

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Reporting - Cares Act Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students (CARES) – Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) – American Rescue Plan (ARP)

1. Western Kentucky University signed the ‘Recipient’s Funding Certification and Agreement’ for the Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act on April 14th, 2020, and it was subsequently submitted on April 15th, 2020.
2. Funding to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students, representing 50% of Western Kentucky University’s total allotment under each Act of legislation was made available for distribution in the amount of \$27,524,794:
 - \$5,318,247 under Section 18004 (a)(1) of the CARES Act
 - \$5,318,247 under Section 18004 (a)(1) of the CRRSAA
 - \$16,888,300 under Section 18004 (a)(1) of the ARP
3. Total grants disbursed to students as of March 31, 2022 is \$23,255,886:
 - \$5,318,247 HEERF I (CARES)
 - \$5,318,247 HEERF II (CRRSAA)
 - \$12,619,392 HEERF III (ARP)
4. It is estimated that over 15,000 WKU students are potentially eligible for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under CARES, CRRSAA, and ARP programs.
5. 20,420 students have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of March 31, 2022.
6. Awarding Philosophy and Procedures:

HEERF I

- A student specific survey has been made available via email and distributed to all students meeting requirements for eligibility. Students were asked: “Have you incurred expenses related to, and as a result of, the disruption of WKU campus operations due to coronavirus?” Radio button options for “YES” and “NO” were offered. If the student selected “NO” they are thanked for their response and automatically documented that the student was not affected. They were subsequently sent an email explaining that they would not receive CARES funding as they had indicated that they had not incurred qualifying expenses.
- If the student selected “YES” they received the following direction: “Because you just indicated you have incurred expenses related to the disruption of WKU campus operations due to coronavirus, please select only those options below that represent the area of expense you experienced. You may make multiple selections if they apply to your situation.” They were then asked to select from the following:
 - Food
 - Housing
 - Course Materials (Select if you made purchases required for coursework in response to WKU’s shift to online instruction as a result of the coronavirus outbreak)

- Technology (Select if you made purchases or acquired services needed in response to WKU's shift to online instruction as a result of the coronavirus outbreak)
 - Health Care (Select if you had expenses not covered by your healthcare plan)
 - Child Care". Each option in the list will include a radio button for selection, and when complete the student will select "Submit Form".
- The student's responses are being used to generate an automatic award not to exceed full-time Pell Grant award amounts per the guidance released by the Secretary of Education and based upon the student's selection of which areas of expense they experienced. This takes into account each student's specific socioeconomic circumstances and prevents bias or discrimination in the awarding process. The following awarding philosophy is being utilized:
 - Food – \$475 (approximately 1 month proration from Spring 2020 COA Estimated Budget)
 - Housing – \$600 (approximately 1 month proration from Spring 2020 COA Estimated Budget)
 - Course Materials - \$125
 - Technology - \$200 for internet, etc
 - Health Care - \$250 for uncovered expenses in student healthcare plan (option listed to contact Student Financial Assistance for consideration if documentable expenses related to COVID19 exceeded \$250 for review on case by case basis with documentation required for further disbursement)
 - Child-Care Expenses - \$500
- Awards are being made through the student billing account, and disbursed automatically via Bank Mobile to the refund preference selected by the student. These funds are bypassing any remaining financial obligations to WKU and going directly to the student. Awards are being processed and kept separately from other account activity via specific detail codes in place for the sole purpose of awarding and tracking CARES funding. Students who requested consideration for Professional Judgement (PJ) reevaluation were awarded a base amount.

HEERF II

- Receipt of these funds does not require an application nor request. Student eligibility is determined based upon enrollment across both undergraduate and graduate levels. Priority is given to students with FAFSA's on file and who were Pell eligible as these were considered to exhibit the most need across the student body, and they received \$568 each, all other students enrolled at the time of disbursement received \$315 each.
- Awards are being made through the student billing account, and disbursed automatically via Bank Mobile to the refund preference selected by the student. These funds are bypassing any remaining financial obligations to WKU and going directly to the student, unless the student otherwise requested the funds to be applied to their bill. Awards are being processed and kept separately from other account activity via specific detail codes in place for the sole purpose of awarding and tracking CARES funding.

HEERF III

- Receipt of these funds disbursed during Fall 2021 does not require an application nor request. Student eligibility is determined based upon enrollment across both undergraduate and graduate levels. Priority is given to students with FAFSA's on file and who were Pell eligible as these were considered to exhibit the most need across the student body.
- Students with remaining billing obligations for Fall 2021 will be considered to exhibit high financial need, surveyed, and required to respond if they wish for payment of HEERF III ARP funds be applied to their billing account in the form of a tuition grant. Otherwise the funds will be paid directly to the student (as is required). Fall disbursements of \$1,374 (cost of one 3 hour course) will be made to each student in this high need population.

- Students enrolled half-time or greater after Fall Census will receive an additional disbursement of \$481 if not Pell eligible, and \$962 if Pell eligible (prorated minimal meal/housing expense - 1 month) in the form of an emergency expense grant. These students were surveyed, and required to respond if they wish for payment of HEERF III ARP funds be applied to their billing account just as with the tuition grant disbursements. Otherwise the funds were paid directly to the student (as is required).

7. Eligible students were sent the following communication with a survey link attached:

Dear Student,

The federal government is making funding available to universities through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Current students who are eligible for federal financial aid programs, were not already studying solely online or through distance education, and have qualified expenses as a result of the disruption of campus operations due to the pandemic are to be considered for CARES Act funds. Expenses that are eligible for consideration include food, housing, course materials, technology requirements, child care, or medical expenses related to COVID19.

Please take a moment to complete the attached survey to help WKU determine if you qualify for CARES Act funding. Your survey is student specific, and your responses will be saved. Please allow 7-10 business days for review. Once your response is reviewed, you will receive a follow-up email explaining your eligibility for funding.

Regards,

Department of Student Financial Assistance