

Federal Student Aid & Students with Disabilities

Fact Sheet 2023

Did you know student loan discharges exist?

If you have a total and permanent disability, it may be possible for you to have your federal student loan discharged. Total and permanent disability is defined as the inability to work and earn money because of an illness or injury that is expected to continue indefinitely, or to result in death. If you qualify for a federal student loan discharge, you will be released from all obligations to repay it.

How does a loan discharge work?

If you are determined to be totally and permanently disabled based on a physician's certification, your loan will be conditionally discharged for up to three years. This conditional discharge period begins on the date you became totally and permanently disabled, as certified by your physician.

During this conditional discharge period, you do not have to make any payments on your loan(s). To qualify for a final discharge due to total and permanent disability, you must meet the following requirements during the conditional discharge period:

- Your earnings from employment must not exceed the poverty line amount for a family of two; and
- You must not receive any additional loans under the Federal Family Education Loan, Direct Stafford Loan, or Federal Perkins Loan programs.

Note: You cannot qualify for a loan discharge based on a condition that existed before the loan was made, unless a doctor certifies that your condition substantially deteriorated after you obtained the loan.

What happens if I stop meeting the conditional discharge period requirements?

If you do not continue to meet these requirements at any time during, or at the end of, the conditional discharge period, your loan(s) will be taken out of conditional discharge status, and you must resume making payments on your loans.

How can I find out if I qualify for federal student loan forgiveness, cancellation, or discharge?

For more information on qualifying for any loan options stated above, review your promissory note, Borrower's Rights and Responsibilities Statement, and contact your loan holder. For:

- Federal Perkins Loans, check with the school that gave you the loan, or with the school's loan servicing agent.
- Direct Stafford Loans, contact the Direct Loan Servicing Center at 1-800-848-0979, or 1-800-848-0983 (TTY), or visit [U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid](https://www.ed.gov/department-of-education/federal-student-aid).
- Federal Family Education Loans (FFEL), contact your lender or the loan servicing agent.

The information contained in this factsheet comes from the [U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid website](https://www.ed.gov/department-of-education/federal-student-aid).

For more information about **Work Without Limits Benefits Counseling** contact **1-877-YES-WORK** (1-877-937-9675) or visit [workwithoutlimits.org](https://www.workwithoutlimits.org)