

# Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Reporting - Cares Act Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students

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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 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and it was subsequently submitted on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
2. Funding was received in the amount of \$5,318,247 under Section 18004 (a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students. This amount represents 50% of Western Kentucky University's total allotment under the legislation.
3. Total disbursed to students as of December 21st, 2020 is \$5,223,575.
4. It is estimated that over 9,200 students are potentially eligible for CARES Act funds and eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in the Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
5. 4,119 students have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of December 21st, 2020.
6. Awarding Philosophy and Procedures:

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.**

**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**

**Student Financial Assistance**

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