

CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Statement

At, Reading Area Community College we acknowledge that many of our students are facing additional challenges due to the ongoing pandemic. To assist students who have been impacted financially, RACC is distributing emergency government grant funding via the CARES Act. The CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)-IHE/Student Aid supplies funding for institutions to provide emergency financial aid grants to students who have been negatively impacted by disrupted campus operations due to coronavirus.

The CARES Act requires all colleges and universities participating in the program to provide the following information.

Reading Area Community College (RACC) has signed and returned to the Department of Education the CARES Act Certification and Agreement. This document is an assurance that RACC has used, or intends to use, no less than 50 percent of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.

- The total amount of funds that RACC will receive or has received from the Department pursuant to the institution's Certification and Agreement [for] Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students is \$1,569,225.
- The total amount of Emergency Financial Aid Grants distributed to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of the date of submission (i.e., as of the 30-day Report and every 45 days thereafter) is \$693,075.
- The estimated total number of students at the institution eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is 3,531.
- The total number of students who have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is 3,531.
- RACC's method of evaluating eligibility for and amount of Emergency Financial Aid Grants under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act was determined by student Title IV eligible as well as Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Awarding Criteria.

As for the awarding criteria for summer and fall semester, we followed the same logic as spring semester with the exception, we removed the mandatory one face to face class registration.

To establish the awarding criteria for the Spring Semester recipients list and to remain in compliance with the Act, we limited our eligibility to students who had a complete financial aid file and who had enrolled in at least one face to face class. We then established an award structure for all eligible students for the Spring Semester with a proration based on credits of

enrollment and a financial need based consideration from the federal needs methodology or the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

There is one year to disburse funds and therefore, RACC has reserved some funds for future semesters due to the likelihood of further interruption. We created an award called CARES Act within the financial aid section of the college administrative software and set it up as a pass through account in order to provide cash directly to the student.

All student award recipients were directed to an e-form to isolate their issues on a case by case basis to be used for possible professional judgement adjustments to increase their eligibility for the Pell grant.

In addition to gathering data for student file adjustments, the form allowed us to determine other needs of students such as computer and technology needs. This information will be considered in determining the allocation of the institutional portion of the CARES Act funds to enable our students to complete on-line instruction successfully.

Sample Award Letter



from the office of **Records and Financial Aid**

Dear Benjamin,

We are pleased to inform you that you were approved for a RACC CARES Act grant. This funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Education as a result of the CARES Act. You were eligible for these funds because you are a student with a complete financial aid file who experienced a switch to on-line learning.

CARES funding is intended and should be used for student expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus,

such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care and child-care expenses.

The amount is \$\$ and the funds will be released by check or direct deposit on Tuesday, May 26, 2020. Students who enroll in summer and fall classes may qualify for further funding through the RACC CARES program.