Ten Things You Should Know About Student Loans

1. Borrow only what you need

- Student loans are a great way to help pay for school.
- However, student loans will eventually have to be paid back...with interest.
- Minimize loans as much as possible. Take advantage of all grants, scholarships, and work-study opportunities available to you before you borrow student loans. Your financial aid advisor can help you borrow only what you need.

2. Have a plan

- Map out the cost of your entire education and how you’ll pay for it.
- For tools and resources to help you build a healthy financial future, visit www.Nelnet.com/Get-Financially-Fit.

3. Create and follow a monthly budget

- Before you graduate, create an estimated monthly budget that factors in your future monthly student loan payment. Several repayment plans are available to fit your budget.
- Budget worksheets and resources are available at www.Nelnet.com/Get-Financially-Fit.

4. Understand your loans

- There are several different kinds of loans. Here are some key factors to be aware of:
  - **Subsidized vs. Unsubsidized**: Accrued interest for subsidized loans is paid by the government while you’re in school or deferment.\(^1\) You are responsible for repaying the interest on unsubsidized loans during the life of the loan.
  - **Federal vs. Private**: Federal loans are funded by the federal government, whereas private loans are issued by banks or similar institutions. They can help bridge any financial gap not covered by federal loans.
  - **Fixed interest vs. Variable interest**: Fixed rates are constant for the life of the loan, but variable interest rates are adjusted annually on July 1.

5. Know your servicers

- Federal student loans are managed by loan servicers: we’re here to help you.
- Servicers send important loan info, process payments, and answer questions. To find out who the loan servicers are for your federal student loans, visit StudentAid.gov.

6. Set up an online account

- An online account with your servicer is an easy way to connect with them and keep your contact information current.
- Visit Nelnet.com or your servicer’s website to create your online account today!

7. Make payments while in school (even if it’s only a little)

- Even if you can only afford $5 per month.
- That’s only 1 latte, 1 movie night.
- Making small payments now will help you pay down your loans, which will save you money in the long run.

8. You have repayment options

- If you need to lower or postpone your payments, or seek other repayment options, including forgiveness or discharge of your student loans, contact your servicer today.

9. Repayment is easier when your overall debt is lower

- During college, avoid racking up credit card debt or purchasing unnecessary big-ticket items. When you graduate, you can focus on paying down your student loans instead of juggling multiple (avoidable) monthly payments.

10. Keep in touch!

- Stay in touch with your servicers and ask questions as your situation changes.

©2017 Nelnet, Inc. All rights reserved. Nelnet is a registered service mark of Nelnet, Inc.
\(^1\)First-time Direct Loan borrowers on or after July 1, 2013, are no longer eligible for the Subsidized Student Loan program if they are in school longer than 150% of the published length of time necessary to graduate from an undergraduate degree program.