

CARES Act Emergency Grant FAQs

What is the CARES Act?

The Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law to provide economic relief from COVID-19. One section of the CARES Act established the Higher Education Emergency Relief fund and sent money to schools to use for emergency financial aid grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the pandemic.

What are eligible COVID-19 pandemic expenses?

Under the CARES Act, expenses incurred for rent/mortgage, groceries, course materials (unexpected school supplies as a result of your classes transitioning online, technology for online classes, essential utilities (electric, gas, internet, water), healthcare and dental that your insurance did not cover, or childcare for essential workers are eligible.

Tuition/fee balances are not eligible expenses under the CARES Act. If you have an outstanding balance, please contact the Office of Financial Aid at finaid@udc.edu for other options.

Who is eligible to receive a CARES Emergency Grant?

Students who meet basic eligibility criteria for federal financial aid and who have the greatest financial need can be considered for these funds.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Must be enrolled at UDC for the semester for which the student is requesting aid.
- Must be a degree-seeking student—undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral.
- Must be eligible to receive Title IV aid; see [Title IV Eligibility Criteria](#) (Basic Eligibility Criteria for Federal Student Aid). **Update: As of May 14, 2021 student are no longer required to be eligible for Title IV student financial aid in order to receive HEERF grants.**
- Enrollment was impacted by COVID-19, with related expenses incurred for rent/mortgage, groceries, course materials (unexpected school supplies as a result of your classes transitioning online, technology for online classes, essential utilities (electric, gas, internet, water), healthcare and dental that insurance did not cover, or childcare for essential workers are eligible.
- Must have submitted [2019-2020 FAFSA](#) and received a disbursement.

Update: As of May 14, 2021 student are no longer required to be eligible for Title IV student financial aid in order to receive HEERF grants.

Are any students excluded from receiving this funding?

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education does not allow these funds to be used for international students, undocumented students, non-matriculated students, or students enrolled in distance-only degree programs, not meeting satisfactory academic progress, in default on federal student loan, a male between the ages of 18 and 25 not registered with selective service or other unresolved eligibility conflicts. If you are a student from one or more of these groups, there may be other types of emergency aid available through the University Foundation <https://www.udc.edu/foundation/>. Additionally, external resources for undocumented and international students may be found here <https://www.internationalstudent.com/scholarships/search/>.

Update: The Department's final rule indicates that student eligibility for HEERF states that all student who were are or were enrolled in an institution of higher education during the COVID-19 national emergency are eligible for emergency financial aid grants.

What is the application process?

Complete an electronic application by reviewing your email from caresactfunding@udc.edu

How will funds be awarded?

Funds will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.

You will be notified via your UDC email of approval or denial, and you should receive notification within 3 business days of submitting your application. The email will be sent from caresactfunding@udc.edu.

I have more than one COVID-19 related expense. Can I receive additional funding? Funding is limited, and the University's goal is to provide assistance to as many students as possible. Therefore, only one eligible expense per student may be considered.

I owe a balance to the University; can my grant be applied to my outstanding balance?

Tuition/fee balances are not eligible expenses under the CARES Act. Therefore, if you are approved for this grant you will receive a refund. Emergency aid may not be applied. However, you may be eligible to receive tuition assistance.

How much funding can I receive?

Grant amounts vary by student and is based on each student's circumstance. The grant is a one-time award, meaning you may only apply once. Or, until funds have been exhausted.

How and when will I receive my emergency grant?

If approved, your grant will be reflected on your MyUDC portal within 3 business days. Your grant will be direct-deposited to your account on file in your MyUDC portal. If you do not have direct deposit set up, please do so ASAP. You may review the step-by-step instructions on the Office of Financial Aid's website. If no direct deposit information is on file, your grant will be emailed to the address reflected on your MyUDC portal.

Are there any tax implications if I receive this funding?

No. Emergency financial aid grants made by a federal agency, State, Indian tribe, higher education institution or scholarship-granting organization (including a tribal organization) to a student because of an event related to the COVID-19 national emergency are not included in the student's gross income. For more information, please see the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) bulletin Emergency aid granted to students due to COVID is not taxable (March 30, 2021).

Can institutions include the amount of a HEERF student emergency financial aid grant in students' financial aid award package?

No, these emergency financial aid grants are not financial aid.

May undocumented students and international students receive HEERF?

Yes. The Department's final rule on student eligibility for HEERF states that all 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 FAFSA or are eligible for Title IV. That includes citizens, permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipients, other DREAMers, and similar undocumented students. International students may also receive HEERF. However, as noted in Questions 11 and 12, institutions must ensure that funds go to students who have exceptional need. The Department encourages institutions to prioritize domestic students, especially undergraduates, in allocating this funding. This includes citizens, permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, DACA recipients, other DREAMers, and similar undocumented students.