

# Executive Summary

The 2012 National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) Staffing Model and Staffing Model Report help financial aid offices compare staff sizes with similar institutions. All Title IV institutions must comply with federal regulations that require an adequate number of qualified staff to administer federal student aid programs. This report summarizes 2010-11 award year data collected from nearly 1,000 financial aid offices at different types of institutions from across the country.

Findings from the 2012 survey suggest that financial aid offices are doing more with less when compared to results from the 2006 report. Specifically, the report finds:

## More Applicants and Recipients

On average, the 2012 report shows financial aid offices served nearly 50% more student aid applicants and recipients than in the 2006 report. Financial aid offices reported serving an average 8,586 applicants and 5,911 recipients – up from 5,773 applicants and 3,961 recipients in the 2006 report.

## More Aid Dollars

Aid offices reported administering almost twice as much student aid dollars than they reported for the 2006 report. On average, financial aid offices administered \$76.5 million in student aid compared to \$40.2 million in the 2006 report.

## Fewer Resources

On average, campuses have slightly increased spending on financial aid staff salaries and benefits. However, funding for “all other operating expenses” has been cut by more than 50% since 2006. In 2010-11, financial aid offices reported having \$7,243 in other operating expenses per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee – down from \$16,043 in 2006.

## Staff Size

The average financial aid office has the equivalent of 12 FTE staff or four FTE per 1,000 applicants. However, specific staffing levels varied greatly between institutions and institution types. Public institutions reported having an average of two FTE staff per 1,000 applicants compared to five at private not-for-profit institutions and 16 at for-profit institutions. Considering that two-thirds of financial aid offices reported facing a “moderate” or “severe” resource shortage in NASFAA’s 2010 Administrative Burden Survey, these FTE averages could be below the adequate staffing level.

NASFAA's 2012 Staffing Model uses survey results to identify and quantify key factors that impact financial aid office staff size. The Staffing Model allows users to enter the factors that impact their aid office to develop a customized estimate of the appropriate staff size. The Staffing Model Report highlights trends in these factors, including:

## **Verification**

Most respondents reported verifying 50% or less financial aid applications. Sixty-five percent of respondents verified between 21% to 50% of applications.

## **Need Analysis**

A large majority (81%) of institutions only used federal methodology and did not use additional or institutional need analysis procedures.

## **Automation**

Similar to 2006, nearly all respondents (95%) used computer software to automate financial aid functions. Administrators reported either completely or partially automating many financial aid functions. At least 40% of respondents have completely automated document tracking, awarding/packaging federal aid, electronic award notifications, view web access to student records, and batch processing of student records.

## **Other Campus Offices**

The number of FTE staff working on financial aid related administration, but employed in other campus offices, ranged from an average of 0.1 to more than 30. More than a third (36%) of respondents had an average of 2-10 FTE working on financial aid but employed in other offices. Another 17% had more than 30 FTE in other offices and most of these respondents were at public or private not-for-profit institutions.