

2017 NASFAA Administrative Cost Allowance Survey Results

Overview:

In June 2017 NASFAA Surveyed our members on the Administrative Cost Allowance (ACA). Results from the survey are below, followed by the survey instrument.

Response Rate: NASFAA Distributed this survey to 2,650 primary contacts at membership institutions. We received 681 responses, for a 26% response rate. These respondents included institutions from community colleges (32%), nonprofit institutions (33%), 4-year public institutions (25%), for-profit institutions (6%), and graduate/professional institutions (3%).

Survey Responses:

Which of the following ACA funds does your institution receive/use? (n=675)

Pell only	19%
Pell and Campus-Based Aid	74%
Our institution does not receive/use ACA	3%
Campus-Based Aid Only	4%

What was the amount of your institution's Pell Grant ACA for award year 2015-2016? Please enter only whole numbers. Do not use a comma (,), decimals (.), or dollar sign (\$). (n=341)

- Mean answer: \$52,662.99

Who controls how ACA funds are spent at your institution? (n=390)

For institutions with a single FAO, the FAO controls ACA funding	30%
For institutions with multiple FAOs, each individual FAO controls its own portion of ACA funding	2%
For institutions with multiple FAOs, a central FAO controls the entire institution's ACA funding	3%
ACA funding is controlled by an office that oversees the FAO (such as a Dean or VP)	18%
Some other office or individual controls ACA funding at my institution	47%

How did your institution spend its Pell ACA funds for award year 2015-2016? (Check all that apply)¹. (n=329)

FAO staff salaries	54%
FAO office supplies and equipment	47%
FAO office travel to financial aid meetings and/or training	54%
Administrative cost of conducting community service programs	15%
Fees that banks charge for maintaining accounts	13%

What percentage of the FAO's 2015-2016 operating budget was funded by Pell ACA? (n=380)

1%-19%	59%
20%-39%	3%
40%-59%	2%
60% or more	4%
0%, no ACA dollars go to the aid office's operating budget	32%

How would your institution be affected if Pell ACA was eliminated? (Check all that apply)². (n=317)

FAO staff reduction	23%
Reduction in FAO hours of operation	6%
Reduction in FAO services to students	32%
Reduction in FAO training budget	53%
Reduction in other campus services because funding would need to be shifted to FAO to make up for loss of ACA	42%

Did your institution claim the maximum amount allowable for CBA ACA for award year 2015-2016? (n=317)

Yes, we claimed the full amount allowed	79%
No, we claimed a partial amount	21%

What was the maximum allowable amount for CBA ACA in 2015-2016 award year? Please enter only whole numbers. Do not use a comma (,), decimals (.), or dollar sign (\$). (n=285)

- Mean answer \$81,252.27

¹ Percentages will not add up to 100% as respondents were able to select more than one option.

² Percentages will not add up to 100% as respondents were able to select more than one option.

If your institution claimed less than the full amount allowed of your CBA ACA, what were the dollar amounts for the 2015-2016 award year? Please enter only whole numbers. Do not use a comma (,), decimals (.), or dollar sign (\$). (n=52)

- Claimed Mean \$35,819
- Not Claimed Mean \$15,335

How did your institution spend its CBA ACA funds for award year 2015-2016 go to? (check all that apply)³. (n=246)

FAO operation and/or expenses budget (FAO directly controls the ACA amount)	41%
Institution's general fund	48%
Central administration of a multi-institutional system retains ACA to use for administrative expenses	8%
Other (Please explain)	11%

Which of the following CBA programs did you claim your CBA ACA from in award year 2015-2016? (Check all that apply)⁴. (n=245)

Perkins	52%
FSEOG	61%
FWS	79%

What percentage of the financial aid office's 2015-2016 operating budget was funded by CBA ACA? (n=243)

1%-19%	49%
20%-39%	6%
40%-59%	2%
60% or more	7%
0% or Unknown, fund dollars go to anywhere else other the aid office's operating budget	35%

³ Percentages will not add up to 100% as respondents were able to select more than one option.

⁴ Percentages will not add up to 100% as respondents were able to select more than one option.

Where did the CBA ACA funds for award year 2015-2016 go to? (Check all that apply)⁵. (n=231)

Staff salaries	38%
Office supplies and equipment	44%
Office travel to financial aid meetings or training	47%
Student consumer information activities	22%
Community service program	11%
Fees that banks charge for maintaining accounts	10%
Computer costs related to Perkins Loan billing	15%
Other (Specify)	24%

Selected survey questions are not included in this analysis. Those questions are:

- Please describe ways in which your institution would be affected if the CBA ACA was eliminated? If your institution would not be affected if the CBA ACA were eliminated, please indicate that. (Open-ended).
- What is the reason(s) for not using ACA Funds? (Open-ended).
- Do you have any additional comments about the possible elimination of ACA and how it would impact your institution? (Open-ended).
- What is the reason why your institution did not take the full CBA ACA amount in 2015-16? (Open-ended).

Additional information on the responses to these survey questions may be found in NASFAA's Policy Brief on the Administrative Cost Allowance.

Questions on this survey instrument, or the results, may be directed to NASFAA's Research Department at Research@nasfaa.org.

⁵ Percentages will not add up to 100% as respondents were able to select more than one option.

2017 Administrative Cost Allowance Survey Instrument:

Introduction:

The current budget climate has pushed federal policymakers to consider additional ways to cut government spending. In this environment, the elimination of the Administrative Cost Allowance (ACA) has come up as way to achieve budgetary savings. Enacting such a cut would leave 100 percent of the costs of administering the Pell Grant and campus-based aid programs solely to institutions. This survey aims to gauge how institutions use Pell and/or campus-based aid ACAs, and discern the importance of ACAs to the operations of Financial Aid Offices (FAOs), with the goal of providing NASFAA data to aid our advocacy efforts regarding the importance of the ACA.

NOTE:

- The best person to fill out this survey is someone who has knowledge of your institution's ACA for Pell and/or the campus-based aid programs. If you are not the best person to answer, please forward this survey to the most appropriate campus representative.
- The survey will automatically save each page when you click the next button, and the survey does not have to be completed in one sitting.
- The person completing the survey may resume the survey at any time using the customized link in their email.
- At the end of the survey the person completing the survey will have the option to download a .PDF version of the answers you have submitted. This survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. All survey responses will be reported in the aggregate and no identifying information will be released. The deadline to complete this survey is **Friday, June 16, 2017**.
- If you have any concerns or questions, please contact NASFAA's Research Department at research@nasfaa.org.

Please refer to the following definitions when completing this survey:

- Pell Grant ACA – ACA is paid to the institution at given points during the award year from funds appropriated by Congress.
- Campus-Based Aid (CBA) ACA – ACA is deducted by the institution from the institution's campus-based aid allocations.
- Survey questions, where applicable, refer to the **2015-2016 award year**.

Question 1: Which of the following ACA funds does your institution receive/use?

- Pell only
- Campus-Based Aid Only
- Pell and Campus-Based Aid
- Our institution does not receive/use ACA

Pell Grant

As a reminder: Survey questions, where applicable, refer to the 2015-2016 award year.

Question 2: What was the amount of your institution's Pell Grant ACA for award year 2015-2016? Please enter only whole numbers. Do not use a comma (,), decimals (.), or dollar sign (\$).

Question 3: Who controls how ACA funds are spent at your institution?

- For institutions with a single FAO, the FAO controls ACA funding
- For institutions with multiple FAOs, each individual FAO controls its own portion of ACA funding
- For institutions with multiple FAOs, a central FAO controls the entire institution's ACA funding
- ACA funding is controlled by an office that oversees the FAO (such as a Dean or VP)
- Some other office or individual controls ACA funding at my institution

Question 4: How did your institution spend its Pell ACA funds for award year 2015-2016? (Check all that apply).

- FAO staff salaries
- FAO office supplies and equipment
- FAO office travel to financial aid meetings and/or training
- Administrative cost of conducting community service programs
- Fees that banks charge for maintaining accounts

Question 5: What percentage of the FAO's 2015-2016 operating budget was funded by Pell ACA?

- 1%-19%
- 20%-39%
- 40%-59%
- 60% or more
- 0%, no ACA dollars go to the aid office's operating budget

Question 5: How would your institution be affected if Pell ACA was eliminated? (Check all that apply).

- FAO staff reduction
- Reduction in FAO hours of operation
- Reduction in FAO services to students
- Reduction in FAO training budget
- Reduction in other campus services because funding would need to be shifted to FAO to make up for loss of ACA

Campus-Based Aid

As a reminder: Survey questions, where applicable, refer to the 2015-2016 award year.

Question 6: Did your institution claim the maximum amount allowable for CBA ACA for award year 2015-2016?

- Yes, we claimed the full amount allowed
- No, we claimed a partial amount

Question 7: What was the maximum allowable amount for CBA ACA in 2015-2016 award year? Please enter only whole numbers. Do not use a comma (,), decimals (.), or dollar sign (\$).

Question 8: If your institution claimed less than the full amount allowed of your CBA ACA, what were the dollar amounts for the 2015-2016 award year? Please enter only whole numbers. Do not use a comma (,), decimals (.), or dollar sign (\$).

- Claimed _____
- Not claimed _____

Question 9: What is the reason why your institution did not take the full CBA ACA amount in 2015-16?

How did your institution spend its CBA ACA funds for award year 2015-2016 go to? (check all that apply).

- FAO operation and/or expenses budget (FAO directly controls the ACA amount)
- Institution's general fund
- Central administration of a multi-institutional system retains ACA to use for administrative expenses
- Other (Please explain) _____

Question 10: Which of the following CBA programs did you claim your CBA ACA from in award year 2015-2016? (Check all that apply).

- Perkins
- FSEOG
- FWS

Question 11: What percentage of the financial aid office's 2015-2016 operating budget was funded by CBA ACA?

- 1%-19%
- 20%-39%
- 40%-59%
- 60% or more
- 0% or Unknown, fund dollars go to anywhere else other the aid office's operating budget

Question 12: Where did the CBA ACA funds for award year 2015-2016 go to? (Check all that apply).

- Staff salaries
- Office supplies and equipment
- Office travel to financial aid meetings or training
- Student consumer information activities
- Community service program
- Fees that banks charge for maintaining accounts
- Computer costs related to Perkins Loan billing
- Other (Specify) _____

Question 13: Please describe ways in which your institution would be affected if the CBA ACA was eliminated? If your institution would not be affected if the CBA ACA were eliminated, please indicate that. (Open-ended).

Question 14: What is the reason(s) for not using ACA Funds?

Question 15: Do you have any additional comments about the possible elimination of ACA and how it would impact your institution?