Purpose

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) (Pub. L. 117-2). The ARP appropriated approximately $39.6 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) and represents the third stream of funding appropriated for HEERF to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. Taken together, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (Pub. L. 116–136), the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) (Pub. L. 116–260), and the ARP represent HEERF I, HEERF II, and HEERF III, respectively.

HEERF III is structured like the HEERF II programs under the CRRSAA, with certain important differences that will be discussed within these FAQs. These FAQs are intended to describe the features and allowable uses of grants received under the HEERF III programs and may be updated with additional information in the future.

How it can be Used

As announced in the Department’s final rule, “Eligibility To Receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students Under HEERF” (May 14, 2021, 86 FR 26608) (final rule), the term “student,” for purposes of the phrases “grants to students,” “emergency financial aid grants to students,” and “financial aid grants to students” as used in the HEERF programs, is now defined as any individual who is or was enrolled (as defined in 34 CFR § 668.2) at an eligible institution (as defined in 34 CFR § 600.2) on or after March 13, 2020, the date of declaration of the national emergency due to the coronavirus (85 FR 15337). Thus, students are no longer required to be eligible for Title IV student financial aid in order to receive HEERF grants to students.

Put more plainly, 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, such as the loss of employment (either for themselves or their families), reduced income, or food or housing insecurity. In addition, the CRRSAA and ARP explicitly state that emergency financial aid grants to students may be provided to students exclusively enrolled in distance education provided the institution prioritizes exceptional need.

**Eligibility Criteria**

1. Priority will be given to students with the greatest Financial need. (Those that are not eligible to apply for Financial Assistance Programs & those that are Pell Grant recipients)

2. Enrolled at an eligible institution on or after March 13, 2020, the date of declaration of the national emergency due to the coronavirus.

**Awarding Criteria**

1. Funding amounts will vary based on the Tuition & Fess asses to the Students Account

   - Students will be funded on a First-Come, First-Serve Basis based on receipt of application
   - Student will be funded at the level equivalent to the Enrollment fees & Student Fees assessed to their account.

All funding levels are based on a Full Academic year of attendance. This will allow Ohlone College to alleviate the additional cost burden our students face by going to college during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**Process**

1. Students must complete the American Rescue Plan Emergency Funding Application online.

2. Submitted forms will go directly to the Financial Aid Supervisor, Shawn Domingo, at sdomingo@ohlone.edu
3. Application will be reviewed within the financial aid department for completeness and to verify student meets eligible criteria. Application will then be approved or denied.

4. Student will be notified once a decision has been made by email to their @student.ohlone.edu email address. If approved, student will then be directed to create a Bank Mobile account in order to receive funding through Bank Mobile process.

5. If approved, Funding code “EF2” will be input into student award screen for the amount(s) listed above based on students’ individual circumstances. Funding will be scheduled to disburse in one disbursement for the current Semester it is awarded.

6. Funding disbursements will be run bi-monthly and sent to the business office so that funding can be drawn down from G5. Funding will then be processed through the existing Bank Mobile process in accordance with student selection. Student will receive email from Bank Mobile to set up account.

7. Funding will be available to students through their personal account, or a Bank Mobile account 2-4 days after funding has been transmitted to Bank Mobile. Funding disbursed to a Bank mobile account will be available immediately.