

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
A Graduate School of Education, Health & Psychology

**TEACHERS COLLEGE HIGHER EDUCATION EMERGENCY RELIEF
FUND (HEERF) EMERGENCY GRANTS POLICY**

HEERF I

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)

On May 8, 2020, the federal [CARES Act](#) was enacted to provide money to colleges and universities for emergency student grants. The purpose of the money was to award emergency financial aid grants to students for specific expenses that were a direct result of the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus. Teachers College received \$559,267 under the Federal CARES Act to distribute emergency financial grants to students in a way that prioritizes students with the greatest demonstrated need while ensuring the funds were distributed as widely as possible. Grants were directly sent to students as a stipend and could not be used by Teachers College for the payment of tuition balances or other fees and charges.

CARES Act Eligibility

The following eligibility requirements have been established by the U.S. Department of Education. All of the following must apply:

- You must be a current student in good standing at Teachers College in a degree-granting program.
- You must not have been enrolled exclusively in online courses prior to March 13, 2020.
- You must affirm you have experienced financial hardship resulting from COVID-19 and the disruption of on-campus operations.
- You must have a FAFSA on file with Teachers College or complete one by June 2020 via the <https://studentaid.gov/> website.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education does not allow CARES Act Emergency funds to be used for students who are not eligible for federal financial aid, including international, DACA, or undocumented students, nor are the funds allowed to be distributed to any student who was exclusively taking online courses prior to March 13, 2020. If you are ineligible for this reason, you may request assistance through the [Wendy M. Dressel Student Emergency Fund](#) application process.

Covered Expenses Under the CARES Act

The following is a list of expenses that can be considered for CARES Act Emergency grant assistance if they were incurred in "direct relation to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus."

- Food
- Housing
- Course Materials
- Health Care
- Childcare
- Technology (such as having to buy a computer when courses were moved online)
- Transportation (such as having to fly home because classes were canceled or having to return from study abroad when the program was canceled)

HEERF II

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act)

On March 19, 2021, Teachers College will receive an additional \$559,267 under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, to assist with any component of students' cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care, or child care, and the College will distribute this emergency grant to students in a way that prioritizes students with exceptional need while ensuring the funds are distributed as widely as possible.

CRRSA Act Eligibility

The U.S. Department of Education has expanded the eligibility requirements allowing more students to be considered for this supplemental funding, and includes the following:

- You must be a current student in good standing at Teachers College in a degree-granting program.
- Students exclusively enrolled in distance education may receive these funds.
- Refugees, asylum seekers, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipients, other DREAMers, and similar undocumented students may qualify for this grant.
- Students no longer have to be eligible for Title IV aid to receive assistance under the HEERF programs.

Covered Expenses Under the CRRSA Act

The following is a list of expenses that can be considered for CRRSA Act Emergency grant to assist students with any component of their cost of attendance or emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus:

- Any component of student's cost of attendance
- Tuition
- Food
- Housing
- Course Materials
- Health Care
- Childcare

The CARES Act stipulates that the emergency funds cannot be used to replace a loss of income or to pay for student expenses that are not directly related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Unlike the CARES Act, the CRRSA Act allows students to receive the funds directly as a stipend or to apply them to an unpaid tuition balance in their account, if they have a balance due.

APPLYING FOR A GRANT

How do I apply for an emergency grant?

Please complete the online [APPLICATION FOR THE CARES ACT](#), the link to which is also found on this webpage.

If I am approved, how much will I receive?

Graduate schools received a limited amount of CARES Act Emergency funds and TC has also set aside a limited amount of institutional funds for those who do not qualify for HEERF Emergency funding. CARES Act recipients have received grants in the amounts of \$1,450, \$860, or \$150 depending on financial need as shown on the applicant's FAFSA. As of February 2021, the CARES Act funds have been exhausted. CRRSA Act recipients will be granted in the amounts of \$1,000 or \$2,000, and these amounts will be determined based on exceptional need. Please note, some students may have already received Wendy E. Dressel Emergency Grants. In those cases, the amount of the HEERF Emergency Grant will be reduced by that amount.

How will I receive the grant money?

Our goal is to award the emergency funds as soon as possible, though it will take some time to process the payment. In accordance with the U.S. Department of Education, the CARES Act emergency grant cannot be used to replace a loss of income or to pay for student expenses that are not directly related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, CARES Act recipients received their emergency grant as a stipend payment.

Unlike the CARES Act, the U.S. Department of Education allows students to receive the CRRSA Act as a stipend payment or to directly apply the grant towards their tuition costs if they have a balance due.

Any stipend payments under the HEERF program will be directly deposited into bank accounts for students who are enrolled in the [e-Refund program](#) at TC. Students without direct deposit will receive a check in the mail at the permanent address listed on their student account.

OTHER QUESTIONS

What if I owe TC for tuition or other expenses?

The full amount of the CARES Act emergency grants will be given directly to the student, and TC will not hold the funds to pay any outstanding balance owed to the College. The full amount of the CRRSA Act Emergency Grant will be given directly to the student as a stipend payment, or the student can request to have the payment applied to an unpaid tuition balance, if they have a balance due.

Will CARES Act or CRRSA Act Emergency funds impact current or future financial aid?

No. This funding is not financial aid, it is emergency relief funding from Congress.

Are CARES Act or CRRSA Act Emergency funds taxable?

The Internal Revenue Service has released a [FAQ](#) which indicates the funds are not taxable since they are "qualified disaster relief payments." Please visit the [FAQ](#) for additional guidance.

What can I do if I am not eligible for CARES Act or CRRSA Act Emergency funding, but have need?

TC recognizes that the need for student support extends beyond what is allowed through the federal CARES Act or CRRSA Act and has set aside a limited amount of institutional funds to support international, undocumented, and DACA students as well as any student who was exclusively taking spring semester online courses prior to March 13, 2020. These institutional funds are currently available through the [Wendy M. Dressel Student Emergency Fund](#) application process.

Last Updated: 06.04.2021