

CARES ACT Report
May 22, 2020

The CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) provides direct emergency assistance to students to cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (including eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care). Professional judgement was used to reason that all students would incur additional expenses related to cost of attendance and remote online instruction exceeding amounts of grants.

To achieve the request from the Secretary of Education in her letter dated April 9, 2020, the Berry College strategy to distribute HEERF emphasized the financial need of families and the desire to balance grants to the neediest students while also distributing the funds as broadly as possible.

This report is being provided to meet the federal reporting requirements of the CARES Act.

1. Berry College signed and returned to the Department of Education the Certification and Agreement on April 22, 2020. Through this agreement, Berry College confirmed to the Department of Education that we intend to use no less than 50% of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide emergency financial aid grants to students.
2. Berry College received the first disbursement of \$794,906 from the Department of Education to be used as emergency financial aid grants to students. The second portion of the CARES Act funding has not yet been received by the college.
3. As of this report, \$713,000 has been distributed directly to students in the form of emergency financial aid grants. Of the remaining undispersed funds, \$25,000 has been allocated to cover emergency repatriation costs of eligible students studying abroad at the time of the COVID disruption and \$56,906 has been allocated for appeals from eligible students for additional funds to meet emergency expenses as allowed by the CARES Act.
4. The college carefully reviewed all enrolled students and only considered those eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in the Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 for an emergency financial aid grant under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. After review, approximately 1,600 enrolled students met the Section 484 criteria and 950 (60%) were awarded an emergency financial aid grant.
5. To ensure emergency grants went to the students with greatest need and distribute the funds to as many students as possible, the college determined that students with an EFC on the 2019 – 2020 FAFSA greater than \$25,000 were not eligible to receive a grant. The college distributed the funds weighted by student need as determined by three

factors: estimated family income from the 2019 – 2020 FAFSA, student work income, and level of student debt. Using this distribution strategy, the average grant distributed to eligible students was \$725 with a range of \$250 to \$1,300.

6. The following message was sent to all students concerning the CARES Act and the emergency financial aid grants that were being distributed to students.



Dear student,

The CARES Act passed in late March by the U.S. Congress provides grants to colleges. One-half of the funds are targeted for direct emergency assistance to students for expenses associated with the cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care. Secretary of Education DeVos has asked each institution to establish a distribution process that prioritizes students with the greatest need, including those who are eligible for Pell grants, while also distributing funds broadly as appropriate. The IRS has recently clarified that any funds received through the CARES Act are not considered taxable income.

Berry has now received its grant for emergency assistance to students. This amount was based largely (75%) on the number of Pell eligible students enrolled at the college. The college will distribute these funds weighted by student need as determined by three factors: estimated family contribution, loss of student work income, and level of student debt. Some funding has also been set aside to reimburse students who had emergency repatriation costs associated with study abroad.

Students must be eligible to participate in federal financial aid programs under Section 484 in the Higher Education Act of 1965 to be considered for these funds. More than half of Berry students (approximately 1,000) will qualify to receive funds, specifically those whose estimated family contribution is between \$0 and \$24,999. Checks will be mailed directly to students at their home address on file. Students can expect to receive their checks within the next ten days. The average grant will be approximately \$725 with a range between \$250 and \$1,300.

Apart from and in addition to this government support, Berry will continue to be attentive to emergency financial situations and the changing financial situation of our students. If you have significant concerns, please let us know using the *Raise Your Hand* form. [Raise Your Hand](#).

We look forward to having you back on campus.