

Public Reporting for Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), the American Rescue Plan Act, 2021 (ARP) and the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF II & III)

30 June 2021

Background

On 22 April 2020, the university submitted to the Department of Education the certification and agreement form to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136. The funds were designated to provide emergency grants to students related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (COVID-19), and were restricted to on-campus students only. Eligible expenses related to a student's cost of attendance include food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care.

On 27 December 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), Public Law 116-260 was signed into law, which authorized the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (HEERF II), and was announced on 14 January 2021. As East Central University had initially received CARES Act HEERF funds to distribute to students, the supplementation CRRSAA HEERF II funds were automatically granted to East Central University to distribute to students.

CRRSAA HEERF II required that Institutions must make financial aid grants to students, which can be used for any component of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), or child care. Unlike the CARES Act, the CRRSAA requires that institutions prioritize students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants, and authorizes grants to students exclusively enrolled in distance education.

On 11 March 2021 the American Rescue Plan Act, 2021 (ARP), was signed into law, which authorized the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III). As East Central University had initially received CARES Act HEERF funds to distribute to students, the supplementation ARP HEERF III funds were automatically granted to East Central University to distribute to students.

HEERF III allows Institutions to include undocumented and international students in the student population eligible to receive grants, but maintains that grants can be used for any component of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), or child care. HEERF III also requires that institutions prioritize students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants.

Public Reporting

As part of the reporting requirements by the Department of Education, East Central University is responding to the following items provided by the federal government.

Item 1

An acknowledgement that the institution signed and returned the certification and agreement form and that the institution has used or intends to use the funds to provide the mandated amount of at least 50% of the emergency financial aid grants to students.

On 22 April 2020, the university submitted to the Department of Education the certification and agreement form to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136. The entire amount designated for student grants will be distributed to Title IV eligible students.

No new certification or agreement was required to receive CRRSAA HEERF II funding and East Central University has met the new requirement of distributing the required amounts to students in the forms of CRRSAA HEERF II emergency grants.

No new certification or agreement was required to receive ARP HEERF III funding and East Central University will meet the new requirement of distributing the required amounts to students in the forms of ARP HEERF III emergency grants, during the Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022 terms.

Item 2

The total amount of funds that the institution received under CRRSAA HEERF II and ARP programs:

The total amount of CRRSAA HEERF II Funds that East Central received or will receive is \$5,075,356.

The total amount of ARP HEERF III Funds that East Central received or will receive is \$8,595,472.

Item 3

Of those funds, the total amount that has been distributed to students as of the date of reporting (i.e. the first 30-day deadline, and then every 45 days thereafter):

CRRSAA HEERF II Funds

- ECU distributed \$1,528,600.00 on March 26, 2021 to 1,579 students.
- ECU distributed the remaining \$5,000.00 on April 8, 2021 to 8 additional students.
- \$1,533,600.00 in emergency aid was given directly to students.

ARP HEERF III Funds:

- As of 30 June 2021, no funds have been distributed to students. A summer 2021 distribution will happen soon, with further distributions occurring to enrolled students for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. The amount designated to award to students during this time period is \$4,362,076.

Item 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 therefore eligible to receive an emergency financial aid grant:

ECU estimated there were 2,207 students who met the criteria outlined in the CRRSAA HEERF II guidelines.

As of 30 June 2021, ECU has not made estimations of the number of students who will meet the criteria of the ARP HEERF III guidelines. This will be done at the beginning of each term during which funds will be distributed.

Item 5

The total number of students who have received an emergency financial aid grant under CRRSAA HEERF II and ARP HEERF III:

As of 30 June 2021, 1,595 students received CRRSAA HEERF II Emergency grants.

As of 30 June 2021, no students have received ARP HEERF III Emergency grants. These will be distributed during the Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022 terms. The amount designated to award to students during this time period is \$4,362,076.

Item 6

Describe the methodology the institution used to determine which students received emergency financial aid grants under CRRSAA HEERF II and ARP HEERF III and how much funding they received:

CRRSAA HEERF II:

The university reviewed all students in accordance with the eligibility requirements outlined in Section 314(a)(1), (a)(4) HEERF II (CRRSAA). On 26 February 2021 student eligibility for CRRSAA HEERF II funds were determined by the following criteria:

- Enrolled in Spring 2021 Semester
- Completed the 2020-2021 FAFSA
- Not in one of the following categories:
 - International
 - DACA/undocumented

Once students were determined to be eligible the following Funding Amount Formula was used to determine grant funding:

- All Pell eligible students received a minimum of \$500 regardless of unmet need.
- Unmet need (calculated as Institutional Cost – EFC – Financial Aid including loans) was then used to create the following categorical award amounts inclusive of the \$500 minimum:

Unmet Need with loans		
Min	Max	CRSSA2 Award
-400	1000	\$ 500.00
1000	2000	\$ 600.00
2000	3000	\$ 700.00
3000	4000	\$ 800.00
4000	5000	\$ 900.00
5000	6000	\$ 1,000.00
6000	7000	\$ 1,100.00
7000	8000	\$ 1,200.00
8000	9000	\$ 1,300.00
9000	10000	\$ 1,400.00
10000	15000	\$ 1,500.00
15000	20000	\$ 1,600.00
20000	25000	\$ 1,700.00
25000	40000	\$ 1,800.00

ARP HEERF III:

As of 30 June 2021, ARP HEERF III grant eligibility methods have not been determined for the Summer 2021, Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 grant distributions.

Item 7

Instructions, directions, or guidance provided by ECU to the students included the following:

CRRSAA HEERF II:

- All students were notified on 8 March 2021 by institutional email of the possibility of receiving CARES II Act emergency assistance. In addition, students who had not set up a BankMobile account in order to receive these funds electronically were sent a reminder email with instructions on how to complete this.
- Students who were determined to receive grant amounts as determined by the criteria in Item 6, were notified through their ECU email accounts about the CRRSAA HEERF II emergency assistance on 24 March 2021, and informed that the amounts would be distributed through BankMobile by Friday 26 March, 2021.
- An additional 8 students were notified by email on April 8, 2021 of their eligibility to receive funds, which were distributed by April 8, 2021.

ARP HEERF III:

As of 30 June 2021, no instructions, directions or guidance has been provided by ECU to students regarding ARP HEERF III grants.