**UPDATE for Texas SLRAP Applicants, April 3, 2020**

On Friday, March 27th, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law by the President.  This act includes a payment suspension, interest waivers, and collection suspension for **federally held student loans** only.  The CARES Act has an effective date of March 27, but the administrative interest waiver began on March 13 (and to the extent it takes a while to implement, we’re told the waiver will be applied retroactively to March 13), and run through September 30, 2020.

The Texas SLRAP will **not** be covering payments on eligible federally held student loans during this period since we are aware of **no** disadvantage to eligible legal aid lawyers by taking this action.  There is no negative effect on Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) as long as the candidate for PSLF follows all other requirements and treats the period of suspension as regular payments.  This six-month period will not cost the attorney or spend down the pool of funding available for legal aid that is used to fund the Texas SLRAP; additionally, the six month period is applied to the 120 payments resulting in an actual savings of legal aid resources.

What’s Next?

* If you have not done so already, finalize your 2020-2021 Texas SLRAP application.  That deadline was **extended to April 15, 2020**.
* If you have not done so, complete the survey that was distributed on March 31.  Contact Lisa at the email below for a link.  Please answer it fully; your response will give us the information we must have about ANY student debt you have that is NOT eligible for the CARES Act suspension of payments.
* If you have not done so already, **DO NOT** expend the 4th quarter 2019-2020 Texas SLRAP disbursement to cover April and May payments that are suspended under the CARES Act.
* Hold the April and May portion of the 4th quarter 2019-2020 Texas SLRAP disbursement to cover the first two months of payments AFTER the suspension has been lifted.
* If you have **already** (before April 3, 2020) used the 4th quarter 2019-2020 Texas SLRAP disbursement to cover April and May of CARES Act-eligible (federally held) loans, please request those funds be refunded per the Department of Education’s statement: "Any auto-debit payments processed between March 13, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2020, can be refunded to you. Contact your loan servicer to request that your payment be refunded."
* If ALL of your student loans are eligible for CARES Act relief, we will withdraw your current application and ask that you copy over that application and update it with new employment certifications thirty (30) days prior to the end of the suspension period.
	+ At present, that appears to be the end of August, 2020.
	+ If the CARES Act suspension is extended in the exact same manner so that no harm is done to eligible borrowers, TAJF will act according to the new suspension period.
	+ If you are a 2019-2020 recipient of the Texas SLRAP, you will have at least two months of payment that you will carry forward and use in the first two months after the suspension.
* If your loans are **NOT** federally held, you MUST pay those and can use the TAJF disbursement to make any REQUIRED monthly payment on Texas SLRAP-eligible commercial/private loans.
* If you have student loans that are **NOT** eligible for CARES Act relief, TAJF will review your Texas SLRAP application and finalize your award by May 15, 2020.  You should expect to receive an award packet covering those private loans by May 15, 2020.  If you do not, contact Gina Richardson at grichardson@teajf.org.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to email Lisa Melton at LDMelton@teajf.org.