

## **Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students Fund Reporting**

On March 27, 2020, the President of the United States signed the CARES Act (H.R. 748), which provides emergency relief funds to organizations and individuals affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), found in Section 18004 of the CARES Act, provides funding to institutions of higher education “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.” This report provides details on the first award Abilene Christian University received under the HEERF, the funds for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under Award No. P425E20006.

### **CERTIFICATION**

Abilene Christian University signed and returned to the Department of Education the Certification and Agreement on April 15, 2020. ACU will use 50% of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.

### **AWARD**

Abilene Christian University will receive a total of \$2,838,742 under Section 18004(a)(1) of the HEERF. At least \$1,419,371 will be distributed directly to students impacted by campus disruptions due to the coronavirus. These funds from the U.S. Department of Education will be awarded pursuant to our Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.

### **FUNDS DISTRIBUTED**

As of 05/20/20, ACU has distributed \$577,624 in Emergency Financial Aid Grants under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

### **STUDENT ELIGIBILITY**

Abilene Christian University has an estimate of 2,376 residential undergraduate and graduate students eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and who are thus potentially eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. As of 05/20/20, ACU has distributed Emergency Financial Aid Grants to 356 students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

### **METHOD USED TO DETERMINE STUDENTS ELIGIBILITY**

All potentially eligible students were notified of the application process developed by the university for these funds by an email correspondence from President Phil Schubert. A committee has been reviewing the individual application requests as they have been received and has recommended distributions of this money to newly approved students on a weekly basis. Already hundreds of ACU students have experienced some financial relief due to qualifying for these funds.

The U.S. Department of Education has specified that students must meet certain criteria to qualify for these funds. These include:

- Must be federal Title IV aid eligible, which has been determined by student's having a complete valid 2019-2020 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on file
- Must meet Title IV aid eligibility criteria including
  - U.S. Citizenship or Eligible noncitizen status
  - Have a valid Social Security Number
  - Be registered with Selective Service (if male)
  - Be meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress standards for Title IV aid
- Students must have been enrolled at ACU as of March 13, 2020 (the date at which the national emergency was declared)
- Students must not have already been attending ACU via an online academic program

Maximum eligibility tiers were established by the university based upon various student situational experiences. The highest of which was set just below the maximum Pell Grant eligibility figure, as recommended by the U.S. Department of Education. The committee reviews requests and determines student's qualifying amounts based upon their amounts requested to cover their current financial needs with respect to the established tier maximums. A follow up questionnaire is sent to students whose initial application is unclear about their short-term financial needs. Awards are focused on the six financial categories encouraged by the federal government. These include funding to help students pay for housing, food, childcare, healthcare, technology and course materials. Distributions to students have ranged between \$100 to \$6,000.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS/DIRECTIONS GIVEN TO STUDENTS**

Instructions, directions, guidance and the application provided to students regarding the Emergency Financial Aid Grants can be found [here](#).