

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund – Student Aid Overview and Data

In response to the national state of emergency declared on March 13, 2020, on March 27, 2020, the president signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, in order to address urgent financial needs created by the coronavirus pandemic.

On April 9, 2020, the Department of Education released information directing institutions of higher education to apply for CARES Act funds allocated to Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations.

The application portal opened on April 10, 2020, and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay was eligible for \$1,752,466 in emergency funds for student aid. The institution applied for these funds on April 10, 2020, by signing and returning to the Department a Certification and Agreement including an assurance that the institution intends to use the entirety of this amount to provide emergency financial aid grants to students. The funding was received on April 23, 2020, and was processed while the institution was finalizing distribution mechanisms and details.

Student Applications for HREEF Awards

On May 6, 2020, UW-Green Bay's website (uwgb.edu/coronavirus/emergency-grant) provided instructions, guidance, and an application form for students to request emergency funds. Students were informed of the available funds and application process through multiple methods including email, video and Chancellor's newsletter, as well as announcement on the University's COVID 19 website

The application process to confirm eligibility and determine funds awarded proceeded in two steps: confirmation of student eligibility and confirmation of expense eligibility. Any student eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 ("title IV eligible") was also eligible for a CARES Act emergency grant. A review of students enrolled for the spring 2020 semester that met Title IV eligibility requirements was done and a list of eligible students compiled. UW-Green Bay enrolled an estimated 4,625 students eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

Eligibility of expenses was determined via the application process, in which students provided documentation of expenses incurred on or after March 13, 2020, and related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus. Those applications and expenses were reviewed in relation to Cost of Attendance (COA) items to determine how much each student receives. Applications that indicated financial need but did not meet these eligibility criteria were declined CARES Act funds but then reviewed for funding through other internal sources of emergency assistance.

The first University of Wisconsin-Green Bay CARES Act awards to students were approved on May 7, 2020. By May 22, 2020, in its first 30 days, UW-Green Bay had received 695 applications and approved 472 students for a total of \$521,551. As of July 6, 2020, which is 45 days after May 22, UW-Green Bay had received 1,078 applications and approved 738 applications from 667 students for a total of \$814,239.

University Identification of Students with Highest Need

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay recognized that students faced many challenges during this pandemic. After assessing the effect of CARES Act awards made to UWGB students in response to the application process, it was determined that many students with highest need were not applying to receive funds. A supplementary process for awarding funds to these students without requiring an application was devised. In order to provide timely assistance to students who have already been identified as having financial need through the FAFSA application, UWGB developed a Phase II, batch approach to awarding CARES funds. The goal of the batch award was to identify high need students who were enrolled for the spring term, and to provide a total of \$625 in emergency funds to the group. In addition, a small amount of CARES funding was reserved for future requests. For students to be eligible to receive funds through this batch approach, they had to:

- be enrolled for Spring 2020 as a degree seeking graduate or undergraduate;
- be enrolled in at least one in person class for the term;
- meet Title IV eligibility (Satisfactory Academic Progress, no eligibility issues); and
- have a 2019-20 Expected Family Contribution of \$5,577 or less (Pell-eligible for undergraduates)

On July 22, 2020, UW-Green Bay made 1,339 awards via this process, totaling \$814,850. The 1,284 students who had not submitted an application for emergency funds were awarded a total of \$802,500, while the 55 students who were on the highest need list and had already received a CARES Act award represented \$12,350 of this total. Adding these to the awards made through the application process, a total of 1,974 students had been awarded a total of \$1,681,067 as of July 22, 2020.

Application Process Awards Continued to Account Depletion

Following the batch award event, applications continue to be accepted for the remaining funds. As of August 14, 2020, UW-Green Bay had received 1,322 applications and approved 738 students for a total of \$933,578 and had funded \$814,850 to an additional 1,284 unduplicated students (and 55 duplicated students) through the batch award process. Therefore, a total of 2,022 students have, thus far, received \$1,748,428 in CARES Act Student Aid funds.

Student Aid CARES Act Funding Summary

(Award # P425E200542; application submitted April 13, 2020, funds awarded April 23, 2020)

- Amount of funds received: \$1,752,466
- Amount of funds expended/obligated as of August 14, 2020:
 - Expended: \$1,748,428
- Activities/Items covered (Emergency Grants to Students):
 - 1,322 applications received and 1,339 batch awards, totaling 2,661
 - 738 applications approved and 1,339 batch awards, totaling 2,077
 - 738 original individual students receiving funds and an additional 1,284 new students receiving batch awards, totaling 2,022 individual students receiving support
 - \$1,748,428 awarded
 - Number of jobs created: not applicable
- Number of subcontracts/subgrants: none

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