



Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Frequently Asked Questions

Where is this money coming from?

The money is part of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), which was expanded under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). Funding allocations were set by the Department of Education and given directly to institutions.

Why are you awarding Block Grants?

First, the University wants to get this relief to students as quickly as possible. Block Grants allow us the ability to do so.

Second, the CRRSAA requires that institutions prioritize students with *exceptional need* (such as students receiving a Pell Grant). By using Block Grants and following the Department of Education's guidance, we are able to better meet the requirements of the CRRSAA.

Who is eligible to receive the HEERF funds?

There are no specific requirements that a student be Title IV eligible to receive The CRRSAA requires that institutions prioritize students with *exceptional need*, such as students receiving a Pell Grant. To that end, Westfield State has directed the bulk of the funding to students who have filed a FAFSA and are Pell Grant eligible.

Westfield State has determined that to receive a grant, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be enrolled in a degree granting program
- Filed a FAFSA or filed an affidavit stating they have financial need
 - Students filing the affidavit will need to certify they are a United States Citizen or Eligible Noncitizen*

**The Department of Education has verbally stated that in order to qualify for the CRRSAA funding, students must be in compliance with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. If there is any change to the guidance issued by the Department of Education, students will be notified and given the opportunity to qualify for the Block Grant.*

Can I receive funding if I did not file a FAFSA?

Westfield State is allowing students who did not or will not file a FAFSA to file an affidavit that will allow them to certify they have financial need, which will allow them to receive a reduced Block Grant amount of \$200.

Do I need to provide any documentation when submitting the affidavit?

You do not need to provide any documentation, however, you must certify that you would be able to provide documentation should the University request it.

Will this count towards my financial aid?

No, the HEERF funds are not counted towards financial aid for the 2019-2020 academic year or the 2020-2021 academic year. HEERF funds will also not count as income for the calculation of your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) or estimated financial assistance (EFA).

Can the funds be used to pay my outstanding balance?

Students can choose to have the funds be directed to pay an outstanding balance, however, it is not required that students do so. Students who wish to do so must complete an affidavit stating that they would like to have the funds go to pay their outstanding balance.

If a student has an outstanding balance and does not want to apply the grant to that balance, the grant will still be paid out to the student.

What are the block grant amounts that the University is awarding?

The University is awarding the following block grants to students:

Undergraduate Students			
EFC	0 - 5711	5712 - 12,000	12,001 +
Full-Time	\$1,000	\$600	\$250
Part-Time	\$900	\$500	\$250
Graduate Students			
EFC	0 - 2500	2501 - 10,000	10,001 +
	\$500	\$300	\$200

Students who file an affidavit with the University will receive a \$200 grant.

How do I know if I am Full-Time or Part-Time?

The University defines a full-time student as being enrolled in 12 or more credits. As of February 19, 2021, students enrolled in 12 or more credits was considered full-time for the purposes of the Block Grant. Graduate students were awarded a Block Grant regardless of their enrollment status.

Do I need to provide receipts to receive the HEERF Funds?

No

What if I have additional needs beyond the Block Grant?

The University will be awarding most of the funding through the Block Grant process. Students who have exceptional need beyond the amount awarded through the Block Grant should contact the Financial Aid Office at financialaid@westfield.ma.edu.