**CARES ACT/HEERF I**

**Overview**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act includes a Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) that provides more than $14 billion in emergency funding to higher education. Of those funds, more than $6 billion must go directly to students in the form of emergency financial aid grants (HEERF-student share) for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 crisis. On April 9, 2020, the ED published a list of individual institutional allocations, a certification form that must be signed and returned in order to access the funds, and a letter from Secretary Betsy DeVos outlining ED’s implementation of the CARES Act program. On April 21, 2020, ED released additional clarification on student eligibility and allowable uses of HEERF-student share funds. (NASFAA 2020)

**Roanoke-Chowan Community College’s Allocation and Actions**

PR Award Number P425E204868

In the summer of 2020, Roanoke-Chowan Community College’s Interim President, Dr. Audre Levy, signed the HEERF certification form for the student portion of funding.

R-CCC was allocated a total of $176,740 to be used for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students, which represented 50 percent of the total CARES Act funding provided to the institution.

On June 18, 2020, R-CCC received the student portion of HEERF and began the process of determining eligible students and creating an application. The total amount of Emergency Financial Aid Grants distributed to students totaled $72,000 with an estimated total number of students at R-CCC eligible to participate in the programs of the CARES Act numbering 124. The total number of students who received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant totaled 60.

**Process & Eligibility**

The method used by R-CCC to determine which students would receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants and how much they would receive was an application-based model. Instructions and the application were provided to students at the following link: <https://forms.gle/5kveoJwodz8pRa9A8>. Titled “Roanoke-Chowan Community College Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Emergency Relief Fund Application,” the page detailed eligibility requirements.

Students must have been enrolled in at least one face-to-face class during the spring 2020 semester on or after March 13, 2020. Additional eligibility requirements included:

* Student is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree or certificate program.
* Student has a high school diploma or GED.
* Student meets satisfactory academic progress, as applicable.
* Student does not owe an overpayment on Title IV grants or loans.
* Student is not in default on a Title IV loan.
* Student, as part of the financial aid application process, filed a certification that includes a statement of educational purpose and social security number.
* Student has a verified security number.
* Student is a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or eligible non-citizen.
* Student returned fraudulently obtained Title IV funds, if convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to charges.
* Student has not fraudulently received Title IV loans in excess of annual or aggregate limits.
* Student repaid Title IV loan amounts in excess of annual or aggregate limits if obtained inadvertently.
* Student registered with Selective Service, as applicable.
* Student does not have a federal or state conviction for drug possession or sale, with certain time limitations.

Per guidelines, students not eligible include:

* Those enrolled in online classes only in spring 2020
* Those enrolled in elementary or secondary school

Eligibility requirements are verified by the R-CCC Financial Aid Office.

The application consisted of students providing name, email address, phone number, checking the appropriate box related to completion of the FAFSA form for the academic year 2019-2020, and checking the appropriate box related to coronavirus pandemic impacts. Students were also instructed to check a box electronically consenting to the following:

"To conclude, please indicate your agreement with the following statement:
I understand that the Federal CARES Act requires that any emergency funds I receive must be used to offset expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the Coronavirus. I attest that I will use the funds received from Roanoke-Chowan Community College to pay for emergency expenses as defined above by the CARES Act. By selecting the 'I Accept' button, you are signing this Agreement electronically. You agree your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual signature on this Agreement."