

Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students Fund Reporting

On March 27, 2020, the President of the United States signed the CARES Act (H.R. 748), which provides emergency relief funds to organizations and individuals affected by the coronavirus pandemic. On December 27, 2020, the President of the United States signed the CRRSA Act, which provides continued emergency relief funds to organization and individual affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), found in Section 18004 of the CARES Act, provides funding to institutions of higher education “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.”

This report provides details on the first and second round of awarding Western Illinois University received under the HEERF, the funds for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Award No. P425E200622.

CERTIFICATION

Western Illinois University signed and returned to the US Department of Education the Certification and Agreement on April 13, 2020. On April 28, 2020 WIU received notification of grant funding from the Department of Education. WIU will use no less than 50% of CARES funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act (HEERF I) to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students. Western Illinois University will receive a total of \$20,854,913 under Section 18004(a)(1) of HEERF I and II. At least \$7,997,094 will be distributed directly to students impacted by campus disruptions due to the Coronavirus.

FUNDS DISTRIBUTED

As of March 31, 2021, WIU has awarded \$3,965,468.00 in Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. As of March 31, 2021, WIU has not awarded any grants under the HEERF II (Supplemental Allocation of CARES or CRRSAA).

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Western Illinois University had an estimated 16,140 students eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. As of 3/31/21, WIU has distributed Emergency Financial Aid Grants to 3,429 students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

METHOD USED TO DETERMINE STUDENTS ELIGIBILITY (FALL 2020)

Emergency aid is given out in the form of a grant and need not be repaid. These emergency funds are administered as one-time awards and are not to be used for a current account balance. The fund can be used to meet a short-term financial need but is not designed to replace or supplement financial aid. Funding is made possible through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund via the CARES Act.

The Office of Financial Aid has identified CARES eligible recipients by term. Students wishing to be considered for emergency funding Fall 2020 not automatically awarded will need to complete a Parent/Student Income Appeal and show a loss of employment/income, reduced hours, or other extenuating circumstance as a result of COVID-19. The amount of the emergency grant

will be determined by the Committee on Professional Judgment not to exceed the 2020-21 maximum Pell Grant. To be eligible* a student must meet the following criteria:

- 1) A US Citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- 2) Be enrolled for the term in which funds are being requested.
- 3) Admitted into a degree program.
- 4) Meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress
(wiu.edu/student_services/financial_aid/appeal/index.php)

Students who completed a parent/student income appeal and meet the criteria above will be awarded a CARES grant not to exceed the 2020-21 PELL Grant. The amount will be determined by the Committee on Professional Judgment (CPJ).

Students will be identified for automatic emergency grants-based completion of the “Spring 2021 Registration” inquiry form. Students who completed the online form were awarded a \$600 CARES grant to assist with the purchase of books and supplies.

INSTRUCTIONS/DIRECTIONS GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Instructions, directions, guidance and the application provided to students regarding the [Emergency Financial Aid Grants](#):

8/12/2020 Website

(http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/financial_aid/special_programs/emergencyAidApplication.php) updated to reflect parameters of Fall 2020 awarding criteria for CARES funds.

6/15/2020 Email to all enrolled students Summer 2020 (2,535): see text under methods to determine student’s eligibility.

[Emergency Aid Application](#)

[WIU Student Emergency Fund Established; Financial Aid Special Circumstances Appeal Available: April 14, 2020](#)

[Purple & Gold Day of Caring Set for April 24](#)

[WIU Student Emergency Fund Established; Financial Aid Special Circumstances Appeal Available: May 1, 2020](#)

Notification to students applying for emergency aid:

Thank you for your application for a Western Illinois University Emergency Grant. These emergency funds are being made available to assist students in the disruption of educational pursuits as the result of COVID-19.

The committee is hard at work evaluating eligibility and availability of funds. Students will receive communication through their University email. We hope to begin making awards within the next 10 days. In the meantime, please stay safe and be well.

1. Emergency aid is given out in the form of a grant and need not be repaid. Applications will be accepted so long as funds are available. These emergency funds are administered as one-time awards and contingent on being enrolled and degree-seeking.
2. If you or your families have experienced a change in income or employment as a result of COVID-19 you may benefit from a [Special Circumstance Appeal](#) through financial aid.
3. If you have a credit balance that is the result of an on-campus housing adjustment you may request those funds be refunded by emailing billings@wiu.edu.
4. If you have not filed your 2020-21 FAFSA we encourage you to do so now to avoid missing out on valuable State funds.
5. To register for the Fall 2020 semester your account balance must be below \$3000. If it is, we encourage you to register and lock in your Fall 2020 schedule.
6. If you are experiencing hardship and need emergency assistance the State of Illinois has provided a guide to economic resources online at coronavirus.illinois.gov.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your application for emergency aid or application for financial aid (FAFSA) please email financial-aid@wiu.edu

Notification to students awarded emergency aid:

You have been awarded an emergency grant. Funding for the emergency grants are provided through the Higher Education Relief Fund authorized by the CARES Act. **Examples of expenses that can be covered include:**

- [Books](#) and other essential academic supplies
- [Technology](#) needs to complete online courses, including laptops, printers and scanners, software, access to Wi-Fi, expansion of data plans, etc.

Grants have been made using a student's 2019-20 and 2020-21 Pell eligibility. ***You have been awarded a {\$600} grant for the {Fall 2020} term.*** If you withdraw from the university or drop all of your hours prior to the 10th day of the semester you may be required to repay these funds. These funds are separate from any Title IV Funds (i.e. Federal Pell Grant, Federal Direct Loans) you may be receiving/expecting as a refund. The earliest Title IV refunds may be issued is Friday, August 21, 2020.

Grants were applied to a student's University account Wednesday, August 12, 2020. Credits were **automatically** refunded Thursday, August 13, 2020 using the direct deposit authorization on file with Billing & Receivables. If you had not authorized direct deposit, a paper check was created Friday, August 14, 2020 and will be mailed to your home address. Please allow 10 business days for delivery.

If you and/or your family have experienced a change in income and/or employment as a result of COVID-19, you may file a Financial Aid [Special Circumstance Appeal](#). If you are experiencing hardship and need emergency assistance, the State of Illinois has provided a guide to economic resources at coronavirus.illinois.gov.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your application for emergency aid, application for financial aid (FAFSA) or special circumstances appeal, email financial-aid@wiu.edu.

Notification to students not eligible for emergency aid:

Western Illinois University has reviewed your request for emergency aid. To be eligible for emergency aid students must be US Citizens or eligible non-citizens. During review of your application we determined you were not eligible for an emergency grant funded through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund.

If you are experiencing hardship and need emergency assistance the State of Illinois has provided a guide to economic resources online at coronavirus.illinois.gov.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your application for emergency aid please email financial-aid@wiu.edu.

Western Illinois University has reviewed your request for emergency aid. To be eligible for emergency aid students must be enrolled for the term in which funds are being requested. During review of your application we determined you were not eligible for an emergency grant funded through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund.

If you are experiencing hardship and need emergency assistance the State of Illinois has provided a guide to economic resources online at coronavirus.illinois.gov.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your application for emergency aid please email financial-aid@wiu.edu.

Western Illinois University has reviewed your request for emergency aid. To be eligible for emergency aid students must be meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP). During review of your application we determined you were not eligible for an emergency grant funded through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund.

If you would like to appeal to regain eligibility for federal aid you may do so by completing the [online appeal form](#).

If you are experiencing hardship and need emergency assistance the State of Illinois has provided a guide to economic resources online at coronavirus.illinois.gov.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your application for emergency aid please email financial-aid@wiu.edu.