

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Reporting

Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students

30-DAY FUND REPORT EMERGENCY GRANTS TO STUDENTS UNDER SECTION 18004(A)(1) OF THE CARES ACT

Simmons University has signed and returned, to the Department of Education, the Certification and Agreement related to the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds . The University 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 University has received \$1,111,221 from the Department pursuant to the our Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students. As of September 30, 2020 Simmons University distributed \$1,079,396 to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

As of March 13th, Simmons University had 2,296 on ground students* 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. As of September 29th 2020:

In the 2019-2020 academic year, 2,296 students received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant to Students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

In the 2020-2021 academic year, 83 students received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant to students under Section 18004(a)(1)

Methodology for determining which students initially received Emergency Financial Aid Grants and how much they will receive under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

Knowing that our on ground population of students were directly affected by the disruption to campus activities due to the Coronavirus, we worked to spread funds equitably across our on ground population. Based on the Department of Education's explanation of the methodology for calculating the funds we received "The first factor(75%) primarily allocates funds based on undergraduate enrollment since Pell Grant eligibility is limited to undergraduates and students in post baccalaureate teacher education programs. The second factor(25%) allocates funds based on undergraduate and graduate enrollment." So of the \$1,111,221, we allocated 75% to undergraduate students and 25% to graduate students. Further, as was suggested by the Department of Education, we prioritized students by need level as shown on the chart to the right.

Level of Funding by Expected Family Contribution (EFC)		
EFC	UG	GR
0 - \$5,576	\$800	\$350
\$5,577- \$10,000	\$600	\$200
\$10,001 - \$40,000	\$400	\$150
> \$40,000	\$200	\$100

*At institutions that provide both online and ground-based education, those students who were enrolled exclusively in an online program on March 13, 2020, the date of the President's Proclamation, "Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak," Federal Register Vol. 85, No. 53 at 15337- 38, are not eligible for emergency financial aid grants. The formula provided by Congress for calculating the distribution of funds to institutions excludes students who were exclusively enrolled in distance education courses. Additionally, the emergency financial aid grants to students are for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus, and students who were enrolled exclusively in online programs would not have expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

Instructions, Directions and Guidance provided by Simmons University to all Eligible Students

On May 19, 2020 **all eligible students** received an email informing them of their eligibility for a grant from the CARES Act. Attached to that email was a letter describing the details and also informing them of the ability to request additional funds.

The email and letter are included here.

Email to Students with Direct Deposit

Attached you will find a letter informing you of your eligibility for a direct grant from the Federal CARES Act.

To view your CARES Act award amount, please go to [Simmons Connection](#) > AARC > Access Student Account Center > View Bill/Make a Payment. You will automatically be logged in to the *Student Account Center*. In the middle of the page next to *view account*, select *CARES Emergency Fund* and click *view activity*.

We will disburse the CARES funds, through direct deposit, on Wednesday May 20th and you should see the funds in your bank account within a few days.

Email to Students without Direct Deposit

Attached you will find a letter informing you of your eligibility for a direct grant from the Federal CARES Act.

To view your CARES Act award amount, please go to [Simmons Connection](#) > AARC > Access Student Account Center > View Bill/Make a Payment. You will automatically be logged in to the *Student Account Center*. In the middle of the page next to *view account*, select *CARES Emergency Fund* and click *view activity*.

As you do not have direct deposit set up at this time, we would encourage you to do that so that your funds will get to you as quickly as possible. To set up **direct deposit** of your CARES Act award, simply click **electronic refunds** on the right hand side of the welcome page under *My Profile Setup* or select the **refunds** option at the top of any page. Click *set up account* and enter in your banking information.

Please sign up for direct deposit by Tuesday May 26th as we will disburse the CARES funds on Wednesday May 27th. If direct deposit is not set up by Tuesday May 26th, we will generate and mail a paper check to the address you have on file.

Letter to Students (attached to above emails)

As this unprecedented Spring semester comes to an end, we hope that you and your family are staying safe and healthy. As a University, our main goal has been the safety and wellbeing of our students, faculty and staff. We understand that this has also been an academic adjustment and want to acknowledge that and commend you on the strength and commitment you have shown to your studies.

The coronavirus has caused us to adjust to a new way of life and the disruption to campus operations has left students with unanticipated costs for things like living expenses, technology, course materials and printing costs. Last week we received money from the federal government as part of the CARES Act. We are committed to providing this emergency assistance to you and are reaching out to let you know that we will be pushing a grant refund, through your student account, to you in the coming week.

This grant will not be a credit on your account and if you owe money, it will not go against those charges. We are merely using the student account as a way of getting these funds into your hands as quickly as possible. To that end, if you are not currently set up with direct deposit, through your student account in touch net, please do that as soon as possible otherwise we will be required to send a paper check to you.

Understanding that each student's need is different we have reserved a small portion of these funds. If your expenses related to the disruption to campus operations is greater than the grant you will receive, you may submit an [application](#) on our website to request further assistance.

Our best wishes to you during the continued transition and disruption the coronavirus has caused all of us. If there is anything our office can do to help you as you plan for the upcoming academic year, please be in touch.

On August 7, 2020 the office of Student Financial Services sent an email to all undergraduate students ahead of the 2020 Fall semester. The University had made the decision to be remote for the Fall term and we knew that there were some students who, because of changes to the campus operations, would need financial help for technology purchases in order to be successful in the term ahead. With the small amount of funds we had remaining from CARES funding we created a CARES Act Technology application. The following message was included in the email to students.

Initial email to students 2020-2021

CARES Act funding for Returning Students

Funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was signed into federal law last March, provides support to universities for a variety of expenses, including technology costs associated with virtual learning. CARES Act funding is enabling us to support some returning undergraduate and campus-based graduate students with technology and equipment needs this semester.

In 2019-2020 Simmons provided CARES grants to all eligible students. We have reserved a limited amount of funds in order to help support eligible returning students who require technology in order to effectively attend and participate in virtual classes.

Returning students who need financial assistance to access items such as high-speed internet or laptops, should contact sfs@simmons.edu to request a grant.

email to students awarded 2020-2021

Dear Student,

I am writing to let you know that we have received your application for CARES Emergency Technology Funds and are in the processing of awarding funds over the next week. Disbursement of funds should happen between September 10 - 17th. We will communicate with you regarding the amount awarded and exact disbursement date shortly.

If you are not already set up with direct deposit, I would recommend you do that for the quickest receipt of funds. Here are the instructions to set up direct deposit:

Log in to aarc.simmons.edu.

- Go to the Student menu. Click on 'Access Student Account Center', and then click 'View Bill/Make a Payment'.
- You will now be in the student portal. Under 'My Profile Setup' located to the right, click on 'Electronic Refunds'.
- Click on 'Set Up Account'.
- Enter your bank account information and click continue. Make sure you enter your checking or savings account number and not your debit card number.