



# Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II

About the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)

On December 27, 2020, the federal government enacted the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). CRRSAA includes a second Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF II). A portion of HEERF funds must go directly to eligible students in the form of emergency financial aid grants for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On January 17, 2021, Union Institute & University received \$176,581.00 in CRRSAA funding for eligible students. It was determined that there were 159 eligible students. The student eligibility list was expanded by 32 students.

## Federal Eligibility

- Non-degree seeking, non-credit, dual enrollment, and continuing education students eligible per U.S. Department of Education guidance
- Students exclusively enrolled in distance education may receive these funds
- Any leftover HEERF II funds as of May 14th, 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
- U.S. Department of Education removed the requirement that a student must be eligible for Title IV aid to receive financial assistance under the HEERF programs

## University Specifics

The following information is provided by Union Institute & University as required by the Department of Education in order to comply with the reporting requirements under CRRSAA.

### **1. Certification and Agreement**

Union Institute & University signed an agreement to receive CRRSAA funds. The university has distributed the required amount of the funds to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and under section 314(a)(1) of CRRSAA to provide emergency financial aid grants to students.

## **2. Amounts to be Received**

Pursuant to the Certification and Agreement, Union Institute & University received \$476,989 in HEERF Emergency Assistance Grant funds. The university received confirmation of the availability of these funds and has drawn down the available funds for distribution. Of those funds, \$176,581.00 must be distributed to students.

## **3. Amounts Distributed to Date**

As of Monday, March 22, 2021, \$113,304.00 of total funds were distributed directly to students.

## **4. Estimated Number of Eligible Students**

Unlike with CARES, students who are online and are not financial aid-eligible are eligible for emergency funds under CRRSAA. As such, the university determined that eligible students were those who had been enrolled in Spring 2021. CRRSAA requires that, as with CARES, the university “prioritize students with exceptional need.” The university defined “exceptional need” initially as those students who have 0 Earned Family Contribution (EFC). It was determined that 159 students met those conditions for eligibility. Eligibility was expanded to include 32 more students with EFCs above \$0 in ascending order.

## **5. Number of Students who have Received HEERF Emergency Grant Funds**

There were two disbursements:

- 1<sup>st</sup> disbursement - 111 of the 159 eligible students requested and received funds not to exceed \$800. This totaled \$85,334.00.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> disbursement – Of the original 159 eligible students, 111 were eligible to receive up to \$1,200 based upon their original request. This totaled \$27,970.

## **6. Method of Determining Which Students Would Receive HEERF Emergency Grant Funds**

Union Institute & University followed the federal guidelines provided. Financial Aid and Office of Institutional Research have vetted each student to determine who met all criteria. CRRSAA requires that, as with CARES, the university “prioritize students with exceptional need.” The university defined “exceptional need” initially as those students who have \$0 Expected Family Contribution (EFC). When all the \$0 EFC students had either a) received funds, or b) did not apply for or qualify for funds, then students with higher than \$0 EFC in ascending order were selected for eligibility. Students completed applications and checked off options for eligible expenses. In addition, there was an option to check “Other” and add an explanation. A member of the Office of Student Success reviewed the application. If “Other” was selected, the reviewer determined if the explanation was an eligible expense.

## **7. Instructions, Directions and Guidance Regarding HEERF Emergency Grant Funds**

Union Institute & University developed a simple online application process for students to apply for the Emergency Assistance Grant funds. Students were sent an application with an introduction letter. Only eligible students received the e-mail and application. The application was an e-form and went to a central email box for review by the Office of Student Success.

Approved application for requested funds from eligible students are sent to the Business Office for processing each Monday. Students can expect a direct deposit into their bank account the following Friday.

CRRSAA student payments are non-taxable.