

# **Western Nebraska Community College's Report on funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students (*updated April 6, 2021*)**

## **Final Report**

Western Nebraska Community College is required to provide regular reports to the U.S. Department of Education on the use of allocated funds authorized by the CARES Act and distributed from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). Funds received by Western Nebraska Community College under the CARES Act were authorized by Congress and signed into law by the President on March 27, 2020. The information noted below is intended to not only meet the reporting requirements of the CARES Act but also provide information to the college community regarding WNCC's use of the student grant portion of the HEERF.

Section 18004(e) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("CARES Act" or the "Act"), Pub. L. No. 116-136, 134 Stat. 281 (March 27, 2020), directs institutions receiving funds under Section 18004 of the Act to submit (in a time and manner required by the Secretary) a report to the Secretary describing the use of funds distributed from the HEERF. Section 18004(c) of the CARES Act requires institutions to use no less than 50 percent of the funds received from Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (including eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare). On April 9, 2020, the Department of Education published documents related to the Emergency Financial Aid Grants, including a [letter](#) from Secretary Betsy DeVos, a form [Certification and Agreement](#) for signing and returning by institutions to access the funds, and a list of [institutional allocations under 18004\(a\)\(1\)](#).

The Certification and Agreement directs each institution applying for HEERF funds to comply with Section 18004(e) of the CARES Act and submit an initial report (the "30-day Fund Report") to the Secretary thirty (30) days from the date of the institution's

Certification and Agreement to the Department of Education. Each HEERF participating institution must post the information listed below on the institution's primary website, as an initial report under Section 18004(e) of the CARES Act. This report is associated with approved information collection under OMB control number 1801-0005.

The following information must appear in a format and location that is easily accessible to the public. This information must also be updated no later than 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter (September 30, December 31, March 31, June 30) thereafter, unless the Secretary specifies an alternative method of reporting:

1. *An acknowledgement that the institution signed and returned to the Department the Certification and Agreement and the assurance that the institution has used, or intends to use, no less than 50 percent of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.*
  - Western Nebraska Community College signed the U.S. Department of Education Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act on April 20, 2020. The certification and agreement document was submitted April 29, 2020. The U.S. Department of Education provided WNCC with an electronically signed Grant Award Notification (GAN) on May 5, 2020.
2. *The total amount of funds that the institution will receive or has received from the Department pursuant to the institution's Certification and Agreement [for] Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.*
  - Western Nebraska Community College received \$402,849 for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.
3. *The total amount of Emergency Financial Aid Grants distributed to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of the date of submission (i.e., as of the initial report and every calendar quarter thereafter).*
  - \$402,849 was distributed to WNCC students as of March 26, 2021.
4. *The estimated total number of students at the institution 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 (and considered eligible per subsequent guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education).*
  - There were 606 Title IV Eligible WNCC students as of April 1, 2021.
5. *The total number of students who have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.*

- 569 Title IV eligible students were disbursed Emergency Financial Aid Grants as of March 26, 2021.
6. *The method(s) used by the institution to determine which students receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants and how much they would receive under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.*
- Western Nebraska Community College identified all students enrolled for Spring 2020 who had a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on file with the college and who met all eligibility requirements for Title IV Financial Aid under Section 484 of the Higher Education Act. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness validated enrollment statuses and the Financial Aid Office confirmed federal aid eligibility prior to disbursement of emergency funds as outlined in the CARES Act and additional guidance from the Department of Education. Students enrolled exclusively online prior to March 13, 2020, were not eligible to receive the Emergency Financial Aid Grant.
  - Students who were Pell grant eligible and enrolled full-time received \$800. Award amounts were then prorated based on enrollment level with no student receiving less than \$250. The Financial Aid Office obtained the eligible students' corresponding Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) created by the FAFSA. The data was stratified by EFC and by enrollment level. The chart below shows the EFC and enrollment strata summary, the CARES grant award amount for each strata to cover expenses for food, housing, course materials, technology, health care and childcare associated with the disruption of on-campus operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Overview of the distribution of CARES HEERF student grants as of March 26, 2021:**

EFC/Enrollment	*Eligible Students	CARES Amount	*Total CARES Grant	*% of Total Disbursed
0-5576 EFC/12+ credits		\$800		
0-5576 EFC/9-11 credits		\$600		
0-5576 EFC/6-8 credits		\$400		
0-5576 EFC/<6 credits		\$250		
5577-15000 EFC/12+ credits		\$700		
5577-15000 EFC/9-11 credits		\$525		
5577-15000 EFC/6-8 credits		\$350		
5577-15000 EFC/<6 credits		\$250		
15000+ EFC/12+ credits		\$500		
15000+ EFC/9-11 credits		\$375		
15000+ EFC/6-8 credits		\$250		
15000+ EFC/<6 credits		\$250		

<b>Totals</b>	<b>569</b>		<b>\$402,849</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
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\*Detail for each cohort not provided per Federal Student Aid Electronic Announcement dated May 6, 2020, Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Reporting-Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students, which advises against reporting about groups of 10 or fewer students.

- Block grants were paid to WNCC students in August 2020 who had a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on file with the college and who met all eligibility requirements for Title IV Financial Aid under Section 484 of the Higher Education Act and experienced disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.
  - Twenty-six students, who lived in on-campus housing during the Spring 2020 semester when campus closed due to coronavirus and incurred transportation costs to retrieve their belongings, were paid grants ranging from \$225 to \$750 for total grants paid of \$12,725.
  - Fifteen Aviation Maintenance students, who were unable to complete required lab coursework during the normal Spring 2020 timeframe due to coronavirus, were paid for housing costs ranging from \$525 to \$1,425 for total grants paid of \$13,275.
  - Nineteen Powerline Construction & Maintenance Technology students who experienced course disruption during the Summer 2020 term due to coronavirus were paid according to EFC and enrollment levels per the above matrix for total grants paid of \$12,425.
  - Two students unable to secure 2020-2021 on-campus housing due to coronavirus limitations received grants totaling \$2,400.
- The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) signed into law December 27, 2020, allows that the additional flexibilities in awarding emergency student grants contained in CRRSAA be extended to unused CARES Act funds not spent prior to December 27, 2020. Unlike the CARES Act, CRRSAA does not require allowable costs be related to a disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus; exclusively online students are eligible for student emergency funds; and the strict rules requiring students meet all eligibility requirements for Title IV Financial Aid under Section 484 of the Higher Education Act do not apply. CRRSAA still prohibits fund distribution to DACA, undocumented, and international students. Western Nebraska Community College chose to utilize the additional flexibilities allowed by CRRSAA for awarding \$29,324 of unspent CARES Act funds. Forty-four students enrolled in the Spring 2021 term who had previously applied for CARES Act funds but were denied for not meeting CARES Act eligibility but who are eligible under CRRSAA were awarded a total of \$29,324 based on the matrix above

utilizing 2020-2021 Expected Family Contribution and Spring 2021 enrollment level.

7. *Any instructions, directions, or guidance provided by the institution to students concerning the Emergency Financial Aid Grants.*

- [Communications to students](#) who received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant
- [Public notice](#) posted to website and to social media
- [CARES Act/COVID 19 Financial Aid Information](#)
- Email communication to Title IV eligible students regarding CARES Act emergency grant application