

St. Philip's College
165-Day Fund Report
CARES Act for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund
SPC CARES ER Student Aid Project

Grant Program: CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (CFDA 84.425E)

Grant Program Title: Education Stabilization Fund

PR/AWARD #: P425E202550

Project Description: 84.425E CARES ACT Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund for students impacted by COVID-19

Budget & Performance Period: April 25, 2020 – April 24, 2021

Current Award Amount: \$1,713,753.00

REPORTING PERIOD: April 25, 2020 through October 7, 2020

Institutional Acknowledgement:

On April 17, 2020, St. Philip's College's (SPC) Authorized Representative and President, Dr. Adena Loston, signed the Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, uploading and returning the document to the U.S. Department of Education as part of the institutions' application submission to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund-Student Aid grant program via the Grants.gov portal. In signing the aforementioned certification and agreement document, St. Philip's College assures its intent to use no less than 50% of the Federal funding received under Section 18004 (a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.

Amount of Student Emergency Aid Grants Disbursed:

UPDATE:

- The total amount of emergency financial aid grants disbursed to St. Philip's College students using funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of October 7, 2020 is \$1,705,953.
- The total amount of remaining emergency financial aid grants available for disbursement to St. Philip's College students using funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of October 7, 2020 is \$7,800.

Estimated Number of Students Eligible to Receive Emergency Aid Grants:

The estimated total number of St. Philip's College students eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is 5,322. This estimated total was derived using the number of all 2019-2020 FAFSA applications received by SPC's financial aid office, and using the student eligibility criteria found in Section 424 of the HEA of 1965 as amended, ensuring the students included in the count were currently in good academic standing.

Number of Students Receiving Emergency Aid Grants:

As of October 7, 2020, a total of 2,734 students attending St. Philip's College have received Emergency Financial Aid Grants under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. Between the 30-day report and the 75-day report there was a change in the interpretation of eligibility. Students that were awarded CARES Act funds that did not meet the new eligibility interpretation had their CARES Act funding retracted and replaced with alternative institutional dollars.

Institutional Methodology:

St. Philip's College developed the following methodology to determine which students are eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants and the amount students are to receive under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act:

St. Philip's College's approach in determining student eligibility was amended several times due to varying interpretations of the USDoE CARES Act HEERF student eligibility criteria between the institution's district financial aid office and the institutional and project leadership. Initially, the student emergency financial aid grants process was to be administered through the St. Philip's College (SPC) Student Advocacy Center, so that students could be case managed and provided with additional tools to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic. In determining which students were eligible to receive CARES Act HEERF Emergency Financial Aid Grants, the district financial aid office made the decision to shift the process in a direction that requires students to submit or have submitted a 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application, given that the FAFSA Student Aid Report provides a reliable confirmation of students' eligibility to participate in programs under Section 484 the HEA.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Complete and submit a 2019-2020 and/or 2020-2021 FAFSA, if one is not already on file
- Have completed all financial aid requirements
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen (i.e., eligible to receive federal Title IV aid)
- Be enrolled full-time or part-time in Fall 2020 semester, OR were enrolled full-time or part-time in Spring 2020, OR were enrolled in Fall 2019 PLUS were enrolled in either Maymester 2020, Summer 1 2020, or Summer II 2020
- Not currently be or have been enrolled exclusively in online programs for the fall 2020 semester or for the spring 2020 semester on or prior to March 12, 2020
- Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements. Not be in default on a federal student loan or owe an overpayment on any federal grant
- Have a high school diploma or GED
- Have a valid Social Security number
- Be registered with Selective Service (if required)
- Not have a conviction for the possession or sale of illegal drugs for an offense that occurred while you were receiving federal student aid (such as grants, work-study, or loans)

The award amount will depend on the number of applicants, availability of funds, and need demonstrated in the application. CARES Act HEERF Emergency Financial Aid

Grants information is housed on the [Students Emergency Aid](#) page of the Alamo Colleges/St. Philip's College website and is reachable through the [Alamo Colleges Corona Virus Response](#) page which can be found on the Alamo Colleges and St. Philip's home pages. The information is further promoted through student and employee email, COVID-19 newsletter updates and St. Philip's newsletters. SPC students were able to request emergency aid assistance through an electronic application available in the ACES student portal and accessible through the SPC website. Adhering to U.S. Department of Education guidance, documentation of expenses was requested from students applying for CARES Act HEERF assistance, but was not mandatory. The online student application asked students questions pertaining to their need for assistance and the amount being requested, and required students to electronically certifying that the funds for which they applied are for expenses resulting from the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Student Advocacy Center, in collaboration with the SPC Student Services leadership, developed a rubric for what an appropriate award would be for different categories of expenses. The rubric was to be SPC's guide for emergency grant award decisions. While SPC received a significant number of applications after the online document was made available on May 1, 2020 at 2:00 p.m., the volume was not as high as expected and students were not asking for much in monetary assistance. Student Advocacy staff noted that students were taking a very short-term view of their needs. In some cases, student awards were elevated upward of a student's request to the amount that had been determined on SPC's previously mentioned rubric. The SPC Student Advocacy staff anticipated that these students would be returning to request additional funds in coming months. To better assist and support SPC students, their fund requests were increased, with instructions provided to the students that an assessment of their current circumstances and needs resulting from the coronavirus pandemic was conducted by the SPC Student Advocacy, which determined anticipating an additional future request for the recurring expenses and encouraged them to budget appropriately.

On May 11, 2020, the SPC Student Advocacy staff began case-loading students who had applied for CARES Act HEERF Emergency Financial Aid Grants with priority to denied students. Students were denied based on not meeting the eligibility criteria. SPC began outreach efforts to help students understand the reasons for denial and what they could do to meet the criteria, such as enrolling in a summer course. The SPC Student Advocacy staff is also working with students who do not qualify for CARES Act HEERF Emergency Financial Aid Grants to determine whether alternative sources of emergency aid or community assistance are available and could be leveraged. Additionally, the SPC Student Advocacy team also began outreach efforts to students who were awarded funds from CARES Act HEERF Emergency Financial Aid Grants to provide further assistance if additional funds or community resources were needed. This process established a connection between students and Advocacy a team members who will be supporting the students through the COVID-19 pandemic to remain enrolled.

Guided by the CARES Act guidance for HEERF funding that states that a single distribution can be made if a specific group could be identified that was impacted by the

COVID-19 pandemic, on May 12, 2020, a one-time disbursement of \$300 was made to all SPC Pell-eligible students who were enrolled during the spring 2020 term. The decision for the one-time disbursement was based on a 2019 survey of students within the Alamo Colleges, including St. Philip's College, in which nearly 50% reported experiencing food insecurity and approximately 60% of students indicated being housing insecure. In the same survey, 17% of students reported having been homeless at some point in the prior year. Because of the fragile nature of poverty and SPC faculty and staff awareness of the likelihood that students were in survival mode, it was the institution's belief that a broad distribution alerting the students to the availability of CARES Act HEERF Emergency Financial Aid Grants funding would help increase awareness and the requests for assistance.

On June 2, 2020 the CARES Act application was temporarily disabled online to allow for the District Financial Aid office to work through the queue of unprocessed applications across the district. On July 1, 2020, after the queue of applications had been processed, it was proposed that the CARES Act application go live again. However, because SPC had already awarded 99.6% of funds to students, it was decided not to reopen the CARES Act application to SPC students and instead use the remaining 0.4% to supplement CARES awardees who received minimal awards and may still need further assistance. SPC students initially seeking emergency aid were directed to the Student Advocacy Center for other aid opportunities.

From June 2, 2020 through August 12, 2020 the remaining 0.4% was awarded to students in the form of supplemental awards. Further, District Financial Aid had initially drawn awards from other funds in an effort to extend the SPC CARES Act fund. The remaining 0.4% was also used to award students who had been provided funds from other grants.

UPDATE:

From August 12, 2020 through October 7, 2020 there were a large number of students who were initially awarded the \$300 award to all Pell-eligible students where their checks or funds were not able to be delivered. After several attempts to locate those students the funds were returned to the Alamo Colleges and the awards were cancelled. This reduced the number of students awarded and freed up funds to be awarded back to the program. The amount returned to SPC and now available to award to students is \$7,800.

Information to Students on Emergency Financial Aid Grants:

The following instructions, directions, and/or guidance pertaining to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Emergency Financial Aid Grants funding under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act received by St. Philip's College and available for disbursement have been provided to students on the institutional website, student emergency aid application, email communications sent to students, and in the Student Information System (award status/outcome) can be viewed by clicking on the following link:

- [Student Communications-SPC CARES Act HEERF Emergency Aid Grant \(PDF\)](#)

Important Documents and Links

- [Recipient's Funding Certification and Agreement Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act \(PDF\)](#)
- [Federal Student Aid: Emergency Aid Requirements and Steps to Apply](#)