

Federal CARES Act/HEERF FAQ

What is the federal CARES Act/HEERF Funding?

The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. The act provides financial compensation and support to multiple layers of the U.S. economy, including businesses, individuals, unemployment benefits, and education. The act established and funded HEERF (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund) for institutions to use a portion of the funds as emergency financial aid grants to students. Additional funding was provided by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) signed into law December 27, 2020. A third act ARP (American Rescue Plan), signed into law March 11, 2021, provided another portion of HEERF for higher education.

How much money will UVU receive?

The CARES Act allocated nearly \$14 billion to support colleges and universities around the country. UVU will receive \$22,949,207.00. The Department of Education guidelines require at least 50% of received funds be used to provide emergency cash grants for students. CRRSAA provides UVU an additional \$11,474,604 for emergency grants for students. ARP provides UVU an additional \$40,635,948 for emergency grants to students.

Why is UVU receiving these funds?

As an open-admission institution with a large population of Pell Grant-eligible students, UVU received the largest portion of the federal CARES Act/CRRSAA/ARP funding for Utah public universities. Funds have been provided to support students who have demonstrated financial need and experienced financial hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why does every school receive a different amount? What factors were considered by the Department of Education?

The Department of Education awarded funds based on a formula prescribed in the CARES Act/CRRSAA/ARP that is weighted significantly by the number of full-time students who are Pell-eligible, but also takes into consideration the total population of the school and other factors.

What direction did UVU receive in determining how to allocate the funds?

The Department of Education provided guidance on how to use a portion of the funds to students *“who are or were enrolled in an institution of higher education during the COVID-19 national emergency are eligible for emergency financial aid grants from the*

HEERF, regardless of whether they completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or are eligible for Title IV. As under the CRRSAA, institutions are directed with the ARP funds to prioritize students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants or are undergraduates with extraordinary financial circumstances in awarding emergency financial aid grants to students.”

“Beyond Pell eligibility, other types of exceptional need could include students who may be eligible for other federal or state need-based aid or have faced significant unexpected expenses either for themselves or that would affect their financial circumstances, such as the loss of employment, reduced income, or food or housing insecurity.”

The emergency grants should be prioritized to domestic students, especially undergraduates. A domestic student includes US citizens, permanent residents, DACA, DREAMers, undocumented students, refugees, and asylum seekers. Additionally, it can be provided to international students.

Which students will receive money?

Students may qualify to receive CARES Act/HEERF Emergency grants under ARP in the following ways:

1. Students have received a Federal Pell Grant for Spring/Summer 2021 semester and are enrolled in at least 6 credit hours, will be evaluated for a \$750 award. These students will be identified by the Financial Aid Office.
2. Students who have demonstrated unmet need/could qualify for federal or state need-based aid (completed a FAFSA for 2020/2021 and have demonstrated financial need) will be evaluated for a \$750 award. Student are enrolled in at least half time for Summer 2021 semester. These students will be identified by the Financial Aid Office.
3. Students (in undergraduate or graduate programs) who are enrolled at least half time for Summer Semester 2021 and do not qualify for an award under criteria #1 or #2 (No FAFSA), listed above, will be evaluated for \$500 award. These students will be identified by the Financial Aid Office.
4. If a student qualifies for a \$500 award (#3 criteria), and experienced significant unexpected expenses either for themselves or that would affect their financial circumstances, such as loss of employment, reduced income, or food/housing insecurity during any time since March 2020, may request an additional \$250. The Financial Aid Office will evaluate the request. (Application in the upper righthand corner.)

5. If a student was enrolled at least half time during any semester since March 2020 through May 2021 (Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020 and/or Spring 2021) and did not receive a CARES Act/HEERF award during that period of time, and can certify that they have experienced significant unexpected expenses either for themselves or that would affect their financial circumstances, such as loss of employment, reduced income, or food or housing insecurity may request a \$750 award. The Financial Aid Office will evaluate the request. (Application in the upper righthand corner.)

If awarded, how will students be notified and receive funds?

Students will be notified via their UVU Gmail accounts. If the student has signed up for direct deposit, the funds will go to the student's bank account. The student will otherwise receive a check. All students are encouraged to set up **DIRECT DEPOSIT**.

Do students have any limitations on how they can spend the money?

As outlined by the Department of Education, the funds 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, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), or childcare.