



Posted Date: May 14, 2020

Institution: Arizona Western College

Subject: Higher Education emergency Relief Fund Reporting – Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students

Section 18004(e) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act” or the “Act”), Pub. L. No. 116-136, 134 Stat. 281 (March 27, 2020), directs institutions receiving funds under Section 18004 of the Act to submit (in a timely and manner required by the Secretary) a report to the Secretary describing the use of funds distributed from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (“HEERF”).

1. Acknowledgement that the institution (AWC) signed and returned required Certification and Agreement and the assurance that the institution will use no less than 50 percent of the funds received of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.

Arizona Western College (AWC) acknowledges that the institution has signed and returned to the Department the Certification and Agreement and the assurance that the institution has used, or intends to use, no less than 50 percent of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.

2. The total amount of funds that AWC received from the Department of Education for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.

Arizona Western College (AWC) actively researched, reviewed and applied for the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) - Higher Education Emergency Relief for AWC’s students. The amount allocated to AWC for direct student dispersal is \$2,264,369 in CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) ACT / HEERF (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund). These funds were received from the Department of Education pursuant to the institution’s Certification and Agreement [for] Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.

3. The total amount of emergency Financial Aid Grants distributed to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of the date of submission.

Arizona Western College has distributed a total amount of \$1,324,550 of the \$2,264,369 in Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of April 14, 2020, and is in the process of collecting and verifying 347 plus student/applications for assessment and approval. The college is well on the way to distributing the majority of CARES Act funding before August 1, 2020. Dr. Corr and the leadership team is committed to prompt and accurate distribution of the CARES Act

Emergency Financial Aid Funding, and considers CARES a top priority in helping to promote the health and safety of AWC's students, faculty, staff and community.

4. The total estimated total number of student at AWC who are eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

The estimated total number of students at AWC who are eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is shown below:

Arizona Western College	
Award Amount	\$2,264,369
Estimated Total Number of Students Eligible For Emergency Financial Aid Grant Award	4,665
Total Number of Students Who Received Emergency Financial Aid Grant	2,586

5. The total number of AWC students who have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

As shown above there were total of 2,586 eligible students who have received Emergency Financial Aid funds.

The AWC marketing and communication department, social media and student services divisions are collectively providing a variety of channels to inform students about CARES Act funding and how they can apply. A second round of CARES Act student financial aid applications and disbursements is scheduled weekly, pending eligible student applications and approvals.

6. The method(s) that AWC used to determine which students receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants and how much they would receive was in accordance to Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

Arizona Western College - In accordance to Section 18004(a)(1) - 15011 of the CARES Act of the Department of Education instructions. AWC's distribution calculation of the CARES Act Funds was based upon eligible student completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for **either** School Year 19/20 or 20/21 before August 1, 2020. AWC used the FAFSA to verify eligibility, per Section 18004(a)(1) and 18004(c) of the CARES Act, as they are one and the same. Students did not need to accept any Federal Aid or be eligible for any grants to receive Student Portion Funds. Eligible students that have already completed the FAFSA received their emergency grant promptly.

AWC students do not need to apply for the CARES Act grant monies, the college is using current FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion to verify eligibility. Students who have not completed a FAFSA this year will not receive a grant. Students have until August 1, 2020 to complete a FAFSA.

The CARES ACT Relief grants, ranging from \$100 to \$800 depending on how many credit hours a student was registered for, are available for all students who qualify to be considered for Federal Financial Aid, whether or not they have ever received aid, or their families qualify for need-based aid.

Distribution of the emergency grant funds was based on enrollment status for eligible students, as follows:

Credits Enrolled as of March 13, 2020: Grant Aid Awarded:

- Students who are enrolled in 12 credit hours or more will receive \$800;
- Students enrolled in 9-11.5, \$500;
- Student enrolled in 6-8.5 credits, \$250;
- Student enrolled in less than 6 credits, \$100

The U.S. Department of Education does not allow these funds to be used for international students, undocumented students, non-matriculated (non-credit) students, dual-credit (currently in high school) students, or students enrolled in distance-only degree programs. Students who are enrolled in a mixture of online and face-to-face classes will receive funds based on the non-online credit hours they are taking.

AWC has prudently established an Emergency Relief Student Fund portion of the \$2.26M of approximately \$175,000 for a locally-administered Emergency Relief Fund, which is designed to address immediate student need and fill in the gaps between standard CARES Act awards.

The Student Portion Funds is an application based emergency grant request process, subject to verification. The applications and information on the emergency grant funds will be available on the AWC Self Service Portal at azwestern.edu/covid. Applications will be collected until August 1, 2020. AWC will make a determination on application awards after the application deadline has passed.

7. Instructions, directions, or guidance provided by AWC to students concerning the Emergency Financial Aid Grants.

The college created messaging for students regarding CARES Act funding disbursement and a plan to distribute the content. Messages are housed on the college's website, on the COVID-19 response page, and a press release and Frequently-Asked Questions document is included. Students received text messaging, emails, and social media content, along with the material appearing in various local media outlets (local newspaper, local radio). The college president addressed the information during two of his weekly livestreams on Facebook. The college has a rapid-response calling team that will continue to reach out to students via phone and text to inform them of what the CARES Act grants are, and how to determine if they are eligible and if they will receive the funds.

Messaging shared on social media:

We will be disbursing federal stimulus funds to spring 2020 students.

Students enrolled in for-credit classes on March 13th, 2020 will be receiving stimulus funds via direct deposit or mailed checks so long as they qualify based on U.S. Department of Education rules.

Learn more, find out if you qualify, and check our FAQs page at azwestern.edu/COVID.

At a glance, the U.S. Department of Education does not allow these funds to be used for international students, undocumented students, non-matriculated (non-credit) students, dual-credit (currently in high school) students, or students enrolled in distance-only degree programs. Students who are enrolled in a mixture of online and face-to-face classes will receive funds based on the non-online credit hours they are taking. To receive funds, students must complete a FAFSA if they have not already done so. Students have until August 1, 2020 to complete a FAFSA to be eligible. Questions? Email disbursement@azwestern.edu.

Press release distributed to local media and posted on our website:

AWC Disburses Federal Stimulus Funds to Spring 2020 Students CARE ACT Grants to be direct-deposited, or mailed in check form

Yuma, AZ (May 8, 2020) – Students enrolled in for-credit classes on March 13 of 2020 will be receiving stimulus funds in their accounts or mailbox, as long as they qualify to receive such funds based on U.S. Department of Education rules.

Communication Timeline:

May 7 – Information and FAQs posted to website
May 7 – Text message to students
May 8 – Distribute press release
May 11 – New announcement on COVID webpage
May 11 – Email to students
May 12 – Z93 Local Radio Interview
May 11 – Notice to students on Blackboard
May 11-Aug – Social media messaging
May 11-Aug – Calls from CARES team
May 13 – Facebook Live with President Corr

8. Document that Recipient (AWC) has continued to pay all of its employees and contractors during the period, and of any disruptions or closures to the greatest extent practicable, explaining in detail all specific actions and decisions related thereto, in compliance with the CARES Act.

Arizona Western College (AWC) continues to employ employees during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Administration has gone to great lengths to meet all students needs through the employment of all faculty, staff and administrators. AWC continues to employ and pay all federal work-study students, part-time employees in essential roles, and adjunct faculty throughout the semester. If any contractors had been hired prior to the pandemic, AWC continues to employ and pay for their services.

As the semester comes to an end, AWC will no longer have federal funding to pay federal work-study students until July, once the funds have been released federal work-study students will be hired for summer 2020, fall 2020, and spring 2021. Adjunct faculty will continue to be employed during the summer and fall of 2020 as needed. Part-time workers normally do not work as much during the summer months, so they will be employed as needed.

Moving forward AWC will continue to employ all full-time employees, adjunct faculty, and essential part-time employees. All of the decisions related to employees at AWC are based on the Governors directive for the entire state of Arizona and CDC guidelines, which have been adhered to throughout this pandemic.