

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, second and third 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. On March 20, 2021 WIU received notification of grant funding from the Department of Education for additional allocation under the American Rescue Plan (ARP). WIU will use no less than \$11,273,110 funds received of the ARP to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grant to students. Western Illinois University will receive a total of \$22,183,557 of HEERF III.

FUNDS DISTRIBUTED

As of September 30, 2021, WIU has awarded \$8,010,595.00 in Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act (HEERF I and II). As of September 30, 2021, WIU has not awarded any grants under the HEERF III (American Rescue Plan).

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Western Illinois University had an estimated 6,994 (Spring 2020), 2,549 (Summer 2020), 7,490 (Fall 2020), 6,995 (Spring 2021) and 2,069 (Summer 2021) 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 9/30/21, WIU has distributed Emergency Financial Aid Grants to 2,503 students (Spring 2020), 696 students (Summer 2020), 611 students (Fall 2020), 3,565 students (Spring 2021), and 1,832 (Summer 2021) under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

METHOD USED TO DETERMINE STUDENTS ELIGIBILITY

HEERF Round 1 (CARES)

Covered Expenses

Examples of expenses that can be covered include:

- Tuition, fees, health insurance, study abroad costs and outstanding debt to the university
- Campus housing
- Technology needs to complete online spring courses, including laptops, printers and scanners, software, access to WiFi, expansion of data plans, etc.
- Books and other essential academic supplies
- Basic personal needs such as emergency housing, food, toiletries and transportation
- Emergency medical, dental or mental health expenses not covered by insurance (ie. eyeglasses, medication, emergency/unexpected procedure)
- Childcare needs
- Costs to travel home unexpectedly, travel to and from work or for educational purposes
- Travel related to the death or emergency of an immediate family member
- Safety-related needs, including the needs of victims of domestic violence
- Replacement of belongings lost in a fire or natural disaster
- Basic utilities

Types of expenses generally not covered include:

- Health insurance costs
- Non-emergency medical-related expenses
- Non-essential costs, such as those for entertainment, recreation and non-emergency travel
- Non-essential utilities (cable costs not associated with WiFi)
- Parking tickets and traffic fines
- Technology not related to education (gaming systems)

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.

To be eligible* for emergency aid students must:

- 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)

Spring 2020

Method	Eligibility	Score
Pell Eligible	Receiving Pell Spring 2020	1
Displaced student workers including Ras	RA or displaced student worker as identified by Housing and Student Employment	1
Emergency Aid Application	Submitted by student	1

Enrollment	Full-time: Graduate: 9 or more hours, Undergrads:12 or more hours	1
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Students with a score of >1 will receive:

- Pell increase and/or,
- RA award and/or,
- Amount requested on emergency aid application

Awards not to exceed \$2500 or the combination of the methods above whichever is lesser.

Students with a score equal to 1 will receive no more than the amount requested on an emergency aid application or \$500 whichever is less.

Students with a score of 0 will not receive an emergency grant.

Summer 2020

To assist the most students with limited funding awards for Summer 2020 will be based on enrollment. The maximum award for Summer 2020 will be \$500. Student enrolled in 6 or more hours will receive a \$500 award; students enrolled in less than 6 hours will receive \$250 upon receipt of application. This breakdown will allow us to assist the most students based on limiting funding.

*Students ineligible to apply for emergency aid may be eligible for emergency aid through institutional funding via the Western Illinois University Foundation. Students can apply for alternative emergency aid through the Scholarship Office by email at SC-Office@wiu.edu.

Fall 2020

Students will be identified for emergency grants based on two factors: Pell eligibility and receipt of book award(s) during the 2019-20 AY.

- Returning students: Students who were awarded a Freshmen Book Award (807.04) will receive a CARES grant in the amount of \$600 Fall 2020.
- New transfer students: Using the criteria of the Leatherneck Book Award (Pell eligibility) new transfer students will receive a CARES grant in the amount of \$600 Fall 2020.
- Remaining funds will be awarded based on receipt of a Parent/Student income appeal. The amount will be determined by the Committee on Professional Judgment (CPJ) for no more than the maximum 20-21 PELL Grant.

Process for awarding:

All of these funds will be awarded as grants (800.10) using CARES Act funding and passed through B/R as credits. Regardless of prior balance funds can be requested as a refund or left on the account to be applied to current charges.

HEERF Round 2 (CRRSA)

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.”

Spring 2021

Pell eligible students will be automatically awarded an emergency grant upon completion of the [Emergency Aid Credit Authorization Form](#). If you are a Pell eligible student (Expected Family Contribution (EFC) 0-5711) and did not receive your emergency aid please contact financial aid for next steps and/or complete the [Emergency Aid Credit Authorization Form](#).

After prioritization is given to Pell eligible students the [Application for Emergency Aid](#) will open to allow all eligible students to request emergency aid. In an effort to serve as many students as possible with limited resources the maximum emergency grant a student can receive Spring 2021 term is \$1000. Additional rounds of funding may be available in subsequent terms (i.e. Summer 2021, Fall 2021, etc.).

ROUND #1

Students whose validated EFC is 0-5711 (RS=A) will be eligible to receive a CARES grant of up to \$1000 (EFC 0 - 5711) upon completion of the Emergency Credit Authorization Form.

ROUND #2

Emergency aid application. Students may request emergency aid up to \$1000. Students who received an automatic award would not be eligible for additional funds Spring 2021.

Summer 2021

To assist the most students with limited funding awards for Summer 2021 will be based on enrollment. All eligible* students enrolled Summer 2021 will receive an emergency grant based on availability of funds divided by total number of eligible students. This breakdown will allow us to assist the most students based on limiting funding in a fair/equitable manner.

Process for awarding:

All of these funds will be awarded as grants (800.11) using CARES Act funding and passed through B/R as credits. Regardless of prior balance funds can be requested as a refund or left on the account to be applied to current charges.

HEERF Round 3 (ARP)

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III) is authorized by the American Rescue Plan (ARP), Public Law 117-2, signed into law on March 11, 2021, providing \$39.6 billion in support to institutions of higher education to serve students and ensure learning continues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fall 2021

Western will automatically award block grants to all eligible students. To be eligible students must meet the following conditions:

1. Be actively enrolled in the term in which aid is awarded.
2. Seeking a degree with Western Illinois University (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate, Post-baccalaureate certificate).
3. Meeting or have successfully appealed Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Students need to complete a credit authorization via [STARS](#) acknowledging how funds will be disbursed. Agreeing to the authorization allows the institution to retain the funds for direct costs (i.e. tuition, fees, housing/dining, etc.). A student who disagrees with the authorization is requesting the funds be refunded regardless of balance due.

Funds will be awarded/disbursed after the 8th week of the semester. No application is required

Spring 2022

TBD

INSTRUCTIONS/DIRECTIONS GIVEN TO STUDENTS

Eligibility and availability of funds for emergency aid is available for viewing at http://www.wiu.edu/student_services/financial_aid/special_programs/emergencyAidApplication.php. Students are directed to the website as well as communicated via email upon awarding of emergency aid.

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.

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. Credits were **automatically** refunded 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.