



**Emergency Financial Aid Grant for Students under the
Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund**

Beginning in March 2020, the Department of Education has authorized funds to be allocated as emergency grants directly to students through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). The funds were allocated through the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Public Law 116-136, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), Public Law 116-260, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP), Public Law 117-2. Emergency funds were made available to institutions and their students, totaling \$76.3 billion. The Department of Education has disbursed these funds to the Universities and as a result, Westfield State University has been allocated a total of \$24,517,498. Of this allocation, Westfield State is required to award \$10,978,124 in direct student aid to students.

These funds may cover any component of the student's cost of attendance or be allocated for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus. Costs include, but are not limited to tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care) or child care. The HEERF requires that institutions prioritize students with *exceptional need* (such as students who receive Pell Grants or undergraduates with extraordinary financial circumstances), in awarding financial aid grants to students.

The Department of Education has stated that all students are eligible to receive the grants, so long as they were enrolled during the COVID-19 national emergency.

Westfield State University has committed to getting funds to students as quickly as possible. Since May 2020, the University has been awarding grants directly to students to support their needs during this pandemic. The University has decided to award remaining HEERF monies in the form of a block grant to students living on campus during the Summer of 2022. In order to receive a grant, students must be:

- Residing in University Housing for the Summer 2022
- Pell Grant eligible (based on their 2021-2022 FAFSA)

All students who meet the criteria for the grant will receive an \$825 HEERF grant.

Calculation

For the purposes of this calculation, a student is determined to be living on campus if they were residing in an official University Residence Hall at any point prior to the disbursement of the HEERF grant.

For the purposes of determining Pell Eligibility, the University used the information that had been submitted on the 2021-2022 FAFSA.

The decision by the University is final and not subject to appeal or reconsideration.

Outstanding Balance

Grants awarded under the HEERF are required to be awarded directly to students and cannot be applied directly to a student's account without their consent. Students will still be eligible to receive their grant, even if they owe an outstanding balance to Westfield State.

For students who wish to have the grant applied to their outstanding balance, they must submit an affidavit to the University and give their consent to have the grant applied their outstanding balance. **The affidavit must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office immediately.**

In the event the grant is more than enough to cover the outstanding balance, the remainder of the grant will be refunded to the student. A student who submits an affidavit may revoke their consent at any point prior to the grant disbursing.

Enrollment

Students must be enrolled or have been enrolled at Westfield State University during the COVID-19 national emergency in order to be eligible to receive funds under the HEERF. Students will be awarded a Block Grant based on their 2021-2022 FAFSA.

The University is aware that students may have completed their Undergraduate Degree and are now enrolled in a Graduate Program at Westfield State. For these students, any Block Grant awarded will be based on their Spring 2022 enrollment.

Students who have graduated or withdrawn from Westfield State since the end of the Spring 2022 semester are eligible for the Block Grant and will receive the Block Grant.

Timeline

June 28th: Email sent to students informing them of the plan for disbursing ARP funds

June 28th: Email sent to students individually informing them of their ARP grant amount

June 29th: Deadline to submit Outstanding Balance affidavit

June 30th: Block Grants paid to students

Timeline subject to change

The University will be awarding most of the funding through the Block Grant process. Students who have exceptional need beyond the amount awarded through the Block Grant should contact the Director of Financial Aid at sbackstedt@westfield.ma.edu.

At the discretion of the Director of Financial Aid, a Block Grant may be awarded or adjusted based on information communicated to the Director. In such instances, the Director will note the change and the rationale for the awarding or adjustment of a Block Grant.