

CARES Act Emergency Funds

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), enacted on March 27, 2020, allows higher education institutions to use certain funds allocated by the Department of Education to support students and higher education institutions with expenses and financial needs related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Riverside College of Health Careers is one of many institutions eligible for funds allocated under the Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

Riverside College of Health Careers has been approved for total grant funding under section 18004(a)(1) in the amount of \$346,191 and has signed and returned the *Recipient's Funding Certification and Agreement*. The U.S. Department of Education stipulates of the total funds received, at least 50% must be used to provide emergency financial aid grants to students. The College intends to award at least \$200,000 of these allocated grant funds to be used by students to cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

Who is eligible for the Emergency Grant Aid?

- Students who were enrolled in at least six (6) credits of an on-ground, residential program in the Spring 2020 semester as of March 13, 2020 to include both Day and Evening/Weekend division students;
- Students who are, or could be, eligible under section 484 of the Higher Education Act (HEA), to participate in programs under Title IV of the HEA; and
(Title IV funds-eligibility is based on information provided on a current Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students not currently receiving Title IV aid, are encouraged to submit a FAFSA in order to determine Title IV eligibility and consideration for an emergency grant.)
- Students who are NOT known to currently be in default or owe an overpayment to a federal aid program.

What is the process for determining who receives Emergency Grant Aid?

As of March 13, 2020, RCHC had 312 students enrolled in on-ground, residential programs. A general review of additional student-incurred expenses due to the transition to on-line education included, but was not limited to, hardware and software technology purchases as well as home internet access. To offset these expenses, grant aids will be disbursed as follows:

- **277** students enrolled in the Spring 2020 semester, including graduating seniors, are eligible to receive \$550;
- **114** of the 277 are also Pell-eligible students are eligible to receive an additional \$300 (for a total grant of \$850); and,
- **35** students are not currently eligible due to incomplete or missing FAFSA information *(these students have been individually emailed to complete a current FAFSA for further consideration of the grant award).*

These funds are a one-time grant and are not renewable. The following are considered expenses under a student's cost of attendance, related to the disruption of College operations due to COVID-19 by the Department of Education: housing, relocation, food, technology, course materials, healthcare, and childcare.

Next Steps & Notification of Award

Students who are eligible to receive CARES Act grant funds will be notified via email in early July. By accepting the funds, students are confirming they incurred expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

8/10/2020

After contacting the 35 students with incomplete or missing FAFSA information a total of \$198,100 was distributed to eligible students. Awards provided in late July, early August were as follows:

- **298** students enrolled in the Spring 2020 semester received \$550,
- **114** of Pell-eligible students received an additional \$300 (for a total grant of \$850); and,
- **14** students were determined ineligible due FAFSA information available

Additional award opportunities are being reviewed for returning students enrolled for the fall 2020 semester. Emergency student aid may be available for eligible individuals enduring continued expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19.

09/14/2020

An application has been developed for students to request emergency grant funds for the 2020 fall / 2021 spring semesters until allocated funds have been depleted. This application is currently under review and expected to be sent to enrolled, residential students in late September and posted on the College's Financial Aid information page for ease of access.

09/23/2020

The approved RCHC – CARES Act – HEERF Student Application for consideration of emergency grant awards is now available. Applications will be reviewed by the Financial Aid office as received. Students are required to be currently enrolled in at least 6 credits of an on-ground, residential (not fully on-line) educational program at RCHC and have a current 2020-2021 FAFSA on file (RN-to-BSN students are not eligible). Emergency grants will be awarded until available grant funds are expended or until the grant award deadline is reached. Additional instructions from the U.S. Department of Education may amend this application and award process. This RCHC CARES Act Notification will be updated as any revisions occur or at least quarterly.

01/06/2021

One hundred and sixty-seven (167) eligible students enrolled in the fall 2020 semester completed the RCHC – CARES Act – HEERF Student Application for consideration of an emergency grant award. Awards amounts varied with a maximum allowable per student of \$750. A total of \$123,200 was awarded between September and December to eligible students requesting emergency assistance with a COVID-related financial need.

Grant awards made in the summer of \$198,100 and fall \$123,200 combine for a total of \$321,300 in emergency grants to eligible students from the \$346,191 CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) funds provided to RCHC for student and institutional COVID-19 relief. The remaining \$24,891 was utilized by the College for reimbursement of COVID-related expenses as allowable under the institutional portion of the 18004(a)(1) grant.

At this time, no further CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) grant award funds are allocated for students at RCHC.

02/17/2021

On January 19, 2021, RCHC was awarded additional federal grant funding through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. \$546,628 was awarded to the College to provide for Student Emergency Financial Aid grants and institutional expenditures in response to COVID provisions and the improvement of the College's online, educational infrastructure. RCHC is required to award at least \$173,096 in emergency aid grants to students. Grants to students will be determined through an application process. Students with exceptional need will be prioritized.

The updated 2021 CARES/CRRSAA Student Grant Application was posted to the College's learning management systems (MOODLE & Canvas) as well as emailed to enrolled students on Tuesday, February 9th. Applications for Spring 2021 award consideration will be accepted until the deadline of March 1st. After March 1st, applications will be reviewed to confirm eligibility and determine appropriate award amounts. Award amounts will be dependent on the total number of applications received and individual student need as demonstrated. Award checks will be available to students approximately the 2nd- 3rd week of March.

Eligibility criteria for Spring 2021 grant awards includes:

- Students who are enrolled in at least six (6) credits of an RCHC educational program in the Spring 2021 semester as to include both Day and Evening/Weekend division students and both residential and online students;
- Students who are, or could be, eligible under section 484 of the Higher Education Act (HEA), to participate in programs under Title IV of the HEA; and

(Title IV funds-eligibility is based on information provided on a current Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students not currently receiving Title IV aid, are encouraged to submit a FAFSA in order to determine Title IV eligibility and consideration for an emergency grant.)

- Students who are NOT known to currently be in default or owe an overpayment to a federal aid program.

3/11/2021 (Updated 3/31/2021*)

As of March 1, 2021 at 4:30pm, RCHC received applications from **184** students for emergency student aid consideration for Spring 2021 enrollment due to the on-going pandemic. The RCHC CARES/HEERF Grant Committee met the week of March 2-5th to review each application, confirm eligibility, assess level of need, and determine appropriate grant award amounts. Due to the expressed needs of students, it was determined to award a majority of available student designated funds for the 2021 spring semester with remaining funds available for summer and fall semester disbursement. The Committee followed guidelines of section 314(c)(3) of the CRRSAA to prioritize grants to students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants. A total of **\$122,400 (3/31/2021: Updated to \$127,200*)** will be disbursed for Spring 2021. Below is a summary of emergency student aid awarded by RCHC for spring semester 2021 and a breakdown of individual award amounts based on documented level of need.

- **320** students are enrolled in the spring 2021 semester.
- **187** total applications were received.
- **50** students were determined Pell-eligible with an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) of \$0; grant amount \$1,200,
- **54** were determined Pell-eligible with an EFC above \$0; grant amount \$800,
- **60** students were determined non-Pell Eligible with varying EFCs above \$5,711; grant amount \$400,
- **3** applications were disqualified as late submissions, **4** students were deemed inactive during the application review period, and **22** students had absent FAFSA documentation and, therefore, deemed ineligible for grant award. (****3/31/2021: 6 additional applicants were determined eligible after confirming a previous, active FAFSA.***)

All applicants will be contacted by email regarding the status of their application and grant award as applicable. Grant checks will be made available to students during the week of March 17th. By accepting the funds, students are confirming they incurred expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

If there are questions about eligibility or regarding this grant award program, please contact:

Serita Lee, Sr. Financial Aid Coordinator

Serita.lee@rivhs.com

Robin Nelhuebel, RCHC Campus Administrator

Robin.nelhuebel@rivhs.com

References:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/caresact.html>

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/crrsaa.html>