

Introduction

On March 27, 2020, the President of the United States signed the CARES Act (H.R. 748), which provides emergency relief funds to organizations and individuals affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), found in Section 18004 of the CARES Act, provides funding to institutions of higher education “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.” This report provides details on the first award Kutztown University (KU) received under the HEERF, the funds for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.

Acknowledgement of Funding and Certification

KU reviewed, signed, and returned the [U.S. Department of Education’s Certification and Agreement](#) for these funds on April 13, 2020, and we received our grant award notification on April 22, 2020. In keeping with the terms of the certification, KU will 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 directly to students.

Total Award

KU will receive a total of \$7,424,966 under Section 18004(a)(1) of the HEERF, of which at least **\$3,712,483** will be provided directly to students impacted by campus disruptions due to the novel coronavirus.

Funds Distributed to Date

Close of Business	KU awarded	Total Awarded from Inception
5/13/2020	2,846,345.00	
6/23/2020	50,712.00	2,897,057.00
8/4/2020	7,100.00	2,904,157.00
10/7/2020	15,491.00	2,919,648.00
12/15/2020	757,160.04	3,676,808.04
1/8/2021	1,270.00	3,678,078.04
4/1/2021	34,404.96	3,712,483.00

Student Eligibility

Close of Business	# of students who have received an award to date
5/13/2020	5525
8/4/2020	5540
10/7/2020	5543
12/15/2020	6907
1/8/2021	6907
4/1/2021	6897*

The total number of KU students eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and therefore eligible to receive CARES Act emergency financial aid grants is **5,525¹**. Of those students, **5,525** have received an award as of May 12, 2020. *Declined 10 students due to returned uncashed refunds and funds allocated to prior needy student requests.

¹ The number of eligible students excludes those ineligible for Title IV aid (e.g., non-degree seeking students enrolled in dual credit courses, non-U.S. citizens) as well as those enrolled exclusively in online programs prior to March 13, 2020, which the U.S. Department of Education [deemed ineligible](#) to receive CARES Act funds.

Methods Used to Determine Which Students Receive Aid and How Much

KU utilized a two-part approach to assist as many students as possible.

Part one awarded all eligible students automatically without requiring a request.

- 40% of this initial funding award allocated \$295 to each eligible student.
- 30% of this initial funding award allocated an additional \$345 to those eligible students above, who also had an EFC below 16,000.

Part two, the final 30% of the initial funding award, is reserved for student requests that exceed the amounts awarded in part one, or are outside of Spring semester, such as summer and future semesters where the disruption of campus closure has effects. Student requests are made online via a request form to be reviewed by the KU Care Team.

Students are asked to specify an amount needed, provide personal information and to detail the need and cause. In addition, they are asked what other steps they have taken to secure funding. The KU Care Team reviews each application in detail to assess if the need is COVID related, and is an approved expense for CARES Act funding (i.e. food, housing, technology, course materials, health/child care, and other approved costs). If student needs are not CARES Act eligible, other internal funding sources are explored and/or suggested. If additional information is required, the student is contacted to obtain this in order to make a fair determination. Provided that the students were eligible to receive funds and identified legitimate needs, additional CARES grant funding may be awarded.

Instructions or Directions Given to the Students

In accordance with the Secretary of Education's instructions for institutions to issue aid to students as soon as possible under the student aid portion of the CARES Act HEERF, on April 24, 2020, the daily update communication included an explanation of the CARES Act as well as steps to ensure a student refund preference was on file to receive any funds in a quick and safe manner.

On May 4, 2020 a newly created CARES Act webpage was published. On May 5, 2020 a communication in the daily update included this information as well as a link to the CARES Act webpage. On the webpage as well as in the communication a link is provided for students to make additional fund requests to be reviewed by the KU Care Team.

These communications contained the following information:

- General instructions on the purpose and allowable uses of funds,
- Anticipated dates of disbursement,
- Method of disbursement,
- A link to the online request form for additional emergency funds,
- Contact information for questions, and
- Acknowledgement of the federal government as the source of funding.

Copies of the following instructional/informational materials given to the students include the following, which are attached to this report in the order listed:

1. Email announcement: Funds and application soon to be available dated April 24, 2020
2. Email notification: Availability of funds and link to request form dated May 5, 2020
3. Email notification: Disbursement, explanation and link to request form May 8/12, 2020
4. Online Funds Request form
5. KU's CARES Act webpage