Slide 1 - Instructions
Please read this entire slide. This presentation contains audio and closed caption Features. Use the navigation bar to: manage the audio/mute options; launch/hide closed captions; and advance through the presentation.

Slide 2 - SGF Signature Changes Title
Hello and thank you for listening to an overview of the new e-sign process for the Pennsylvania State Grant Form.

Slide 3 - Agenda
The purpose of this presentation is to explain the changes to PHEAA’s signature process for students when they submit the State Grant Form or SGF. The changes discussed in this presentation are effective April 2018 and in general, will eliminate the need for many students to return certification signature pages.

During the presentation, we will review the SGF completion process that previously existed, in addition to the updates that have been made to the signature portion of this process. We will also discuss some new messaging that students will receive when submitting the online form, and the impact that the updates will have on their Pennsylvania State Grant records. Since there are some instances when a student’s wet signature will still be required, we will also highlight a few of those exceptions.

We wrap up the presentation with a brief recap of the resources available to assist in answering student inquiries. During the presentation we reference a few PHEAA-provided technical resources which are only available to authorized users. For instance, Account Access is a web portal provided for student applicants, and Partner Interface is the postsecondary school portal. For more information on our technical resources please contact us. We will provide contact information at the end of the presentation.

Now, let’s start out by reviewing some background information on the SGF signature change requirement.

Slide 4 - Background
In order to make the SGF submission process easier for applicants, recommendations were made to streamline the State Grant signature requirement. Providing a more efficient means for students to submit the SGF would also increase the number of completed State Grant records, as well as decrease the amount of manual processing of certification signature pages by PHEAA staff.

The changes that were put into place eliminate the need for most students to provide a “wet signature” when completing their SGF. This enhancement, also known as E-Sign, enables PHEAA to use a student’s FAFSA signature in combination with their electronic consent on the State Grant Form Rights and Responsibilities, also referred to here as the R&R, to complete the signature component.
Before we review the new E-Sign process, let's take a quick look back at how the process worked prior to April 2018.

**Slide 5 - SGF Workflow: Prior to April 2018**

In applying for a State Grant award, students are directed to begin the process by completing the FAFSA. As you may know, students can complete the FAFSA via one of a few ways. The most common way is via the FAFSA on the Web, or FOTW. For students that complete the FOTW, they are able to link directly to the Pennsylvania State Grant Form after submission of their FAFSA. Prior to the April update, once students answer the questions listed in the SGF and accept the Rights and Responsibilities, they were presented with a copy of their signature page via a PDF. They were then directed to print and mail the signature page.

Students who do not link to the State Grant Form from the FOTW can also submit their SGF information by later logging into Account Access. With the previous process, these students would also be directed to print, sign, and mail the signature page to PHEAA. When students did not submit the signature page during their initial completion of the SGF, the form would remain available in Account Access until it was determined to be received and complete by PHEAA.

**Slide 6 - Rights and Responsibilities: Prior to April 2018**

As mentioned on the previous slide, when students submitted the SGF, they also agreed to the State Grant Rights and Responsibilities Certification Document. The R&R document reviews the applicants' rights, responsibilities, and privacy expectations with regard to the data that is provided to PHEAA. Students are unable to submit their SGF without providing consent on the Rights and Responsibilities.

The image on this slide displays the Rights and Responsibilities section of the SGF as it appears prior to the change. When selecting the "I have read and agree to the Rights and Responsibilities of this application," it enabled the student to submit the SGF but did not automatically update any signatures within the State Grant record.

To officially complete their application, the student would still need to print the PDF and submit the certification page to PHEAA with the appropriate signatures. The forms received by PHEAA were then routed to State Grant and Special Programs for manual reviewed.

Now that we've talked about how the process was, let's review the changes that were put into place to simplify the application process.

**Slide 7 - New SGF Workflow: After April 2018**

With the April 2018 updates, the first steps of the FAFSA on the Web and SGF completion processes will remain the exact same. One thing worth noting here is that the student’s acceptance of the Rights and Responsibilities has a greater significance now. By acknowledging the R&R, the applicant not only certifies that the data submitted on the FAFSA and SGF are accurate, but they also consent to enable PHEAA to accept both their FAFSA signatures and this acknowledgement as an electronic signature for the SGF. In many cases, the ability to accept both the FAFSA signatures and Rights and Responsibilities attestation, serves as completion of the State Grant signature requirement.
Please keep in mind that since the State Grant record is only created after the FAFSA data is received, the record is not immediately completed when students link to the SGF from the FAFSA on the Web. There is a three to five day period between the submission of the SGF and the creation of the State Grant record. During this interim period, PHEAA is awaiting receipt of the FAFSA data and students are presented with a message whenever they log into Account Access to advise of this. This interim message is new and we will touch upon it in more detail in a few slides.

Slide 8 - Rights and Responsibilities: After April 2018

Since the Rights and Responsibilities play a greater role under the new E-Sign process, let’s review this portion in a little more detail.

The image on this slide displays the Rights and Responsibilities section of the SGF as it appears after the change. Under the new process, whenever applicants select the “read and agree” check box, this will enable the student to submit the SGF and, in many cases, automatically update the signature fields within the State Grant record. The updates made within the State Grant record are dependent upon the code from the federal signature item, Item 037. The updates will be made to the appropriate State Grant signature Items in PHEAA’s records.

Slide 9 - SGF Confirmation Message

Later in the presentation we will review incomplete signature situations, but first we would like to share a couple of high level changes to the process, starting with the confirmation page that the student sees upon completion of the SGF.

All students who complete the SGF via the FAFSA on the Web will initially see the page presented on this slide. Students who already have a State Grant record and log into the SGF via Account Access, will also see this confirmation page if PHEAA has determined that the required FAFSA signatures are complete.

Slide 10 - After April 2018: Interim Message

As mentioned previously, a new interim message displays for applicants who have logged into Account Access before PHEAA has received the data from the FAFSA application. During the waiting period, students will be presented with a message that states, “We know you have submitted your FAFSA and we are waiting to receive that data. Allow us 3-5 days from when you submitted the FAFSA to receive and prepare your information. If we need additional information after we receive your FAFSA data, we will contact you. You may also return periodically to check the status of your State Grant.”

It should be noted that there are instances where the student files the FAFSA and SGF under the wrong Social Security Number. One indication of this error is that the student says they have submitted the FAFSA over 5 days ago, but we still don’t have a State Grant record created. Since this may mean that the Department of Education was unable to successfully verify the student’s name and SSN with the Social Security Administration, you should instruct any students in this situation to follow the instructions on their Student Aid Report, or SAR, to make any corrections to SSN and/or name issues on their FAFSAs.
Slide 11 - After April 2018: Interim Message

The language within the new confirmation message explains that a PDF is available to print so that the student can retain the document for his or her own records. Once the student leaves this confirmation page, the PDF cannot be accessed again. Additionally, PHEAA is not able to print or mail this confirmation to the student.

The confirmation message also instructs students not to submit corrections to their SGF by sending a corrected copy of the form. Instead, students are advised to allow 3 to 5 days after completing their FAFSA, for PHEAA to create the State Grant record, before making corrections electronically. The message then directs students to make their enrollment changes via the “Update School Information” link within Account Access, and refers them to PHEAA.org for instructions on submitting all other types of corrections. The language presented here is also duplicated in the confirmation email sent to applicants.

Again, students who already have a State Grant record and open the SGF via Account Access will see this confirmation page only after we have determined that the required FAFSA signatures are complete.

Before we discuss situations when PHEAA will still require a “wet signature,” let’s take the next few slides to talk about how the E-Sign process will impact student records.

Slide 12 - After April 2018: TGSF Doc ID

First, regardless of the signature status, all State Grant Form submissions will continue to have a “receipt” of the submitted information as depicted on this slide.

Slide 13 - After April 2018: Rights and Responsibilities

Something else that was adjusted with this process is what appears in the student’s activity. On the Activity tab, accessible via the single student display in partner interface, postsecondary institutions will be able to view when FAFSA Items are received. The image on this slide depicts an example in which State Grant student signature Item 1 83 and the parent signature item 1 84 are missing. This missing information has therefore triggered an indicator to appear on the Application Info tab which will also highlight the missing items.

Slide 14 - Timing of Updates

It should be noted that when the student completes the SGF after logging into Account Access, it means we’ve already created the State Grant record, and are able to determine who signed the FAFSA.

When the student submits the SGF via the FAFSA on the Web link, we need to wait until the FAFSA is received, to determine who signed the FAFSA. Again, this step typically takes 3 to 5 days. For most students who sign the FAFSA, the State Grant record will be complete upon initial creation. For students who don’t sign or who have a discrepancy, we will require the missing signatures.
Slide 15 - State Grant Status (Signatures)

Now let’s take a look at the federal signature completion.

This chart illustrates the possible statuses of the federal signature, and how this impacts the overall completeness of the State Grant record.

If both the student and parent signed the FAFSA signature, then you can expect State Grant certification signature items to be complete.

When the only parent signs, then the state grant record status is incomplete for the student signature.

When only the applicant signs the and the student is independent, then the signature status is complete. If the student is dependent, then the record status is incomplete awaiting the parental signature.

If the FAFSA is completely unsigned by anyone, the State Grant items will also remain blank.

Lastly, if the FAFSA is completely unsigned by anyone, the corresponding State Grant items will also remain blank. In all cases where the FAFSA is unsigned, the State Grant signature items will also remain blank and a correctable.

Please keep in mind that blank signature Items which are correctable will result in an incomplete status for the State Grant record.

Postsecondary institutions will be able to view signature items on the Application Info tab of the single student display in Partner Interface.

We will step through what happens with missing signatures in the next few slides.

Slide 16 - Incomplete for Signatures

If a signature is considered incomplete for State Grant purposes, the student must take action by either: returning to the FAFSA, where possible, and signing or having his or her parents sign; or submitting the State Grant Program’s “Signature Request Form.”

In this instance, the form must be mailed to State Grant and Special Programs for a manual processing and evaluation.

Slide 17 - New SGF Workflow: Incomplete for Signatures

To review, in cases where the student links to the SGF at the time of completing the FOTW, PHEAA is unable to make an immediate determination as to whether or not the FAFSA signatures are complete.

Once the three to five days it takes to receive the FAFSA data, and create the State Grant record have lapsed, if we determine that we do not have the signatures we need, additional action will need to be taken by the applicant. Now let’s review those situations and the messaging students would receive.
Slide 18 - Incomplete Signature Messaging: Link from FOTW
If PHEAA is missing necessary FAFSA signatures, students who return to Account Access will see the page that advises to finish the State Grant application. Upon verifying that the Rights & Responsibilities have been agreed to and selecting submit, the student will then see the confirmation page which explains that we are still in need of signatures.

In this instance, a PDF will open as one page which is the “Signature Request Form.”

Please keep in mind that it is possible for the student to return to his or her FAFSA to correct the signature issue instead of completing this form. A link to the FAFSA is provided in the blue alert box at the top of this confirmation page. The student will have to wait three to five days from the date of correcting the FAFSA for us to receive and process that correction.

Slide 19 - Incomplete Signature Messaging: SG Record Created
In cases where the student did not link to the SGF at the time of completing the FAFSA, and instead returns to Account Access to complete it later, at the time the student completes the SGF, we are able to determine if the necessary FAFSA signatures are in the student’s record.

If the necessary signatures are not in the record, the student is immediately presented with this alternate confirmation page.

Slide 20 - Incomplete after SG Record Created
Again, it is possible for the student to return to his or her FAFSA to correct the signature issue instead of completing this form. A link to the FAFSA is provided in the blue alert box at the top of this confirmation page. PHEAA will receive the FAFSA updates in 3-5 days and, if the appropriate signatures are complete, this will resolve the matter.

This page also instructs the student to print and submit the State Grant Program’s “Signature Request Form.” The form must be mailed to State Grant and Special Programs for evaluation and updates.

Slide 21 - Incomplete after SG Record Created
The PDF on this confirmation page opens up to show the student 2 pages. The first page is the “Signature Request Form,” which must be returned if the student does not make the signature corrections on his or her FAFSA.

The second page is a copy of the information that was submitted to PHEAA. As previously mentioned, this page, which is only available when the SGF is initially submitted, serves as the student’s receipt and explains that it is for the student’s records only.

Slide 22 - Signature Request Form (TGCF)
In those instances where the student needs to submit the “Signature Request Form,” a scanned copy of the form will be routed to the State Grant and Special Programs workflow for review and processing.
As a result of changing the signature completion process for students who submit their SGF after the April update, there are a number of students in other situations who will be impacted by the change. Let's take a look at some of the other changes that were made as a result of the new E-Sign process.

**Slide 23 - SGF Completed Prior to April**

Since the 2018-19 FAFSA and State Grant Form became available in October, we realize there will be situations when students completed the SGF prior to the April change, but have yet to submit the signature page that was required under the old process. These students now have the opportunity to sign the SGF by confirming their agreement with the Rights & Responsibilities online instead of returning the paper form.

When students in this situation log into Account Access, they will view the display depicted on this slide which instructs them to “Finish your PA State Grant application.”

**Slide 24 - SGF Completed Prior to April - Complete**

Once the submission button is selected, if we determine that we have the necessary FAFSA signatures in the student’s record, the student will see the confirmation page depicted on this slide and no further action is needed.

**Slide 25 - SGF Completed Prior to April - Incomplete**

Once the student agrees to the new Rights & Responsibilities Certification statement and the submission button is selected, if we determine that we do not have the necessary FAFSA signatures in the student’s record, the student will see the confirmation page depicted on this slide. The confirmation page will instruct the student to either return to the FAFSA to complete the signatures or to print and return the “Signature Request Form.”

Students should then complete and return the form directly to PHEAA for review and processing.

**Slide 26 - Activity: FAFSA Signature Only**

In certain instances when we have received FAFSA data, the student’s activity will reflect a web submission. These can be viewed by postsecondary institutions via the Activity tab of the single student display in Partner Interface.

The image on this slide depicts that only the State Grant signature items 1-83 and 1-84 were completed as part of the student’s action. Activity such as this one will be added when we have updated the FAFSA signature data for a student who, prior to the April change, submitted the SGF, but not the certification signature page, then, after the change, logs into the SGF and agrees to the new Rights and Responsibilities.

**Slide 27 - Reminder Messaging**

A reminder email will be sent to students who are incomplete for signatures, and have a valid email address on file. Rather than sending this reminder 15 days after submission of the SGF, the time frame has been extended to 30 days. This will allow us sufficient time to receive any
corrections to signatures that the student makes on the FAFSA, and avoid having to collect the “wet signature” page. Once sent, the email will direct the student to Account Access where he or she can access the signature page.

In cases when students have no valid email address on file or have opted out of receiving emails, a letter is sent directing students to check Account Access to determine the next steps. Letters may also contain a signature page for students to return.

**Slide 28 - Account Access Status**

Another notable item is the messaging that appears in the “PA State Grants Status” under the “Applications & Status” section of Account Access. When we send this type of email reminder, there is equivalent messaging that displays in the student portal.

The language has been modified to align with the signature changes. To paraphrase, the language advises that we cannot determine the student’s eligibility, until he or she provides the necessary signatures. The message also advises the student how the signatures should be provided, and that they should check back later if changes were recently submitted.

**Slide 29 - Not Listed**

It is important to note that since we are no longer requiring the return of the signature page, PHEAA still needed a way to identify those records where the student selects the “Not Listed” option for high school, home school organization, or college.

In these cases, upon submission of the SGF, a copy of the certification signature page PDF will be routed to PHEAA staff for manual review. State Grant and Special Programs staff will continue to evaluate the action needed on these records in the same way that we have previously done. Our procedure on how to review these items has not changed, just the manner in how the correspondence is received.

**Slide 30 - New Messaging: Exception Cases**

After April 2018, a new message will be added to Account Access, for certain students who already have a State Grant record, but log into Account Access to complete the SGF. Upon logging in, the system recognizes the student as an “exception” case. These “exception” students fall under one of the following categories:

- the student has a dependency mismatch, which occurs when, for dependency purposes, the State Grant Program does not agree with the federal status;
- the postsecondary institution has approved the student to be processed as financially independent; or
- the postsecondary institution applied professional judgement to have the student processed under special circumstances.

For the State Grant Program, students with dependency status discrepancy due to professional judgement may need to be considered under “Special Consideration” policies; reduced income, for example.
Slide 31 - New Messaging: Exception Cases

Students in this situation are directed to the paper Status Notice or placed in a review by PHEAA. To avoid possible confusion, we’ve eliminated the ability for students in this situation to complete the SGF online.

The new message in Account Access states: “Additional information will be required before we can process your application. The State Grant Program uses criteria to determine your eligibility that may be different from federal and/or school-specific criteria. PHEAA will be contacting you by email or mail if additional information or other documentation is required to determine your eligibility.”

Slide 32 - New Messaging: Summer Applications

Finally, some messaging on the State Grant Summer Application incomplete confirmation page was altered to remove the reference to returning the signature page.

Slide 33 - SGF E-Sign Changes Summary

To summarize, the changes we have made to the signature completion requirement effective April 2018, will allow for many students to complete their State Grant form electronically. This means that going forward, most students will not need to sign and send in the Certification Signature Page. To accomplish this, our new SGF e-sign process incorporates wording within the SGF Rights and Responsibility Certification document, that permits PHEAA to utilize applicants’ FAFSA signature items to complete the State Grant Form. However, students must wait 3-5 days between completing the SGF via the FAFSA on the web link, before the record is created. This is especially important if the student needs to make corrections to the SGF, since the State Grant record is not created until after this time. When students link to the SGF from the FOTW, corrections to the SGF should then be made electronically after the wait period.

While the intent of the e-sign change was to increase the number of completed SGFs, there are still some cases when the student will need to submit a “wet” signature for completion. In cases of incomplete FAFSA signatures, as well as a few other situations, we will produce a certification signature form that must be returned. Also as a result of these updates, new messaging has been added to Account Access as well as emails and letters.

Slide 34 - SGSP Resources

In conclusion, we would like to refer you to some resources that will assist you in managing the State Grant Program. On our training site, you will find the most recent version of the State Grant Program Handbook, in addition to user guides, tutorials, FAQ documents, and various one-page resources. You will also find resources to assist you with the other PHEAA-administered programs.

In Alec, you will find links to the Document Library and PageCenter. PageCenter is our reporting repository, and contains student and institutional reporting for your school. Within the Document Library, you will find copies of correspondence that was sent to schools throughout the year, in addition to technical resources, such as our Online Roster Certification Form, and our clock-hour conversion spreadsheet.
If you would like to contact us, PHEAA staff is available at 1-800-443-0646. You may also outreach to us via email, to share your questions and concerns, or to express your feedback. Your feedback in writing will help us to share your input with the appropriate staff. If you have questions about institution eligibility for the State Grant Program, please call 717-720-2470.