's impact on PHEAA-administered student aid programs.

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About PHEAA

Created in 1963 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has evolved into one of the nation's leading student aid organizations. Today, PHEAA is a national provider of student financial aid services, serving millions of students and thousands of schools through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, financial aid processing, outreach and other student aid programs.

PHEAA's earnings are used to support its public service mission and to pay its operating costs, including administration of the Pennsylvania State Grant and other state-funded student aid programs. PHEAA continues to devote its energy, resources and imagination to developing innovative ways to ease the financial burden of higher education for students, families, schools and taxpayers.

PHEAA conducts its student loan servicing activities nationally as FedLoan Servicing and American Education Services (AES). For more information, visit www.pheaa.org.