



GTU

COVID-19 Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund

Graduate Theological Union Reporting for Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA)

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Report Financial assistance to students

On December 27, 2020, the President signed the [Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 \(CRRSAA\) \(P.L. 116-260\)](#). This new law gives the U.S. Department of ED approximately \$22.7 billion to distribute to institutions of higher education in order to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus through HEERF.

[CRRSAA section 314 \(a\)\(1\) Section 18004\(c\)](#) of the CARES Act is a continuation of the [CARES Act Section 18004 \(a\)\(1\)](#) program which the department implemented as two funding streams: The Student Aid Portion for financial grants to students and Institutional Portion for institutional uses of funds related to the coronavirus.

Grant awards under this new program may be used to defray costs associated with coronavirus (including lost revenue reimbursement for expenses already incurred, technology costs associated with a transition to distance education, faculty and staff trainings, and payroll); carry out student support activities authorized by the HEA that address needs related to coronavirus; or provide financial aid grants to students (including students exclusively enrolled in distance education), which may be used for any component of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus such as tuition, housing, food, health care, or childcare. The institution must prioritize students with exceptional need.

[Section 314 \(d\)\(8\) of the CRRSAA](#) does not require institutions that previously received grants under section 18004 (a)(1) of the CARES Act to submit a new or revised application to receive funding. The Department will automatically award supplemental funds to eligible institutions that previously received a section 18004 (a)(1) Student Aid Portion or Institutional Portion award under the CARES Act when they have submitted the required HEERF Annual Report to the Department. (The Certification and Agreement for approval was signed and submitted on April 21, 2020.)

The GTU received notification of approval and was awarded an allocation of **\$29,534**.

The regulation states that only students who are or could be eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV (TIV) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) may receive emergency financial aid grants, however, students are not required to meet all Title IV eligibility requirements. [Undocumented, DACA and International students are not eligible for HEERF I or II under 8 USC 1611\(a\) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act](#) (the 1996 welfare reform law), which prohibits these students from receiving federal public funds.

Applicants must be enrolled in the spring 2021 term and expenses must have incurred after March 16, 2020; the date that the Shelter in Place Order was put in place in Alameda County.

The Director of Student Life contacted domestic students by email that included instructions to complete the [online Emergency Request form](#) (See email in Appendix A). Each student was asked to answer the following questions:

1. Describe the circumstances surrounding the need for assistance pertaining to 1) emergency costs that arise due to Coronavirus, such as but not limited to tuition, food, housing, health care, mental health care, or childcare, and/or 2) any component of your cost of attendance.
2. What is the dollar amount needed to work through this emergency? Please know that we might not be able to provide the full amount that is requested.

Students were given the opportunity to upload any supporting documents and share additional information in support of their circumstances.

Once applications were submitted, the Director of Student Life met with the Senior Director for Financial Aid and Enrollment to determine the amount of the award for applicants. Applicants were awarded based upon the same criteria as HEERF I.

18 students applied and were awarded on April 14, 2021. Student awards ranged between \$850 and \$7,000 depending on the student's request and amount of funds available. The Financial Aid Office created a code in the PowerFAIDS Student Information System to identify HEERF recipients for auditing purposes. The total amount of emergency grants distributed is \$29,534 as of April 19, 2021.

The committee made a good faith effort to distribute the funds in a just and equitable manner and grant amounts were determined based on various factors such as:

- The need that was expressed in the student's application. Priority was given to students that experienced loss of income, food and housing insecurity and mental health issues.
- The unique circumstances that were caused due to COVID-19 were considered and decisions were made accordingly.
- The size of the family and if the applicant is the primary provider or not were also considered as we deliberated upon the applications.

In accordance with the HEERF guidelines, the GTU Business Office posted and distributed funds directly to students by direct deposit or paper check on April 19, 2021.

The GTU agrees that all employees and contractors will continue to be paid during the period of any disruptions or closures in compliance with Section 18006 of the CARES Act.

Appendix A

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) II provides emergency funding to institutes of higher education to assist students in need during the coronavirus pandemic. In 2020, this funding was known as the CARES Act Funding.

GTU has received a small amount of HEERF II funding and has established the HEERF II CRRSAA Emergency Relief Fund to distribute grants ranging from \$200 to \$900 to eligible students to help cover expenses related to the cost of attendance (i.e., food, housing and utilities, health insurance including mental health care, transportation, or childcare) or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus.

Funds from the HEERF II CRRSAA Emergency Relief Fund are not considered financial aid and do not affect a student's financial aid eligibility. Per guidance from the federal government, these grants will be distributed to our students with exceptional need, which will be identified by an application that the students will submit.

Please note that undocumented, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and international students are not eligible for HEERF II funds under 8 USC 1611(a) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which prohibits certain noncitizens from receiving federal public benefits.

If you intend to apply for these grants, here is [the application](#). The deadline to submit completed applications is Monday the 8th of March 2021, by 5 pm.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions.