

## **HEERF I, II, & III Quarterly Report: Student Emergency Grants 09/30/21**

East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Securities Act (CARES Act)

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Report

Reporting as of September 30, 2021

**HEERF I:** East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania (ESU) received federal funding under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. These grants provide 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.” The information below is intended not only to meet the reporting requirements of the CARES Act but also provide information to our community regarding ESU’s use of the student grant portion of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund.

**HEERF II:** East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania (ESU) received additional federal funding under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). The U.S. Department of Education has expanded upon guidance previously provided under CARES for awarding of HEERF II funds to include the ability to award students who are exclusively in distance education courses and for the use of direct cost of attendance expenditures. However, CRRSAA also stipulates that funding should be prioritized with those who have exceptional need such as students who receive PELL grants and balances can only be paid with student grant funding if the institution collects written consent from the student.

**HEERF III:** East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania (ESU) received funding under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) with \$9,000,698 designated for student emergency funds under Section 2003(a)(1). U.S. Department of Education expanded guidance for awarding ARP funds to be inclusive of non-citizens and for any period of enrollment from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Quarterly Budget and Expenditure Reporting for HEERF I, II, and III \(a\)\(1\) Institutional Portion, \(a\)\(2\), and \(a\)\(3\), if applicable.](#)

### **Certification**

East Stroudsburg University signed and returned to the U.S. Department of Education the Certification and Agreement form that was required to receive the HEERF funds. ESU will use no less than 50% of the total amount of funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students. This stipulation was signed and agreed upon in response to CRRSAA requirements which state under section 314(a)(1) that institutions are to provide the same amount of funding in financial aid grants to students that it was required to provide

under its original student aid portion. Certification was also signed to acknowledge receipt and awarding procedures of HEERF III funds under the American Rescue Plan Section 2003(a)(1).

## **Award**

ESU was allocated \$3,234,662 in HEERF I from the U.S. Department of Education pursuant to ESU's Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.

An additional \$3,234,662 was certified for use from HEERF II funds from the U.S. Department of Education via the CRRSAA certification procedures.

ESU also received \$9,000,698 in HEERF III student aid funds from the U.S. Department of Education via the American Rescue Plan.

## **Funds Distributed**

As of this report, the full allocation of HEERF I funding in the amount of \$3,234,662 had been distributed under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

As of this report, \$3,234,662 of HEERF II funding has been fully awarded under Section 314(a)(1).

As of this report, \$271,963 of HEERF III funding has been awarded under ARP section 2003(a)(1).

## **Methodology and Student Eligibility**

### **CARES Act (HEERF I)**

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 in Phase I and II was 5,841.

ESU used the following methodology for evaluating whether students were eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants, and how much they would receive under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

Eligibility for the funds was based on:

1. Verifying attendance for Spring 2020 semester at ESU for Phase I; verifying attendance for Spring 2020 and or Fall 2020 for Phase II.
2. Verifying Title IV eligibility.
3. Verifying program of student was not 100% on-line prior to Spring 2020.

Phase I (Representing one-third of the funds and is now closed)

ESU solicited requests for funds from students through three outreach efforts:

- Outreach Effort 1 – A survey was sent to all students inquiring whether the disruption created an interruption in their academic plan that would necessitate taking summer classes. CARES Act Grants were disbursed directly to students. The amount of the award represents an estimated amount that would support at least 3 credits of summer tuition and books (ESU rates were used as a guide). As funds went directly to students, they could enroll at the school of their choice.
- Outreach Effort 2 – We recognized students who have outstanding Spring 2020 balances might especially be experiencing difficulties due to COVID-19. Therefore, a survey was sent to students who had Spring 2020 balances asking them if they had a need. All requests were reviewed and funding was based on funds availability, using the maximum PELL grant award as a guide. Funds were disbursed directly to students.
- Outreach Effort 3 – All eligible students were emailed information about the CARES Act and were provided a direct link to an application for funds on our foundation website. Requests were reviewed and funds disbursed based on needs of those applying. Award amounts varied based on request and availability of funds.

Phase II (Representing two-thirds of the funds and is now closed)

- ESU set aside two thirds of the funds for assisting students who experienced need past the Spring 2020 term. The early fall review required enrollment during Spring 2020. The late fall review required enrollment during Spring 2020 or Fall 2020.
- ESU solicited requests for funds from students for an early fall distribution. This solicitation is now closed, applications were reviewed, and awards made.
- ESU solicited requests for funds from students for a late fall distribution through student email and social media. This solicitation is now closed, applications were reviewed, and awards made.
- ESU solicited requests from students for an early Spring 2021 distribution. This solicitation is now closed, applications were reviewed, and awards made.

ESU has exhausted all CARES Act funds.

### **CRRSAA (HEERF II)**

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 CRRSAA Sections 314(a)(1) and 314(a)(2) was 5,841.

ESU used a solicitation and application process to distribute grants, prioritizing those with known need as demonstrated by PELL eligibility. ESU conducted its outreach efforts to PELL eligible students, recent graduates, students who stopped-out during the pandemic, students who did not perform well in the Fall 2020 semester and needed to retake a course, as well as all continuing students. Multiple communication methods were used including email, social media, and a telephone call campaign which pushed students to an application for funds. Applications were reviewed and funds awarded with distribution applied to student account balances only where written consent was provided by the student.

As of September 30, 2021, all of these funds have been distributed to students.

### **American Rescue Plan Act (HEERF III)**

An estimated 7,800 students are currently potentially eligible to receive funds under the American Rescue Plan.

ESU is using block grants to students with known need as demonstrated by their FAFSA generated Expected Family Contribution, as well as an emergency aid application to identify other students with emergency need. As of September 30, 2021, \$271,963 of these funds have been distributed to students through an application process. A block grant will be distributed in October 2021.