

**261.5 Response to national emergency — waiver authority.**

1. For purposes of this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

a. “Active duty” means “active duty” as defined in 10 U.S.C. § 101(d)(1), except that the term does not include active duty for training or attendance at a service school.

b. “Affected individual” means an individual who is serving on active duty during the national emergency; or who resides or is employed in an area that is declared a disaster area by any federal, state, or local official in connection with the national emergency; or who suffered direct economic hardship as a result of the national emergency, as determined under a waiver or modification issued pursuant to this section.

c. “Serving on active duty during the national emergency” means any of the following individuals:

(1) A reserve of an armed force ordered to active duty under 10 U.S.C. § 12301(a), 12301(g), 12302, 12304, or 12306, or any retired member of an armed force ordered to active duty under 10 U.S.C. § 688, as amended, for service in connection with the emergency or subsequent actions or conditions, regardless of the location at which the active duty service is performed.

(2) Any other member of an armed force on active duty in connection with the emergency or subsequent actions or conditions who has been assigned to a duty station at a location other than the location at which the member is normally assigned.

2. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, in the event of a national emergency declared by the president of the United States by reason of terrorist attack, the commission may waive or modify any statutory or regulatory provision applicable to state financial aid programs established pursuant to this chapter to ensure, with regard to affected individuals, that the following occurs:

a. The financial positions of affected individuals who are state student loan borrowers are not worsened in relation to those loans because of their status as affected individuals.

b. Administrative requirements placed on state student loan borrowers are minimized, to the extent possible, without impairing the integrity of the student loan programs, to ease the burden on these borrowers and to avoid inadvertent technical violations or defaults.

c. The calculation of “annual adjusted family income” and “available income”, as used in the determination of need for student financial assistance under 20 U.S.C. § 1070 et seq., for affected individuals, or if applicable, for the spouses or dependents of affected individuals, may be modified to mean the sums received in the first calendar year of the award year for which the determination is made, in order to reflect more accurately the financial condition of the affected individuals or their families.

3. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, in the event of a national emergency declared by the president of the United States by reason of terrorist attack, the commission may grant temporary relief from requirements rendered infeasible or unreasonable, including due diligence requirements and reporting deadlines, by the national emergency, to an institution of higher education under the state board of regents, a community college, an accredited private institution as defined in section 261.9, eligible lenders, and other entities participating in the state student assistance programs in accordance with this chapter, that are located in, or whose operations are directly affected by, areas that are declared disaster areas by any federal, state, or local official in connection with the national emergency. If the commission issues a waiver in accordance with this section, the report prepared by the commission pursuant to section 17A.9A, subsection 5, shall include examples of measures that a postsecondary institution may take in the appropriate exercise of discretion, as provided in 20 U.S.C. § 1087tt, to adjust financial need and aid eligibility determinations for affected individuals.

4. This section shall not be construed as a requirement that the commission exercise the waiver or modification authority provided pursuant to this section on a case-by-case basis.

2002 Acts, ch 1036, §1, 2