

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II Process
for
Emergency Financial Grants to Students
March 1, 2021

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act designates funds under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) model, established under the CARES Act, to distribute direct grant assistance to students. Schools must spend the same dollar amount allocated under CRRSA on student grants as was allocated to student grants in the CARES Act.

Eligible Students

Illinois Tech will utilize a completed FAFSA for the current academic year to establish eligibility, as this application establishes the ability for U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens to participate in Title IV programs and meets all applicable general student eligibility requirements as defined in Section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Students with no current valid FAFSA and an active citizenship or lawful permanent resident status will be encouraged to complete a FAFSA to demonstrate eligibility. Additional Title IV aid eligibility requirements need not be met to be eligible for a grant (i.e., SAP ineligibility, outstanding federal verification, or c-codes need not be satisfied). Per guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, schools must prioritize students with “exceptional need” and establish awarding details accordingly. Illinois Tech initially elected to award HEERF II grants only to degree-seeking undergraduate students (full or part time) with a prioritization for students with high need. Illinois Tech elected to expand the eligible student population to include degree-seeking graduate and professional students on April 13, 2021. HEERF II funds can be applied to charges or expenses incurred after December 27, 2020.

Initial Distribution

Pell Grant recipients have been identified as a population with known exceptional need and difficulty responding to emergency expenses and Illinois Tech will distribute a portion of grant funds to Pell Grant recipients outright. Each grant recipient will receive \$1,100. This population can also submit an application (see below) to be considered for additional grant funds based on additional need.

Remaining Distribution

Remaining students will need to apply for HEERF II grants so Illinois Tech can decipher and prioritize the neediest students. Grants will be determined based on percent need met of existing financial aid offer along with the personal expenses and circumstances expressed by the student on the application. This method will prioritize students with a lower percent need met while considering not all need may be captured as such and provide the flexibility for exceptional need circumstances students may be facing.

Grant amounts will range from a minimum award of \$300 going up progressively in \$100 increments to a maximum of \$6,300 (in alignment with the 2020-21 Pell Grant maximum) with greater amounts going to students with greater need.

Application Process

Students will apply through the Office of Financial Aid's [Student Assistance Form](#), where a HEERF option will be designated. This application will prompt students to identify which costs they may need assistance with (from the COA or coronavirus related) along with a prompt to describe their personal circumstance. This information will serve the Office of Financial Aid in determining individual student need (see awarding process section) along with understanding if the student may benefit from further financial support through Professional Judgment guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed in the order received. The portion of the grant remaining after the initial Pell distribution will be awarded on a first come first serve basis to applicants until the allocation is fully distributed.

Awarding Process

Upon submission, each application will be reviewed individually through the Office of Financial Aid. As a situation warrants, in the Financial Aid Office's professional judgment, the need calculation will be adjusted based on the information contained in the application (i.e, either increased costs or a change of situation that impacts EFC/ need calculation). Any EFC adjustments made will follow the separate Professional Judgment guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education. Upon completion of the process, students will receive personal communication indicating the value of the grant, the timeline for distribution, instructions on the billing application consent form (link forthcoming), and remind students of the intent of the funds.

Distribution

A new detail code and financial aid fund code will be created under the existing university HEERF accounting code for funds to be applied directly to the student bill, for students who complete the consent form indicating this authorization. Funds are not contingent upon completion of the consent form. The existing HEERF financial aid fund code will continue to be utilized to distribute this grant directly to students for students who do not complete the consent form. All HEERF funds (regardless of consent for billing application) will be added to the student's financial aid record in Banner and disbursed to the student bill. Students who provided the consent form will have the grant applied directly to any current charges and any excess will be distributed to the student via their direct deposit information on file. Students with no consent will have the funds distributed through direct deposit. For any student without direct deposit information in TouchNet, a paper check will be cut and mailed to their current address.

Communication

All Pell Grant recipients will be communicated to regarding the initial distribution, with instructions on completing the optional consent form. Thereafter, all undergraduate students with a FAFSA on file will be communicated to regarding the purpose of the HEERF II funds and the application process. Graduate and professional students will receive the same information upon expending eligibility for these student populations.

Reporting

Details on award usage will likely be reported to the U.S. Department of Education similar to the CARES Act reporting. As further guidance is offered, the Office of Financial Aid will make all reports and/ or work closely with appropriate campus offices to do so.