

February 21, 2012

Dear Student Support Services Project Director,

This letter is in regards to the Student Support Services (SSS) Annual Performance Report (APR) submission for the 2010-11 reporting year. Beginning **February 21, 2012**, please visit <https://trio.ed.gov/sss> to access the web application. The deadline for submitting the APR is **March 21, 2012**.

The information provided below covers the following topics: (1) Information on the 2010-11 APR, (2) Information on the Tier 1A file, (3) Information on the Web Application, and (4) The Help Desk.

Information on the 2010-11 APR:

The 2010-11 APR has undergone major revisions. Prior to accessing the web application, please review the OMB-approved record structure and instructions on the TRIO website at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/report.html>. Please ensure that if your project chooses to upload the APR data, that the database column names and field chronology match those in the 2010-11 APR record structure.

Additional information regarding specific revisions to the APR is provided in a document entitled “Revisions to the 2010-11 Student Support Services (SSS) Program Annual Performance Report (APR)” and can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/report.html>.

Information on the Tier 1A file:

For previously funded projects that participated in the Tier 1A Student Record Verification process in late 2011, your project will be prompted, upon logging into the web application, to download the most recently updated Tier 1A file from the “Tier 1A Download” tab. This file will have the name formatting issues resolved such that hyphens, spaces, apostrophes, etc., have been restored to affected records. Therefore, please use this file to ensure that all of the records contained in this file appear on your 2010-11 APR data file which includes records that were flagged as “not reported in 2009-10. Please note that the First and Last Name, DOB, and SSN must be the same in both files. Any changes to these fields will result in a non-match.

In the most recently updated Tier 1A file that projects may download from the “Tier 1A Download” tab, participation information will be available for the following fields:

- PR Award Number
- Social Security Number
- Last Name
- First Name
- Date of Birth
- Student Cohort Year
- Enrollment Status in academic year first served
- Bachelor’s Degree status (this will only appear for 4-year institutions)
- Associate Degree status (this will only appear for 2-year institutions)
- Certificate status (this will only appear for 2-year institutions)

- Transferred2to4 (this will only appear for 2-year institutions)
- Date of Undergraduate Degree

The latter six fields in the above list are included to provide projects additional information. For the Bachelor's Degree status, Associate Degree status, Certificate status, and Transferred2to4 fields, a "Yes" in the field for a particular record means the project has indicated, in a previous reporting period, that the student has received the degree/certificate and/or transferred from a 2-year to a 4-year institution, whereas a "blank" means that the student did not receive the degree/certificate or transferred.

In addition, to the fields above, the last columns of this data file beginning with "Add_Record_to_201011" will contain flags that indicate which records required corrections during the Tier 1A student verification process and/or were flagged as missing from your 2009-10 APR file. A "Yes" indicates that the record required a correction and/or was flagged; therefore, you can use this information to more easily identify which records should have been corrected and/or added back to your 2010-11 APR file.

Information on the Web Application

➤ **Registration**

Due to the APR changes and the Tier 1A Student Record Verification Process, there will be some notable changes to the web application used for APR submission. Please make note of these changes when your project starts the APR submission process.

For previously funded projects that participated in the Tier 1A Student Record Verification process in late 2011, please use the same login id and password that was used during that process. If you have forgotten your password, you can use the "**Forgot Password?**" link to reset your password. More information on the "**Forgot Password?**" feature is provided below.

New grantees must register for a userid and password each year in order to protect the security of the annual performance report data. Register by clicking on the "**Register Here Each Year**" link.

A "**Forgot Password**" feature has been added to the homepage of the SSS web application. Projects may now reset their password without having to call the TRIO Helpdesk for assistance. Upon registering, projects will be prompted to provide answers to two self-selected security questions. These security questions will need to be answered if a project forgets their password.

➤ **Getting Started Feature**

Another change relates to the "Getting Started" functionality. There are still four options for starting the data submission process for Section II:

- Download
- Upload
- Transfer
- Enter student data directly into the Web form

In previous years, the “download” and “transfer” functionalities used the previous reporting year’s data; that is, projects would be able to download an Excel file of last year’s APR file or transfer last year’s APR file into the Web form. However, with the 2010-11 APR submission, projects will be downloading and/or transferring an Excel file containing the record structure for the 2010-11 SSS APR. If you choose the “download” or “transfer” feature the PR Number and Batch Year as well as the Tier 1A participant data for the following APR fields will be displayed:

- SSN, APR field #3
- LastNM, APR field #4
- FirstNM, APR field #5
- DOB, APR field #7
- FirstServEnrollCD, APR field #20
- StuCohortYR, APR field #21

➤ **Tier 1—Cohort Comparison Report**

For informational purposes, the Department added a Cohort Comparison Report in Tier 1. This report compares the number of students that are on both the most recently updated Tier 1A file and your project’s 2010-11 APR submission for each cohort year applicable to your project’s Prior Experience points for this grant cycle. For four-year institutions, this table would contain students in cohort years 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, and 2009-10; for two-year institutions, this table would contain students in cohort years 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10. Projects can use this report as a guide to determine if records are missing from their 2010-11 APR data file or as a first step in determining if incorrect cohorts have been reported. The Cohort Comparison Report will also be generated for newly funded projects; however, since these projects did not go through the Tier 1A verification process, there will be no comparison data in the column “# of Participants in the Tier 1A File.”

➤ **Tier 2—Tier 1A File Process**

For the 2010-11 APR reporting period, the Tier 1A file replaces the match to prior process. Therefore, the Tier 1A file is now considered correct and final, and as such, essential data (such as student identifiers and cohort years) in your 2010–11 APRs will be matched against the Tier 1A file. This means that, except for new participants, 2010–11 cohorts must match the Tier 1A file cohorts, and grantees must restore records for any participants who appear in the Tier 1A File Report. With over 285,000 participants in the Tier 1A file, TRIO cannot accommodate any corrections to any errors to the student identifiers and cohort year that grantees might have made in earlier APRs. Therefore, the Department will consider additional changes to the SSS system of records only if a grantee has documentation that TRIO made an error in resolving issues during the Tier 1A student verification process.

How to avoid mismatches? Occasionally, a project unintentionally ends up in the confusing situation of having two records for one student, generally due to inconsistencies in how the project recorded identifying data for the student (first name, last name, SSN, and date of birth). **Identifying data for each participant in your APR file (except for new students) must match the data in your Tier 1A file, even if you have discovered that the data contained errors or misspellings.** For the sake of the SSS system of records, consistency trumps other considerations.

➤ Tier 2—The Student Cohort Year Report

The Web application runs this report after you add and update any student records required by the Tier 1A report; those students then become part of the 2010-11 file. This report compares the data provided in field #21 (student cohort year) of the 2010-11 APR file with the SSS Tier 1A records for your project. Those participants on the 2010-11 data file whose student cohort year (field #21) is different from the SSS Tier 1A records are displayed on the screen. You must use the functionality in the cohort year report to change your data to match the SSS Tier 1A records for each participant's record on the report.

The Help Desk

If you encounter technical problems accessing the Web site or using the Web application, please contact the Help Desk by either telephone at (703) 846-8248 or e-mail at SSSWEB@cbmiweb.com. Please note that the Help Desk will try to contact projects within 24 hours of receiving the telephone call or e-mail. The Help Desk will be available to respond to your questions on week days that are not Federal holidays from February 21, 2012 until March 21, 2012. During the holidays and peak times, it may take longer for you to receive a response; thus, we encourage you to prepare and submit your performance report as soon as you have collected complete data.

Please remember that, after you submit the completed APR electronically, **you must also fax to 703-832-1360 a signed copy of Section I of the report form** that certifies that the information submitted electronically is readily verifiable and that the information reported is accurate and complete. If for any reason you need to revise your performance report data after you submit it, please do not fax in the corrections; you should contact the Help Desk for information on revising your report and resubmitting it electronically. Note that TRIO will generally be able to accommodate revisions only until your deadline. If you have questions regarding the performance report requirements, please contact your program specialist directly. To ascertain your program specialist's name, telephone number, and e-mail address, please visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/staff.html>.

Thank you for the time and effort you dedicate to performance reporting each year and for your commitment to providing complete and accurate data. Please retain source documents in a readily accessible form so that they can be verified during an on-site visit.

Sincerely,

Eileen S. Bland
Director
Undergraduate and Graduate Programs Division
Student Service