

## **Department of Education Higher Education Emergency Relief Funding (HEERF) FAQ Sheet**

The HEERF provides emergency grant funding to students who have had EXPENSES incurred related to the disruption of campus operations (moving to an online only modality) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These emergency grant funds are not federal financial aid, and will be paid directly to the student via check or direct deposit.

### **What are the Grant Eligibility Requirements?**

- Student must be enrolled for Spring 2020
- Student must have 2019-2020 FAFSA on file with the MSU-Northern and have met all eligibility requirements:
  - o Be enrolled in a degree or certificate program
  - o Registered for Selective Service (if male over 18)
  - o No default or overpayment of Federal Aid
  - o Must be making Satisfactory Academic Progress
  - o Have a verified Social Security Number
  - o Be a U.S. Citizen or national, permanent resident, or other eligible noncitizen
  - o Not have a federal or state conviction for drug possession or sale, with certain time limitations
- Student must be in a program of study that is not exclusively offered online
  - Students in an online program that have the option to take courses in person will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis

### **What is the CARES/Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund provided by the federal government?**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law to provide economic relief from COVID-19. One section of the CARES Act established the Higher Education Emergency Relief fund

and sent money to schools to use for emergency financial aid grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the pandemic.

### **When will CARES/Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds be available?**

The MSU-Northern applied for funding from the federal CARES Act and has recently received some of that funding from the U.S. Department of Education. The hope is to rapidly start distributing grants to students based on their specific financial need. We anticipate (but cannot guarantee) the grants will be disbursed by check and mailed to students weekly, beginning the week of May 25. We cannot guarantee disbursement dates; however, will ensure that recipients are notified by UP email once the check has been sent by mail.

### **Who is eligible for the CARES/Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds?**

Students who meet basic eligibility criteria for federal financial aid (more specific criteria listed above). The Office of Financial Aid will use Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data to determine individual student eligibility.

Under U.S. Department of Education rules for the program, these funds can be awarded to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students pursuing degree programs and enrolled at MSU-Northern.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education does not allow these funds to be used for international students, undocumented students, non-matriculated students or students enrolled in distance-only degree programs.

### **How will MSU-Northern prioritize or consider applications?**

The University will prioritize students whose family income is in the low- to low-middle income categories. We want to ensure that funding is not only prioritized to those with great need, but that distribution is in alignment with Northern's mission in serving the poor and vulnerable populations. MSU-Northern hopes to provide economic relief quickly to students who may have had unexpected expenses as a result of the move to online instruction due to COVID-19. We will use the CARES Act emergency aid funds to provide an individualized relief grant to each student.

### **What if I apply and still don't receive CARES Act Grant Funding?**

Under U.S. Department of Education rules for the program, students who are not eligible for federal financial aid programs are not eligible for federal CARES grants. Should we receive an application and it is determined that you do not meet the eligibility criteria, you will not be eligible to receive funding.

### **What emergency relief funds are available for international students?**

Unfortunately, under U.S. Department of Education rules for the program, international students are not eligible for the federal CARES funds.

### **What expenses might be covered?**

- Technology and connectivity needs related to distance learning
- Instructional expenses
- Overdue utility bills reaching a turn-off notice • Sudden loss of Housing/Rent
- Food/Groceries
- Personal Automobile/Travel
- Other emergency or unforeseen expenses

### **What expenses are not covered?**

- The HEERF Grant cannot be used to pay a balance owed to the university
- Lost wages
- Legal Fines/Expenses
- Parking Tickets/Fines
- Costs of entertainment, recreation, or non-emergency travel

### **Will there be CARES funds for 2020-21?**

Right now, we are concentrating on spring semester emergency aid and monitoring federal and state economic conditions, as well as the prospects for additional federal emergency funding for universities and students. We will continue to monitor the possibilities for future semesters. We will update these FAQs if later decisions are made