

Panhandle State CARES Act Emergency Grant Policy



Effective Date: April 23, 2020

Approved by: Provost

Policy Owner: Office of Financial Aid

Last Reviewed: September 27, 2021

Last Revised: November 29, 2021

CARES Phase One Policy

The Office of Financial Aid will administer the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which includes a Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), in accordance with the requirements and guidance set forth by the Department of Education (ED).

The grant is to provide financial aid grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

Eligibility

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.

Section 484 of the HEA states that Title IV eligible 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 (Social Security Number).
 - Be a U.S. citizen or national, permanent resident, or other eligible noncitizen.
 - Have returned fraudulently obtained Title IV funds if convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to charges.
 - Not have fraudulently received Title IV loans more than annual or aggregate limits.
 - Have repaid Title IV loan amounts more than 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, with certain time limitations.

FAFSA Completion

If a student has filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), then the student has demonstrated eligibility to participate in programs under Section 484 the HEA. Students who have not filed a FAFSA but who are eligible to file a FAFSA also may receive emergency financial aid grants. The annual deadline for FAFSA completion is June 30 each year. Example, the 2019-20 FAFSA deadline for completion or submission is June 30, 2020.

FAFSA Verification

The Office of Financial Aid will require completion of all verification requirements prior to processing an application for the Panhandle State CARES Act grant.

Disbursement

Students must complete an application to be considered for the funds. The Office of Financial Aid will consider the application within the Title IV eligibility guidelines set forth in this policy. Disbursement will occur to the student's bursar account. The Office of Bursar will issue refunds by direct deposit or paper check.

CARES Phase Two Policy

As of 3/25/2021

Amended as of 9/27/2021

The Office of Financial Aid will administer the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) as signed into law on December 27, 2020.

The CRRSAA requires that institutions prioritize students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants, in awarding financial aid grants to students.

Eligibility as determined by OPSU:

- Students enrolled in the Fall 2020 and/or Spring 2021 semesters.
- Those enrolled in degree-seeking, non-degree programs, and concurrent enrollment students, as well as exclusively online programs.
- OPSU will prioritize students who demonstrate financial need. Students who have been awarded a Pell Grant will be given priority for additional funds for this award. Pell Grant eligibility is demonstrated through the successful completion of a 2020-2021 Free Application for Federal Student Aid as of March 25, 2021.
- Students must complete an application for the funds via their Aggie Portal for consideration indicating how they want funds to be delivered: via direct refund or applied to their student account. Students cannot change their fund delivery method once selected. After May 20, 2021,

students who have not applied and are deemed eligible to receive the funds by the Office of Financial Aid will receive the funds issued to them via a direct refund.

- Students excluded from this grant are undocumented students and international students within federal guidelines for the grant.
 - Update as of 9/27/2021: Guidance received under the American Rescue Plan indicates any leftover HEERF II funds as of May 14th, 2021, may be awarded to refugees, asylum seekers, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipients, other DREAMers, and similar undocumented students qualify for HEERF student grants.
 - As of 9/27/21, OPSU had remaining \$9074.50 in funding and disbursed these funds to 61 students determined to be eligible.

Award Methodology

Total funds available to students: \$480,750

Total students: 1,532

Total students eligible: 1,469 (excluding international and non-citizen students)

Category One

Non-Pell Eligible Students

Total students: 736

Non-Pell Eligible students will be awarded: \$285.

Category Two

Pell-eligible Student

Total students: 604

Pell-eligible students will be awarded: \$435.

Category Three

Non-degree seeking, concurrent students.

Total students: 129

Award: \$50

Category Four

International, DACA and other students previously deemed ineligible but deemed eligible with the passing of the American Rescue Plan

Total Students: 63

Award per student: \$147

Disbursement

Students must complete an application to be considered for the grant. Students can select how funds will be disbursed via the application. The options are direct issuance to the student or application to the student's bursar account.

American Rescue Plan (HEERF III)

As of 9/27/2021

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 represents the third stream of funding appropriated for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) and Oklahoma Panhandle State University is a recipient of these student grants.

Eligibility

The Department of Education's final ruling regarding the term "student," for purposes of the phrases "grants to students," "emergency financial aid grants to students," and "financial aid grants to students" as used in the HEERF programs is now defined as any individual who is or was enrolled at an eligible institution on or after March 13, 2020. Students with an enrollment record since March 13, 2021 have been deemed eligible.

OPSU is required to prioritize students who demonstrate financial need. Students who have been awarded a Pell Grant will be given priority to additional funds for this award as outlined below.

Award Methodology

The pool of students to be awarded includes students enrolled in Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Summer 2021, and Fall 2021.

Total Funds Allocated:

HEERF III: \$1,427,883

Hispanic Serving Institution Share: \$73,105

Total: \$1,500,988

Total eligible students:

Pell eligible: 1022

Non-Pell Eligible: 1557

Student Awards:

Pell eligible awards: \$700

Non-Pell eligible awards: \$500

Student Receipt of Funds

Financial aid will award students to their financial aid account. The Business Office will issue direct refunds to students. Funds will be issued to students until the funds are exhausted.

Professional Judgment

Under the requirements for HEERF III funds, the Office of Financial Aid will make direct contact with students about the opportunity to be considered to receive a financial aid adjustment due to recent unemployment or change in employment of a family member or independent student, or other circumstances. The Office of Financial Aid will reach out via email directly to students.

