

Proposal to Enhance NASSGAP's Washington, D.C. Presence
Contract with Consultant, Bart Astor

Overview

The intensity and complexity of federal student aid programs is growing to the point where, to remain effective advocates for programs which affect the states and their student aid program recipients, NASSGAP needs to augment the on-going efforts of its Executive Committee, Federal Relations Committee, and its membership.

This is particularly true in 2005 with (1) the start of a new Congress with new committee chairs; (2) the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act; and (3) the annual federal budget process within budget deficit constraints.

To meet these needs, NASSGAP seeks to retain the services of Washington, D.C. area based consultant, Bart Astor, to represent NASSGAP in key venues and through agreed-upon activities to achieve NASSGAP objectives.

Consultant Activities

The NASSGAP consultant will assist the association through the following types of activities:

- 1) Attend regular education association and U.S. Department of Education (ED) meetings in Washington, D.C. where student aid policy and funding are discussed (e.g., the weekly/biweekly ACE One DuPont Circle meetings), to represent NASSGAP, advocate NASSGAP's positions and build coalitions of support. Meet with or arrange for NASSGAP officers to meet with key association and/or Hill staff to forge strong relationships for the Association;
- 2) Attend key Congressional hearings dealing with NASSGAP's priority student aid issues;
- 3) Analyze federal legislative and regulatory proposals, bills and final text, highlighting areas affecting NASSGAP members and their students, and suggesting advocacy strategies;
- 4) Coordinate NASSGAP input on student aid issues from the Executive Committee, Federal Relations Committee and members, by collecting and synthesizing the input into suggested NASSGAP positions, as approved by the NASSGAP President and Federal Relations Chair.
- 5) Provide to the NASSGAP President and Federal Relations Chair bi-weekly reports on federal activities pertinent to NASSGAP including any activities conducted by the consultant during the prior two weeks and including a plan for consultant activities for the subsequent two-week period.
- 6) Draft letters for signature by the NASSGAP President, developed in conjunction with the Federal Relations Committee chair and reviewed by the Executive Committee, and approved by the President.
- 7) Draft Reauthorization, budget, and/or regulations position papers for review and approval by the NASSGAP Federal Relations Committee and the Executive Committee.

- 8) Other activities as directed by the NASSGAP President and the Federal Relations Committee Chair.

Duration of Services and Budget

It is proposed that NASSGAP contract with the consultant recommended by the Federal Relations Committee Chair for a one-year period beginning immediately upon approval of the NASSGAP Executive Committee with an initial budget allocation of \$20,000. NASSGAP will pay the consultant \$85 per hour for approved services billed, plus reasonable expenses, with the provision that the consultant's services be pre-approved on a bi-weekly basis by the NASSGAP President and Federal Relations Committee chair. The initial budget allocation can be increased with the approval of the NASSGAP Executive Committee. Consultant will bill NASSGAP monthly and payment will be made within 30 days.

This agreement does not guarantee or imply that NASSGAP will employ the contractor's consulting services for a minimum number of hours per week nor for a minimum number of hours for the year. NASSGAP expects the consultant to optimize the NASSGAP Consultant costs, however possible, so that NASSGAP's highest priorities can be achieved through the contract year within the initial budget allocation. NASSGAP fully intends to supplement and support the Consultant Activities through information and advocacy efforts by its members, and intends for the Consultant to augment, not replace, those member efforts.

As part of the bi-weekly reports and discussions among the Consultant, NASSGAP President and Federal Relations Chair, budget allocation use for the prior two weeks will be reported by the Consultant, and budget allocation planned use for the next two weeks will be proposed by the Consultant to be approved by the NASSGAP President and Federal Relations Committee Chair. Deviations from that budget allocation use necessitated by new or changing activities in Washington, D.C. will be approved by the Federal Relations Chair, up to a maximum deviation of \$1,360 per week ; deviation amounts above that require approval of the NASSGAP President. Consultant will agree to be available for last-minute meetings or activities, within limits of reasonability.

The Consultant will notify NASSGAP of any other student aid related work she/he undertakes to ensure no conflict of interest exists. Consultant will also agree to sign a non-disclosure agreement specifying that he will not discuss any internal NASSGAP information without permission from the Federal Relations Chair and/or President.

Either party can terminate this agreement with two weeks notice.

Bart Astor, Consultant Date

NASSGAP President Date