

## EWC's CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funding (HEERF) for Students Required Reporting

1. Eastern Wyoming College (EWC) acknowledges that the institution signed and returned the Certification and Agreement to the U.S. Department of Education with 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.
2. EWC received \$210,262 from the Department of Education pursuant to the institution's Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students. The overall total allocation for the student and institutional portions of CARES Act funding is \$420,524.
3. EWC distributed \$210,262 of Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act by the date of the previous report, August 20, 2020. Grants were distributed directly to students via paper check. The disbursements of the emergency grants were unencumbered by the institution, i.e. no amounts due to the institution were deducted from the grants.
4. Approximately 352 students at EWC completed a FAFSA and demonstrated eligibility to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and thus are eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. International students and non-degree seeking students were excluded as these students are not eligible for Title IV funding, and therefore not eligible to receive emergency grants. Since there is no practicable way to determine meeting all eligibility standards under Section 484 of the HEA, students who did not complete a FAFSA were also excluded.
5. Two-hundred twenty-four (224) students received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of September 30, 2020, which represents no change from the August 20, 2020 report.
6. EWC first implemented an application process to identify students enrolled for Spring 2020 semester who may have been in need of emergency grants under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. The application was used for students to self-certify that they were impacted by the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 epidemic to help cover unforeseen expenses such as food, housing, technology, health care, child care, and course-related materials. EWC's Financial Aid Office reviewed the student grant applications and awarded funds on a case-by-case basis. Funding per student varied based on the expenses the student indicated he/she had in addition to a tiered structure based on need. The highest funding amounts went to Pell-eligible students, with special consideration of those considered below poverty level as determined from total family income and household size as reported on the FAFSA. Second priority funding was provided to students with an EFC above Pell-eligibility up to 12000. Factors such as enrollment status, housing status, single-

parent status, and other extenuating factors were also considered. EWC established a minimum award level of \$250 and a maximum initial grant amount of \$1,500 per student in an effort to distribute the grant funds as widely as possible to students in need of emergency funds; grants in excess of the maximum required supporting documentation and were allowed only as funds were available. EWC's average grant amount per student as of the August 20, 2020 report was approximately \$939.

In May 2020, EWC determined it needed a second approach to distributing funds based on low application submittal and student reports of not receiving emails about the availability of CARES funds and/or being unaware of other marketing campaigns. Some students were also confused about how to apply or criteria for receiving the award. The Financial Aid Office initiated Phase Two of HEERF fund delivery by re-evaluating all Pell eligible students enrolled Spring 2020 who were impacted by campus closures; a third phase of block grants was completed for other TIV-aid eligible students with an EFC up to 15000 with the remaining funds, saving approximately 10% of the total allocation for additional applications and students with remaining need. The remainder was spent in August for students completing applications and for eligible gunsmithing students who had to return to campus early for an additional two weeks of class to complete their Spring 2020 term.

Grants were awarded to eligible students following the U.S. Department of Education's guidance: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/heerfstudentfaqs.pdf>. Only students who are or could be eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), may receive emergency financial aid grants. The criteria to participate in programs under Section 484 of the HEA include but are not limited to the following: U.S. citizenship or eligible noncitizen; a valid Social Security number; registration with Selective Service (if the student is male); and a high school diploma, GED, or completion of high school in an approved homeschool setting.

7. Information, directions, and guidance provided by EWC to students concerning the Emergency Financial Aid Grants can be found on EWC's Emergency CARES Grant web page which includes the link to the electronic application: <https://ewc.wy.edu/future-students/financial-aid/cares-act-higher-education-emergency-relief-fund/>. A link to this grant page is also listed on our general COVID-19 Information page: <https://ewc.wy.edu/alerts/>

The information provided includes eligibility criteria and guidance that the grants must be used to cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus that have impacted a student's educational experience, and includes a list of allowable expenses.

Students were notified and provided information about the CARES Act Emergency Funds via their student email, notifications via Canvas, PSAs, through advisors, and online. The instructions given to students are online via EWC's main CARES Act Emergency Funding page and the application itself. Pell eligible students who had not applied within two weeks of the application's availability were also called by financial aid staff to inform them of the availability of the funds, eligibility requirements, and the process to apply. Students in Phase Two and Three of fund distribution were sent an explanatory sheet with the check, indicating that acceptance of the funds served as an acknowledgment that the student was

impacted by campus closures due to COVID-19 and as a secondary self-certification of eligibility.

Ineligible students were sent a denial email notification to their student email address following the review of their emergency grant application. Eligible students received the funding typically within a week and a half of application. Funding amounts are available through the students MyEWC account in the MyEWC Services portal via the financial aid self-service function and are included on students' online offer letters.

Please note that EWC student email is the official method of communication for EWC students.

*This information meets the U.S. Department of Education's reporting requirements for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund's (HEERF) Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This information was reported 30 days after receipt of the HEERF funds, was reported after 45 days for two subsequent reports, and will be updated quarterly thereafter, or as required.*

*September 30, 2020*