

Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds FAQ's

1. *What is the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)?*

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("Cares Act") was signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020. The Act provides funds to colleges to give to eligible students to assist with costs related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

2. *Who is eligible to receive these funds?*

Students with active enrollment in a Title IV eligible program between March 1-31, 2020, who filed a FAFSA no later than March 13, 2020, and who were eligible to receive Title IV funds within the spring semester, excluding incarcerated individuals; cross-enrolled students whose "home institution" is not SOWELA; and students enrolled only in online courses during March 1-31, 2020.

3. *What does it mean to be "eligible to receive Title IV funds?"*

The United States Department of Education's guidelines state that students must meet requirements as outlined in Section 484 of the Higher Education Act. So, to receive these grant funds students must:

- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree or certificate program
- Not be enrolled in elementary or secondary school
- For currently enrolled students, be making satisfactory academic progress
- Not owe an overpayment on Title IV grants or loans
- Not be in default on a Title IV loan
- File "as part of the original financial aid application process" a certification that includes
 - A statement of educational purpose
 - Student's SSN
- Be a U.S. citizen or national, permanent resident, or other eligible noncitizen
- Have not fraudulently obtained Title IV funds if convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to charges

- Not have fraudulently received Title IV loans in excess of annual or aggregate limits
- Have repaid Title IV loan amounts in excess of annual or aggregate limits if obtained inadvertently
- Have Selective Service registration verified
- Have Social Security Number verified
- Not have a federal or state conviction for drug possession or sale while receiving Title IV aid, with certain time limitation

4. *How much will I receive?*

Each eligible student will receive the same amount. We are currently determining what that amount will be.

5. *I know someone that goes to another college who received a different amount. Why is that?*

Every college received a different amount of funds from the United States Department of Education. Because each college had a different amount of money and a different number of eligible students, grant amounts will vary by college.

6. *How will I receive my funds?*

Students will receive their grants through their Bank Mobile account.

7. *When will I receive my funds?*

At this time, we anticipate sending grants out by May 15, 2020.

8. *Do these funds have to be repaid?*

No. These are emergency grant funds and do not have to be repaid.

9. *What am I supposed to use the funds for?*

There are no specific restrictions on how you should use your funds. However, students are encouraged to use the funds to help them to continue attending college. That might mean buying a computer or internet service so you can attend online classes, for example.

10. *I was enrolled in courses that ended before March 1st or after March 31st. Am I eligible?*

No, only students who were enrolled in courses between March 1-31, 2020 are eligible because that is the time period in which campus disruptions occurred.

11. I submitted my FAFSA after March 13th, am I eligible?

No, only students who had demonstrated Title IV eligibility by submitting a FAFSA by the day a national emergency was declared (March 13, 2020) are eligible.

12. Why are students who were enrolled only in online courses excluded?

According to the United States Department of Education, the funds are for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus, and students who were enrolled exclusively online would not have expenses related to the disruption of campus operations.

13. Does the number of hours I was enrolled in during the spring semester affect my eligibility?

No. The number of classes or credit hours a student was enrolled in for the spring semester does not in any way affect whether they are eligible for the funds or not.

14. I have more questions. Who can I contact?

You may contact SOWELA's One Stop Enrollment Center at 337-421-6550 or by emailing onestop@sowela.edu. At this time, we will be unable to tell an individual student that they are eligible however that information should be forthcoming very soon via email. Eligible students will be notified via their student email account.