

West Virginia University at Parkersburg
CARES ACT Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Reporting
Emergency Financial Aid to Students

Statutory Authority: Section 18004 (e) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES ACT), Pub. L. No 116-136, 134 Stat. 281 (March 27, 2020) provided \$876,544 to West Virginia University at Parkersburg that was restricted for distribution of emergency grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus including eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance such as food, course materials, technology, health care, and child care.

Section 1004(a)(1) requires the following information to be made available in a format and location that is easily accessible to the public within 30 days after the date when the institution received its allocation of funds (April 28, 2020) from the Department of Education. The following information includes all required disclosures:

- West Virginia University at Parkersburg signed and returned to the Department of Education, the Certification and Agreement and the assurance that the institution would use, no less than 50% (\$876,544) of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.
- West Virginia University at Parkersburg received a total of \$1,753,088 in CARES Act funding pursuant to the Institution's Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students. As required the University will distribute 50% (\$876,544)
- As of May 15, 2020, West Virginia University at Parkersburg has disbursed a total of \$876,544 in Emergency Financial Aid Grants to eligible students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.
- The total number of students at the institution eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is **1,048 students**.
- The total number of students who have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is **1,048 students**.
- West Virginia University at Parkersburg determined that any student who met the eligibility requirements under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and who were not enrolled in 100% online programs prior to March 27, 2020 were financially impacted by the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus. Eligibility for Section 484 of Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 was determined by requiring all students to complete a 2019-2020 FAFSA and by a review of each student's compliance with Standards for

Academic Progress (SAP). Students who failed to complete a FAFSA or comply with SAP were deemed to be ineligible to receive an Emergency Financial Aid Grant.

- University officials identified the following campus provided resources that were lost during the disruption of services caused by the Coronavirus:
 - Under normal operating conditions, the University provides all students with access to computer labs, printers, photocopiers, and workstations throughout its Parkersburg and Ripley locations.
 - The University provides students who have food security issues access to our on-site student food pantry which was not available during campus closure.
 - Students with young children received preferential rates and access to our on-site childcare facility. When the campuses closed these resources were no longer available.
 - The University offers student support and mental health support services on our campuses. The significant changes caused by the Coronavirus and the related disruption to our campuses caused heightened anxiety and stress which manifested itself in a greater need for assistance and support.
- Nearly all students who are attending campus-based courses utilize computer hardware, WIFI, photocopiers, software, and printers provided at the campuses, When the Coronavirus forced the closing of our campuses, these resources were no longer available to students. Moving to a 100% online format meant that students had no choice but to obtain these resources on their own. The University believes that this factor alone qualifies any student who meets the eligibility requirements under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and who were not previously enrolled in 100% online majors to receive a baseline allocation to cover the cost of acquiring hardware (computers, printers, or other required electronic devices) and to help pay for WIFI access through DSL internet or “hot spot” technology. These students were eligible to receive a base Emergency Financial Aid Award of \$650.
- The remaining funds available were distributed to eligible students who exhibited a greater financial need (EFC under \$11,000). The University developed an online application for students who felt they had a financial need caused by disruption of classes that addressed technology issues, food insecurity, and loss of child care caused by the disruption of our campuses. The application was available for 14 days. Students were notified about the opportunity in many ways including email, texting,

radio, and social media advertisements.

- Before any Emergency Financial Aid Grants were distributed, each student's eligibility was confirmed by the director of financial aid's review of FAFSA and SAP status.
- The University established a separate refund code to track all CARES' Act Emergency Financial Aid Grants to ensure that funds were not diverted to pay any balances due to the University for unpaid tuition or fees. Once the disbursements were processed, a file was sent to Bank Mobile who disbursed the funds based on the individual student's choice. Students were permitted to choose to have the funds deposited into a bank account, posted to a prepaid debit card that is valid in all locations that accept Mastercard or Visa, or by a check sent to them through US mail.
- Communications to Students. Below is an example of the communication that was sent to awarded students. Students who were not in the pool of eligible students and also did not fill out the application we provided were not notified specifically that they did not qualify for funds. Students who filled out the application but were not in the pool of eligible students were sent a brief notification that included the reason that they did not qualify (online degree program, not making satisfactory academic progress, etc.).

First Name

WVUP ID Number

Dear (First Name),

On April 9, the Secretary of Education for the U.S. Department of Education notified us that as part of the CARES Act (due to the coronavirus pandemic) we would be receiving \$876,544 to disburse directly to eligible students in the form of cash grants. We decided to disburse some of those funds to every eligible student, and then give students who expressed their needs by filling out an application some additional funds. Our CARES grant application was posted online on Friday, April 24 and was taken down on Friday, May 8.

On Friday, May 8, after the application closed at 4:00 p.m., eligibility for all students was verified and grants were processed for 1,048 eligible students totaling \$876,544. Our total grant allocation has now been awarded to eligible students. The refunds are being processed now and will be sent out via the BankMobile refund method that you chose earlier in the semester (direct deposit, BankMobile VIBE deposit, or paper check in the mail). The individual grant award amounts were determined by the administration of West Virginia University at Parkersburg based on the belief that all students attending classes on our Parkersburg and Ripley campus were in some way financially impacted by the disruption of switching to 100% online courses and the closing of our facilities. All eligible students received a base amount of \$650, and students who filled out the application and had additional expenses received additional funds above the \$650 base

amount.

We determined that you are eligible for \$(amount) in CARES Emergency Grant funds. Your CARES funds will be released to you regardless of whether you owe any balance to WVUP for current or future classes. If you do not need your grant funds for other expenses, and want them applied to a balance, you will need to contact the Business Office after you receive your grant funds and make a payment arrangement. You are not required to use this grant to pay a balance at WVUP though - it is intended for other expenses that you have.

If you have questions about your CARES Emergency Grant, please contact the WVUP Financial Aid Office at finaid@wvup.edu.

If you want to check which refund method you chose with BankMobile, please reach out to BankMobile, or contact the WVUP Business Office at business.office@wvup.edu. If you received any funds from WVUP in the Spring 2020 semester, your CARES funds will come to you the same way. The refunds will take a short amount of time to process, but we anticipate all direct deposit students will receive their funds by Friday, May 15. Please do not check the status of your refund with the Business Office before Monday, May 18, 2020.

WVUP Financial Aid Office
Center for Student Services
finaid@wvup.edu
304-424-8310