Student Loan Programs—CBO's May 2019 Baseline

Under the William D. Ford Direct Loan Program, the federal government provides education loans to undergraduate and graduate students and to the parents of undergraduate students. In the direct loan program, the federal government serves as the lender for all borrowers but contracts with private entities to service those loans. Before July 1, 2010, the federal government also provided loan guarantees to financial institutions to provide federal student loans through the Federal Family Education Loan Program. The current program offers four types of loans:

- **Subsidized loans** are need-based loans for undergraduate students. No interest accrues while the borrower is enrolled or during other deferment periods, and borrowing is limited by a student's class level and dependency status.
- Unsubsidized loans are non-need-based loans for undergraduate and graduate students. Interest accrues from origination, and borrowing is limited by a student's class level and dependency status.
- **PLUS parent loans** are non–need-based loans for parents of dependent undergraduates. Interest accrues from origination, and borrowing is limited only by the cost of attendance.
- **GradPLUS loans** are non–need-based loans for graduate students. Interest accrues from origination, and borrowing is limited only by the cost of attendance.

Student Loan Programs--CBO's May 2019 Baseline Projections

These six tables detail the costs, loan volumes, and subsidy rates for the student loan programs for CBO's May 2019 baseline.

Table 1 includes the cost projections for each budget account associated with the student loan programs using estimating procedures established in the Federal Credit Reform Act (FCRA).

Table 2 includes the projections of loan volume and subsidy rates for the direct student loans using FCRA.

Table 3 includes expenditures for student aid administration.

Table 4 includes the projection of the borrower interest rates.

Table 5 includes the cost projections for the student loan programs using fair-value estimating procedures.

Table 6 includes the federal subsidy rates for student loans using fair-value estimating procedures.

The differences between FCRA and fair-value estimating procedures are as follows:

FCRA requires that the lifetime costs of student loans be recorded up front on an accrual basis (that is, they are recognized in the year in which the loan is made). The lifetime cost of a federal loan—called its subsidy cost—is measured by discounting all of the expected future cash flows associated with the loan to a present value at the date the loan is disbursed. Those cash flows include the amounts disbursed, principal repaid, interest received, fees charged, and net losses that accrue from defaults.

Under the rules specified in FCRA, the present value of expected future cash flows is calculated by discounting those cash flows using the rates on U.S. Treasury securities with similar terms to maturity. For instance, the yield on a Treasury security maturing in one year is used to discount cash flows one year from disbursement, a two-year rate is used for cash flows two years from disbursement, and so on.

In contrast, under the fair-value estimating procedures, estimates are based on market values—market prices or approximations of market prices when directly comparable figures are unavailable—which more fully account for the cost of the risk the government incurs. The fair-value approach accounts for the cost of market risk, which FCRA procedures using Treasury rates, do not.

The definitions of budget authority, program obligations, and outlays as they apply to the student loan program subsidy or "program" accounts are as follows:

Subsidy budget authority figures express what total subsidy costs would be if all the loans for which an eligible application was received during a year were made. In reality, not all loans are disbursed because prospective borrowers either do not show up for school or decide not to take all or part of the loan for which they applied.

Subsidy obligations are the costs associated with all loans for which there will be at least one cash disbursement (shown on the attached tables as Net Annual Loan Volume). Typically, the subsidy obligation estimates are not included in budget tables.

Subsidy outlays reflect the subsidy obligations adjusted for the timing of the cash disbursements. Because of the multiple disbursement requirements and the timing of the academic school years compared to the federal fiscal year, only about two-thirds of the dollars are disbursed to the borrowers during the first fiscal year. The remaining are disbursed in the following year.

Table 1.
Student Loan Program Budget Account Totals, Federal Credit Reform—CBO's May 2019 Baseline

| Millions of Dollars, by Fiscal Year | | | | | | | | | | | | | May 2, 2019 |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------|--------|---------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------------|
| | | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2019-2029 |
| | | | ı | Direct Studer | nt Loans | | | | | | | | |
| Program Account ^a | Budget Authority | -1,216 | -4,700 | -3,575 | -2,265 | -1,948 | -1,789 | -2,707 | -2,928 | -3,144 | -3,716 | -4,311 | -32,299 |
| | Outlays | -1,905 | -4,683 | -3,648 | -2,533 | -1,957 | -1,771 | -2,255 | -2,672 | -2,864 | -3,265 | -3,789 | -31,341 |
| Credit Reestimates and Modifications ^b | Budget Authority Outlays | 26,661 26,661 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26,661 26,661 |
| Subtotal, Direct Loans | Budget Authority | 25,445 | -4,700 | -3,575 | -2,265 | -1,948 | -1,789 | -2,707 | -2,928 | -3,144 | -3,716 | -4,311 | -5,638 |
| | Outlays | 24,756 | -4,683 | -3,648 | -2,533 | -1,957 | -1,771 | -2,255 | -2,672 | -2,864 | -3,265 | -3,789 | -4,680 |
| | | | Gua | aranteed Stu | dent Loans | | | | | | | | |
| Program Liquidating Account and Federal Student Loan Reserve Fund | Budget Authority | -355 | -388 | -288 | -251 | -203 | -163 | -132 | -108 | -90 | -73 | -56 | -2,107 |
| | Outlays | -477 | -484 | -364 | -311 | -251 | -203 | -162 | -129 | -105 | -83 | -62 | -2,631 |
| Credit Reestimates and Modifications ^b | Budget Authority Outlays | 1,562 1,562 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 | 1,562 1,562 |
| Subtotal, Guaranteed Loans | Budget Authority | 1,207 | -388 | -288 | -251 | -203 | -163 | -132 | -108 | -90 | -73 | -56 | -545 |
| | Outlays | 1,085 | -484 | -364 | -311 | -251 | -203 | -162 | -129 | -105 | -83 | -62 | -1,069 |
| | | | Stu | dent Aid Adr | ninistration | | | | | | | | |
| Student Aid Administration (Discretionary) ^c | Budget Authority | 1,679 | 1,719 | 1,759 | 1,799 | 1,842 | 1,885 | 1,929 | 1,973 | 2,017 | 2,065 | 2,111 | 20,778 |
| | Outlays | 1,664 | 1,696 | 1,735 | 1,773 | 1,815 | 1,858 | 1,901 | 1,945 | 1,989 | 2,035 | 2,081 | 20,492 |
| Student Aid Administration (Mandatory) ^d | Budget Authority | 1,313 | 1,355 | 1,402 | 1,451 | 1,500 | 1,550 | 1,592 | 1,623 | 1,654 | 1,685 | 1,769 | 16,894 |
| | Outlays | 1,259 | 1,344 | 1,390 | 1,439 | 1,488 | 1,538 | 1,582 | 1,615 | 1,646 | 1,678 | 1,748 | 16,726 |
| Subtotal, Student Aid Administration | Budget Authority | 2,992 | 3,074 | 3,161 | 3,250 | 3,342 | 3,435 | 3,521 | 3,596 | 3,671 | 3,750 | 3,880 | 37,672 |
| | Outlays | 2,922 | 3,040 | 3,125 | 3,212 | 3,303 | 3,396 | 3,483 | 3,560 | 3,635 | 3,713 | 3,829 | 37,217 |
| | | | Total | Spending, S | tudent Loan | s | | | | | | | |
| Total Student Loans | Budget Authority | 29,644 | -2,013 | -702 | 734 | 1,191 | 1,483 | 682 | 561 | 437 | -39 | -487 | 31,490 |
| | Outlays | 28,764 | -2,127 | -888 | 368 | 1,095 | 1,423 | 1,066 | 760 | 666 | 365 | -23 | 31,468 |

a. Estimated spending for fiscal year 2019 includes additional adjustments based on current spending patterns projected by the Office of Management and Budget.

b. Costs for credit reestimates and modifications are changes to the estimated costs of outstanding loans originated in years before 2019. Those totals are based on the amounts that the Office of Management and Budget expects to record in fiscal year 2019.

c. Projections of discretionary spending for administering student aid are calculated by inflating the budget authority provided in the most recent appropriation act rather than on the basis of an estimate of the future costs of administering the program.

d. Projections of mandatory spending for administering student aid are based on estimated future costs of administering federal loan programs.

Table 2.

Total Direct Loan Program (New Loans Only), Federal Credit Reform—CBO's May 2019 Baseline

| By Fiscal Year | | | | | | | | | | | May 2, 2019 |
|--|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| , | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
| Total All New Loans ^a | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net Annual Loan Volume (Millions of dollars) | 98,379 | 101,745 | 105,425 | 109,610 | 113,987 | 118,121 | 122,491 | 127,064 | 131,837 | 136,840 | 142,081 |
| Net Number of Loans (Thousands) | 15,617 | 15,928 | 16,234 | 16,613 | 17,027 | 17,453 | 17,858 | 18,289 | 18,747 | 19,234 | 19,752 |
| Average Loan Amount (Dollars) | 6,299 | 6,388 | 6,494 | 6,598 | 6,694 | 6,768 | 6,859 | 6,948 | 7,033 | 7,115 | 7,193 |
| Subsidy Rate (Percent) ^{b, c, d} | -5.43 | -4.13 | -3.13 | -1.96 | -1.63 | -1.46 | -2.08 | -2.15 | -2.22 | -2.52 | -2.80 |
| Subsidized Student Loans | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net Annual Loan Volume (Millions of dollars) | 21,404 | 22,022 | 22,601 | 23,297 | 24,062 | 24,908 | 25,690 | 26,522 | 27,408 | 28,351 | 29,356 |
| Net Number of Loans (Thousands) | 6,020 | 6,133 | 6,232 | 6,360 | 6,504 | 6,666 | 6,807 | 6,958 | 7,119 | 7,291 | 7,475 |
| Average Loan Amount (Dollars) | 3,555 | 3,591 | 3,627 | 3,663 | 3,700 | 3,737 | 3,774 | 3,812 | 3,850 | 3,888 | 3,927 |
| Subsidy Rate (Percent) ^{b, c, d} | 11.04 | 12.15 | 12.52 | 12.81 | 12.78 | 12.65 | 12.37 | 12.00 | 11.68 | 11.43 | 11.22 |
| Unsubsidized Student Loans: Undergraduate | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net Annual Loan Volume (Millions of dollars) | 22,681 | 23,358 | 24,009 | 24,796 | 25,673 | 26,654 | 27,584 | 28,589 | 29,674 | 30,845 | 32,109 |
| Net Number of Loans (Thousands) | 6,118 | 6,238 | 6,348 | 6,491 | 6,655 | 6,840 | 7,009 | 7,192 | 7,391 | 7,607 | 7,840 |
| Average Loan Amount (Dollars) | 3,707 | 3,745 | 3,782 | 3,820 | 3,858 | 3,897 | 3,936 | 3,975 | 4,015 | 4,055 | 4,095 |
| Subsidy Rate (Percent) ^{b, c, d} | -0.81 | -0.23 | -0.27 | 0.07 | 0.20 | 0.08 | -0.32 | -0.48 | -0.67 | -0.92 | -1.16 |
| Unsubsidized Student Loans: Graduate | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net Annual Loan Volume (Millions of dollars) | 29,449 | 30,527 | 31,787 | 33,192 | 34,673 | 35,903 | 37,383 | 38,943 | 40,587 | 42,322 | 44,152 |
| Net Number of Loans (Thousands) | 1,904 | 1,952 | 2,011 | 2,077 | 2,146 | 2,198 | 2,263 | 2,332 | 2,404 | 2,480 | 2,559 |
| Average Loan Amount (Dollars) | 15,467 | 15,637 | 15,809 | 15,983 | 16,158 | 16,336 | 16,516 | 16,698 | 16,881 | 17,067 | 17,255 |
| Subsidy Rate (Percent) ^{b, c, d} | -7.28 | -5.60 | -4.53 | -2.00 | -1.78 | -1.61 | -2.30 | -2.45 | -2.31 | -2.64 | -3.09 |
| GradPLUS Student Loans | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net Annual Loan Volume (Millions of dollars) | 11,457 | 12,111 | 12,907 | 13,783 | 14,582 | 15,265 | 16,037 | 16,798 | 17,528 | 18,244 | 18,937 |
| Net Number of Loans (Thousands) | 606 | 626 | 651 | 678 | 700 | 715 | 733 | 749 | 763 | 774 | 784 |
| Average Loan Amount (Dollars) | 18,901 | 19,336 | 19,819 | 20,315 | 20,823 | 21,343 | 21,877 | 22,424 | 22,985 | 23,559 | 24,148 |
| Subsidy Rate (Percent) ^{b, c, d} | -10.54 | -7.65 | -3.15 | -1.53 | -0.01 | 1.12 | -1.03 | -0.64 | -0.91 | -1.76 | -2.29 |
| Parent Loans | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Net Annual Loan Volume (Millions of dollars) | 13,388 | 13,727 | 14,121 | 14,543 | 14,996 | 15,391 | 15,796 | 16,212 | 16,639 | 17,078 | 17,528 |
| Net Number of Loans (Thousands) | 969 | 979 | 992 | 1,007 | 1,023 | 1,034 | 1,046 | 1,057 | 1,069 | 1,081 | 1,093 |
| Average Loan Amount (Dollars) | 13,816 | 14,023 | 14,233 | 14,447 | 14,663 | 14,883 | 15,107 | 15,333 | 15,563 | 15,797 | 16,034 |
| Subsidy Rate (Percent) ^{b, c, d} | -31.17 | -30.47 | -29.86 | -29.38 | -29.16 | -29.17 | -29.16 | -29.12 | -29.08 | -29.06 | -29.09 |

a. Totals exclude consolidation loans stemming from loans issued before 2019.

b. The subsidy rate is the net present value of the future federal cash flows divided by the loan dollars disbursed to borrowers each year. For example, the 2020 federal cost associated with the \$101,745 million in new loan volume would be -\$4,202 million or -4.13 percent of the new loan volume [\$101,745 * -0413 = -\$4,202]. In other words, the federal government will save, on average, about 4 cents for each new dollar lent in 2020.

c. Subsidy rates do not include federal administrative costs associated with disbursing and servicing loans. Those administrative costs are included in the budget on a cash basis (see Table 3).

d. Subsidy rates were calculated using CBO's January 2019 interest rate forecast.

Table 3. Student Aid Administration—CBO's May 2019 Baseline

| 322 | 2019-2029 |
|--|--|
| 222 | |
| 200 | |
| 200 | |
| | 4,152 |
| 325 | 4,178 |
| 24 | 800 |
| 24 | 800 |
| 0 | 0 |
| <u>0</u> | <u>13</u> |
| 346 | 4,952 |
| 349 | 4,991 |
| | |
| 1,447 | 12,741 |
| 1,423 | 12,548 |
| 1,447 | 12,741 |
| <u>1,423</u> | <u>12,548</u> |
| 1,793 | 17,693 |
| 346 349 1,447 1,423 1,447 1,423 | 17,539 |
| | |
| 2,111 | 20,778 |
| 2,081 | 20,492 |
| | |
| 3 904 | 38,472 |
| 3,853 | 38,030 |
| | 24 0 0 346 349 1,447 1,423 1,423 1,772 2,111 2,081 |

a. In the budget, funds for default prevention are included in the Student Loan Reserve Fund Account and funds for administering pre-1992 loans are included in the Liquidating Account. Both are included in this table's total for administration.

b. Some of the funds for discretionary administrative costs are used for other student aid programs, such as the Pell grant program.

Table 4. Projection of Borrower Interest Rates—CBO's May 2019 Baseline

| | | | | | | | | | | | | May 2, 2019 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| | Actual | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Award Year | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 | 2029-30 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans to Undergraduate Stud | lents | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10-year Treasury + 2.05% Capped 8.25% | 5.05% | 5.42% | 5.68% | 5.76% | 5.79% | 5.80% | 5.78% | 5.76% | 5.77% | 5.78% | 5.79% | 5.80% |
| Unsubsidized Loans to Graduate Students | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10-year Treasury + 3.60% Capped 9.50% | 6.60% | 6.97% | 7.23% | 7.31% | 7.34% | 7.35% | 7.33% | 7.31% | 7.32% | 7.33% | 7.34% | 7.35% |
| PLUS Loans to Graduate Students and Parents | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10-year Treasury + 4.60% Capped 10.50% | 7.60% | 7.97% | 8.23% | 8.31% | 8.34% | 8.35% | 8.33% | 8.31% | 8.32% | 8.33% | 8.34% | 8.35% |

Borrower interest rates are fixed for the life of the loan. The borrower interest rate is adjusted based on the last auction in May for 10-year Treasury notes. That rate is in effect for all newly issued loans from July 1 through the following June 30.

The borrower interest rates used for estimating the cost of the student loan program are different from the rates shown above. The rates used for cost estimating are projected using a Monte Carlo method to capture the effect of a cap on interest rates under current law.

Table 5.
Student Loan Program Budget Account Totals, Fair Value Estimating Procedures—CBO's May 2019 Baseline

| Millions of Dollars, by Fiscal Year | | | | | | | | | | | | | May 2, 2019 |
|---|-------------------------|--------|---------|--------------|------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|
| | | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2019-2029 |
| | | | Di | rect Student | Loans | | | | | | | | |
| Program Costs | Budget Authority | 22,093 | 20,572 | 22,310 | 24,233 | 25,403 | 26,448 | 26,644 | 27,407 | 28,321 | 28,922 | 29,708 | 282,061 |
| · · | Outlays | 18,808 | 17,537 | 19,050 | 20,703 | 21,965 | 22,926 | 23,356 | 23,850 | 24,612 | 25,238 | 25,872 | 243,917 |
| Credit Reestimates and Modifications ^a | Budget Authority | 26,661 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26,661 |
| | Outlays | 26,661 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26,661 |
| Subtotal, Direct Loans | Budget Authority | 48,754 | 20,572 | 22,310 | 24,233 | 25,403 | 26,448 | 26,644 | 27,407 | 28,321 | 28,922 | 29,708 | 308,722 |
| | Outlays | 45,469 | 17,537 | 19,050 | 20,703 | 21,965 | 22,926 | 23,356 | 23,850 | 24,612 | 25,238 | 25,872 | 270,578 |
| | | | Guara | anteed Stude | ent Loans | | | | | | | | |
| Program Costs | Budget Authority | -355 | -388 | -288 | -251 | -203 | -163 | -132 | -108 | -90 | -73 | -56 | -2,107 |
| | Outlays | -477 | -484 | -364 | -311 | -251 | -203 | -162 | -129 | -105 | -83 | -62 | -2,631 |
| Credit Reestimates and Modifications ^a | Budget Authority | 1,562 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,562 |
| | Outlays | 1,562 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,562 |
| Subtotal, Guaranteed Loans | Budget Authority | 1,207 | -388 | -288 | -251 | -203 | -163 | -132 | -108 | -90 | -73 | -56 | -545 |
| | Outlays | 1,085 | -484 | -364 | -311 | -251 | -203 | -162 | -129 | -105 | -83 | -62 | -1,069 |
| | | | Stude | ent Aid Admi | nistration | | | | | | | | |
| Student Aid Administration | Budget Authority | 2,992 | 3,074 | 3,161 | 3,250 | 3,342 | 3,435 | 3,521 | 3,596 | 3,671 | 3,750 | 3,880 | 37,672 |
| | Outlays | 2,922 | 3,040 | 3,125 | 3,212 | 3,303 | 3,396 | 3,483 | 3,560 | 3,635 | 3,713 | 3,829 | 37,217 |
| | | | Total S | pending, Stu | dent Loans | | | | | | | | |
| Total Student Loans | Budget Authority | 52,953 | 23,259 | 25,183 | 27,233 | 28,541 | 29,720 | 30,033 | 30,895 | 31,902 | 32,599 | 33,532 | 345,850 |
| | Outlays | 49,477 | 20,093 | 21,810 | 23,604 | 25,017 | 26,120 | 26,677 | 27,281 | 28,142 | 28,867 | 29,639 | 306,726 |

a. Costs for credit reestimates and modifications are changes to the estimated costs of outstanding loans originated in years before 2019. Those totals are based on the amounts that the Office of Management and Budget expects to record in fiscal year 2019.

Table 6. Federal Subsidy Rates, Fair Value Estimating Procedures—CBO's May 2019 Baseline

| Percent | | | | | | | | | | M | May 2, 2019 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 |
| All Loans | 16.92 | 17.82 | 18.57 | 19.41 | 19.57 | 19.67 | 19.10 | 18.94 | 18.87 | 18.56 | 18.36 |
| Subsidized Loans | 30.29 | 31.03 | 31.30 | 31.47 | 31.40 | 31.21 | 30.98 | 30.58 | 30.27 | 30.05 | 29.86 |
| Unsubsidized Loans: Undergraduate | 22.25 | 22.66 | 22.73 | 22.80 | 22.86 | 22.71 | 22.31 | 22.06 | 21.77 | 21.53 | 21.37 |
| Unsubsidized Loans: Graduate | 16.09 | 17.24 | 17.94 | 19.89 | 19.87 | 19.98 | 19.28 | 19.07 | 19.24 | 18.82 | 18.42 |
| GradPLUS Loans for Students | 14.61 | 16.58 | 19.93 | 21.08 | 22.13 | 22.93 | 21.07 | 21.17 | 20.92 | 20.11 | 19.89 |
| Parent Loans | -9.67 | -9.21 | -8.72 | -8.36 | -8.22 | -8.24 | -8.24 | -8.21 | -8.17 | -8.16 | -8.19 |

The subsidy rate is the net present value of the future federal cash flows divided by the loan dollars disbursed to borrowers each year. For example, the 2020 federal cost associated with the \$101,745 million in new loan volume would be \$18,131 million or 17.82 percent of the new loan volume [\$101,745 * .1782 = \$18,131]. In other words, the federal government will spend, on average, about 18 cents for each new dollar lent in 2020.

Subsidy rates do not include federal administrative costs associated with disbursing and servicing loans. Those administrative costs are included in the budget on a cash basis (see Table 5).