



The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund
Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students

Columbia College's 30-Day Reporting for Student Portion of the CARES Act Emergency Relief Fund

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("CARES Act"), March 27, 2020, directs institutions receiving CARES Act funding to submit a report to the Secretary of Education describing the use of funds distributed from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund ("HEERF").

The CARES Act requires institutions to use no less than 50 percent of the HEERF allocation received from the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students. The funds are for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus and including eligible expenses under a student cost of attendance such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare.

On April 9, 2020, the Department 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](#).

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.

The Department of Education will provide instructions for submitting the required information to the Secretary in the near future. In the meantime, each HEERF participating institution must post the information listed below on the institution's primary website. The Department would like to receive the most current information from the date when the institution received its allocation for emergency financial aid grants to students, and the institution should have received its allocation within a few days after submitting the Certification and Agreement. Accordingly, the following information must appear in a format and location that is easily accessible to the public 30 days after the date when the institution received its allocation under and updated every 45 days thereafter:

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.**

Yosemite Community College District signed and submitted the Certification and Agreement on May 6, 2020. A copy of the signed document can be viewed [here](#).

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.**

Columbia College received \$497,288 in emergency grants for students. However, Columbia College graciously added \$2,712 to make our cares funding total \$500,000.



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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 30-day Report and every 45 days thereafter).

Disbursements of CARES funds are every two weeks (opposite of federal Pell disbursements) to eligible students via their Bank Mobile preference. Click [here](#) to see the number of students and the total dollar amount paid each during each disbursement to date.

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.

The Department of Education's April 21, 2020 guidance stated that students must meet Title IV financial aid eligibility requirements in order to receive HEERF emergency grants. The number of Columbia College students identified to receive CARES Act Grants was 872 who were paid Pell funds for the spring 2020 term. Further discussion determined that students who were identified as still being enrolled as of March 4, 2020 would be our first round of students eligible for funding. That reduced our identified student numbers to 645.

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.

Disbursements of CARES funds are every two weeks (opposite of federal Pell disbursements) to eligible students via their Bank Mobile preference. Click [here](#) to see the number of students and the total dollar amount paid each during each disbursement to date.

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.

The Financial Aid Office identified students that we knew were still enrolled in Spring 2020 as of March 4, 2020, meet Title IV regulations under Section 484 of the Higher Education Act (HEA), and are regulated under the CARES funding guidelines. Those items are:

- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree, certificate or other recognized educational credential (including a program of study abroad approved for credit by the eligible institution at which such student is enrolled)--that is, a regular student under 34 CFR 600.2);
- Not be enrolled in elementary or secondary school and have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent;



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- Be maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) if the student is a currently enrolled student;
- Not owe an overpayment (refund) on Title IV grants;
- Not be in default on a Title IV loan;
- File with ED “as part of the original financial aid application process” a certification (Statement of Educational Purpose) that includes:
 - A statement of educational purpose, and
 - The student’s Social Security Number (SSN);
- Be a U.S Citizen or national, a permanent resident, or an eligible noncitizen;
- Have returned any fraudulently obtained Title IV funds, if the student is 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 any Title IV loan overpayment amounts in excess of annual or aggregate limits, if obtained inadvertently;
- Have his Selective Service registration verified (the Title IV aid ineligibility for failure to register is actually in the Selective Service Act §3811(f));
- Have a valid SSN, except for residents of the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau; **and**
- Not have a federal or state conviction for drug possession or sale, with certain time limitations.

Our office identified 645 students who met eligibility and were eligible for the first round of CARES Funding. Funding award amounts were set at \$375 based on a discussion with the CARES Committee and the Vice President of College and Administrative Services.

A second round of funding is on hold until a verdict is rendered in the law suit filed by the California Community Colleges Chancellors Office against the Department of Education (Case 3:20-cv-03215 filed on May 11, 2020) to determine if the rules have changes for eligibility.

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

There have been multiple methods used to notify and inform students about the CARES Act funds.

- All students who were initially deemed eligible were sent emails via their student assigned email account on May 27, 2020 informing them of the Cares Grant Funding availability and how to apply. Additionally, we included links to other resources available to students such as CAL Fresh, local food banks, unemployment, Mother Lode Job Training, Covered California, laptop or hot spot assistance through Columbia College, and Tuolumne County Public Health and Behavioral Health, and ATCCA. A copy of the email is below.



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******19-20 CARES FUNDING APPLICATION NOW AVAILABLE******

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Dear |

Due to COVID-19, the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) has been issued to provide funding for college students who were affected by the disruption in learning. The following expenses can be considered for grant assistance if they were incurred in "direct relation to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus."

Examples of How the CARES Act Federal Emergency Grant Can Be Used

Loss of income and food insecurities (inability to purchase food)	Loss of income and housing insecurities (inability to pay rent/mortgage)	Medical Expenses (COVID-19 related)
New technology for online classes	Purchase of laptop/desktop as a result of classes moving to online/distance	Temporary housing and supplies

If you were affected by the transfer from on-campus to remote learning for your Spring 2020 course(s), submit the **CARES Act Funding Application** as soon as possible as funding is limited. For priority consideration, students should complete and submit the online application by Thursday, June 11, 2020. Applications received after that date may be considered if funds are still available. For more information, visit our webpage: [CARES Act Funding](#)

Document Description	Web Link
19A: CARES Act Funding Application	Electronic Data Submission --Click here and select 2019

CONTACT INFORMATION
STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES OFFICE

TECHNICIANS

Students with last names A-L
Contact: Brooke Nielsen
Phone: (209) 588-5105
Email: nielsenb@yosemite.edu

Students with last names M-Z
Contact: Christa Bartels
Phone: (209) 588-5272
Email: bartelsc@yosemite.edu



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- The Columbia College Financial Aid Office has built a CARES Act website that is easily found on our home page. The website can be found at https://www.gocolumbia.edu/financial_aid/CARES%20Info.php and includes:
 - Information about the Cares Act Funding and Disbursed to Date at Columbia
 - Cares Act Fast Facts that includes links to the Cares Act and the Department of Education FAQ's
 - Cares Act Frequently Asked Questions
 - Financial Aid Staff contact information
- Financial Aid Staff attend all Town Hall Meetings, Student Open forums, and Student Services meetings (all via zoom) to talk about and answer questions that arise about Cares Act funding for students.
- Financial Aid Staff have been reaching out to individual students via phone calls or email who have still not responded to the Cares Act notification.