

CARES Act Funding for Students Tri-State Bible College

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)
October 20, 2020

About the CARES Act and the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)

On March 27, 2020 the federal government enacted the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The CARES Act includes a Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). A portion of HEERF funds must go directly to eligible students in the form of emergency financial aid grants for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emergency grants will be awarded to students who are Title IV eligible. Only students enrolled for credit pursuing an Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's degree are eligible for emergency grants.

The following information is provided by Tri-State Bible College as required by the Department of Education in order to comply with the reporting requirements under the CARES Act. This is TSBC's first reporting. Subsequent reports will be provided every 45 days until the funds are expended.

1. Certification and Agreement

On September 29, 2020, Tri-State Bible College signed and returned to the Department of Education the Certification and Agreement and the assurance that the College 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.

2. Amounts to be Received

Pursuant to the Certification and Agreement, Tri-State Bible College received \$12,900 in HEERF Emergency Assistance Grant funds. The College received confirmation of the availability of these funds and has drawn down the available funds for distribution.

3. Amounts Distributed to Date

This is the first distribution of these funds. Students were notified through a variety of methods beginning on October 21, 2020—direct email, TSBC website posting, and TSBC Facebook posting—with a deadline of 11:59pm on October 28, 2020. As of October 29, nine students have applied, requesting a total of \$13,450. The Student Grants Committee will meet the week of November 2, 2020 to determine the amount given to each student.

4. Estimated Number of Eligible Students

TSBC estimates that approximately 24 students from the Spring 2019–2020 semester and 14 enrolled students from the Summer 2019–2020 semester, including students enrolled in associate's, bachelor's, and graduate programs, may be eligible for the Emergency Assistance Grant funds. This represents approximately 39% (in the Spring) and 23% (in the Summer) of the College's total enrollment.

5. Number of Students who have Received HEERF Emergency Grant Funds

None to date since this process is just being implemented.

6. Method of Determining Which Students Would Receive HEERF Emergency Grant Funds

Following is a summary of the College’s procedure for determining how the HEERF Emergency Assistance Grant funds will be distributed:

- The Student Grant Committee will evaluate each eligible applicant’s award based on a matrix of these factors: (1) course load (i.e., number of credit hours) during the aforementioned semesters, (2) amount of previously awarded aid, and (3) need-based circumstances unique to COVID-19.

Spring Course Load	Summer Course Load	Amount of Previously Awarded Aid	COVID-19 Related Expenses Resulting in Need
# of hours	# of hours	\$ of Previously Awarded Aid	\$ from Submitted Receipts Demonstrating Need

Table 1. TSBC Student Grant Committee Distribution Formula Matrix

- Student applications should accurately describe the expenses incurred as a result of the disruption of campus operations, classroom operations, and class schedules due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the College will validate each student’s eligibility through an application process. Student applications will be accepted starting October 21, 2020.
- Any funds remaining after the initial funding time period will be awarded to eligible students on a case-by-case basis taking into account each student’s unique circumstances and needs. The College will continue to make awards consistent with the CARES Act and the College’s policy until the HEERF Emergency Assistance Grant funds are fully distributed.

7. Instructions, Directions, and Guidance Regarding HEERF Emergency Grant Funds

Tri-State Bible College developed an online application process for students to apply for the Emergency Assistance Grant funds. Students are continuously notified through email, text, social media, and other notification processes and are encouraged to do the following:

- Review the Online Application: [Grant Application https://www.tsbc.edu/CARESActStudentGrant](https://www.tsbc.edu/CARESActStudentGrant)
- Of all allowable expenses (Food, Course Materials, Technology, Health Care, Child/Dependent Care, Transportation, or Housing), determine expenses incurred after March 13, 2020 and prior to August 30, 2020 that are directly related to the disruption of campus operations, classroom operations, and class schedules.
- Print out the completed application, attach applicable receipts, and deliver it to the Financial Aid Office.
- The TSBC Student Grant Committee (SGC) will review applications on a regular and ongoing basis to determine eligibility and allocated amount based the aforementioned distribution formula matrix. A member of the SGC will communicate with the student if there are concerns or if additional information is needed.
- The student will receive an email sent to his/her TSBC address with a decision. Grants will be awarded by check and mailed to the physical address currently on file with the College. Checks may take up to ten business days to be received.
- Review HEERF Emergency Assistance Grant FAQ’s (below) and <https://www.tsbc.edu/CARESActStudentGrant> for related information.

HEERF Emergency Assistance Grant FAQ’s

Emergency grants will be awarded to students using the SGC’s distribution formula matrix previously described and illustrated and in accordance with federal financial aid guidelines. All students who are eligible to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) may apply.

ELIGIBILITY

Here's what's required:

- According to U.S. Department of Education, enrollment in a degree-seeking program as an undergraduate student or as a graduate student with Title IV eligibility [Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), Federal Subsidized and Unsubsidized Direct Loans].
- College Credit Plus students are ineligible.
- Eligible as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA (see details below this list)
 - U.S. citizenship or eligible non-citizen
 - A valid Social Security number
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress in their course of study (at least a 2.0 at time of application).¹
- Must have been enrolled in at least one resident or resident modular course in Spring or Summer 2020 semester.

HOW DO I APPLY?

CARES Emergency Assistance Grant must be used to cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations, classroom operations, and/or class schedules due to coronavirus. This includes, but is not limited to, eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare.

Starting the process:

Go to the CARES Act **Grant Application** <https://www.tsbc.edu/CARESActStudentGrant>.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES (MUST BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE):

- **Food expenses** may include unexpected grocery expenses or a student supporting dependent children now home due to their school or childcare closure.
- **Course materials** may include but not limited to general use supplies such as writing utensils and notebooks; course specific supplies required to be purchased due to campus disruption of regular operations.
- **Technology** expenses may include computer equipment, internet access expenses, printer supplies, etc. required for student success when transitioning to an online format from the traditional in- person class structure.
- **Health care** expenses may include the cost of unanticipated or unusual medical expenses due to coronavirus or its effects.
- **Childcare/Dependent care expenses** may include the cost of unanticipated or unusual care expenses for a student's child or other dependents in the independent (based on FAFSA) student's household.
- **Transportation expenses** may include the cost of unanticipated or unusual travel expenses related to the disruption of campus operations. This may include additional trips to the college to retrieve personal belongings or difficulty in making car payments due to income loss from this economic disruption.
- **Housing expenses** may include unanticipated expenses in securing housing and/or rent for residential students after the closure of campus housing in March. This may also include difficulty in making rent or mortgage payments due to income loss from this economic disruption.

If a student is Title IV eligible and can supply relevant receipts within the date range, then they qualify.

¹ Incoming freshman are exempt from this requirement.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is there a deadline to apply for CARES Emergency Assistance Grant?

- Applications will be considered on a first-come, first served basis until all funds are depleted. All students should apply as soon as possible. The deadline for the Student Application to the Student Grant of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) is **11:59pm on October 28th, 2020**.
- The college's goal is to distribute these funds as widely as possible to assist many students.

How long will it take for me to receive the funds?

- Receiving the payment may take up to ten days after approval. The Student Grant Committee will review applications on an ongoing basis and make decisions as quickly as possible.
- Once an application has been approved, notification will be sent to the student's Tri-State Bible College inbox. In the event an application is not approved, the student will be notified as soon as possible to provide additional information or to clarify eligibility.

How will the funds be received?

- CARES Emergency Assistance Grant funds will be sent by check to the address provided in the application. We recommend you regularly update your mailing address with the Registrar. Due to these unique circumstances, your check to be sent to your permanent residence on file with the college.

Could these funds be deemed taxable by the IRS?

- CARES Act student payments are non-taxable, according to the IRS: (<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/faqs-higher-education-emergency-relief-fund-and-emergency-financial-aid-grants-under-the-cares-act>).

Can CARES Emergency Assistance Grant funds be applied to my college balance or account?

- No, the college cannot directly apply these funds to an outstanding balance on a student's account. The college will disburse funds to students by check.

Can I make a payment to my college balance using a portion of the CARES Emergency Assistance Grant?

- You can make a payment on your balance at any time. However, please note that the intent of the CARES Act is to provide emergency cash grants to students to cover their emergency personal expenses such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare.
- Please ensure you have what you need to cover these expenses before using any emergency grant funds to make payment on an outstanding student account balance. Tri-State Bible College will not withhold any CARES Act funds to cover balances.

What are my options if I lost my job?

- CARES Act funds cannot be used to offset lost income but can be used to help toward expenses incurred due to that lost income if those expenses were due to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.
- It is recommended that you contact the Financial Aid Office to discuss the details of your situation. It may be an option to request a Special Circumstance Form to determine if you are eligible for additional federal funds due to a reduction or loss of income.

Whom may I contact with questions?

- Students who require assistance in completing the application, or have other questions, may contact the following offices weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday.

Application questions: Jana Thacker (South Point Financial Aid Office & Student Grant Committee Member) — jana.thacker@tsbc.edu, 740-377-2520.