

University of Maine at Fort Kent

CARES Act Funding Under Section 18004(a)(1) – Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund 50% for Student Aid

Report for Quarter ended 9/30/2020

Sponsor: U.S. Department of Education

Award Number: P425E201773

Award Amount: \$313,019

Report Period: 04/24/2020–9/30/2020

Report Date: 9/30/2020

Source and Purpose of Funds

The University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK) received the above award from the CARES Act passed by Congress on March 27, 2020 to provide emergency financial aid grants to eligible students for their expenses related to the disruption of our campus operations due to coronavirus.

On April 17, 2020, UMFK submitted the required [Certification and Agreement](#) to the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) committing to use these funds to provide emergency aid directly to our eligible students.

Eligibility Requirements

Consistent with the guidance from the U.S. DOE, eligible students include all students who were enrolled at UMFK on March 13, 2020 and are eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), with the following exceptions:

- Non-degree seeking students
- International or DACA students
- Employees receiving UMS Employee Tuition benefits
- Early College students
- Students enrolled in exclusively online programs as of March 13, 2020

Students who did not have a FAFSA on file with the university were able to complete a self-certification form, attesting under the penalty of perjury to meeting the requirements of Section 484 of the HEA.

Distribution Plan

Consistent with the other institutions within the University of Maine System, of which UMFK is a part, and in acknowledgement that every one of our students experienced disruption when COVID-19 forced all courses to be transitioned to online delivery, UMFK will automatically distribute 85% of these funds to all eligible students. Award amounts will be tiered as follows based on the number of credit hours in which the student is enrolled as of March 13, 2020:

- .1 – 5.99 Credit Hours: \$200
- 6 – 11.99 Credit Hours: \$300
- 12+ Credit Hours: \$580

The remaining 15% of the CARES student aid is being made available by application to eligible students who self-identify with additional need as a result of the disruption to campus operations caused by COVID-19. As we communicated to our students on May 5, 2020, eligible students may apply for those funds here https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdzckHxYin6M7mmhE_vpKIDmpAilpQtz-BDm FRtP6W51quKA/viewform

In some cases, emergency funds may have been supplemented with a portion of CARES dollars intended for institutional relief.

All distributions to students will be made via direct deposit or check. Because the IRS considers the CARES student funds as a “qualified disaster relief payment,” they are not considered taxable income.

Disbursements to Date

Distribution Type	Number of Eligible Students	Number of Students to Which Aid Has Been Distributed	Total Amount of Aid That Has Been Distributed	Amount of Funds Remaining for Disbursement
Automatic	527	527	\$259,120	\$0
Application	527	88	\$53,709	\$190
Total	527	527	\$312,829	\$190

As of July 31, the timeframe for student self-certification for eligibility has closed. The \$6,840 remaining in the plan for Automatic distribution has been repurposed to the funds available via Application for additional COVID-related needs of eligible students.

Communications to Students

Below are communications from the University of Maine System or UMFK to students concerning the emergency financial aid grants provided through the CARES Act.

- [UMS Informational Website](https://www.maine.edu/health-advisory/community-guidance/students/) (<https://www.maine.edu/health-advisory/community-guidance/students/>)
- UMS Student Letter - May 1 (*see: Appendix A*)
- CARES Act Student Letter May 5 (*see: Appendix B*)
- Email to Students - May 12 (*see: Appendix C*)
- Email to Students - May 17 (*see: Appendix C*)
- Email to Students - June 1 and June 3 (*see: Appendix C*)

Appendix A: University of Maine System Letter to Students
Sent: May 1, 2020

UMS Students -

Today marks the end of classes in a semester that has been unlike any other in the history of our universities.

Your academic and personal lives were upended by the sudden onset of a worldwide pandemic unseen in a century. To protect the health and safety of our campuses, communities, and state, our universities had no choice but to empty their residence halls and transition all work and instruction to online and remote modalities.

Many in our families have lost jobs, and many others have struggled to balance work, learning, and childcare from home. The pandemic's unprecedented disruptions have been especially tough for the thousands of you who are the first in your family to attend college and who may have relied on their campus communities for support not available at home.

From the start, minimizing the pandemic's impact on you has guided every decision I've made.

That's why I immediately pledged that our residential students would be reimbursed for their unused room and board charges. And then we returned that money to our students within days of the closure of our residence halls, making us among the first in the nation to do so.

And that's why our Presidents, Chief Business Officers, and Financial Aid Directors have been working around the clock to determine how to best disburse the \$8.63 million that Congress provided to our universities through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (also known as the CARES Act) to help students pay for emergency expenses caused by the pandemic's disruption to our university operations.

Last week, we decided that 85 percent of each university's CARES Act student money will be distributed to all eligible undergraduate and graduate students, with award amounts varying based on the number of credit hours you are taking this semester. Today, I am pleased to let you know that we've started processing those payments – which for most students will be several hundred dollars – again making UMS a national leader in providing support directly to our students as soon as possible.

Eligible students who have a FAFSA on file should not need to do anything to receive your payment, which should come as early as next week via direct deposit or check. For those who have not completed a FAFSA in the past, your university will be providing details in the coming days on how you can certify your eligibility for these funds so we can get them to you without further delay.

They'll also let you know about a simple process by which those with additional financial need can apply for special emergency funds that have been set aside using the remaining 15 percent of the CARES student monies your university received, which will be further supplemented by a portion of CARES dollars received for institutional relief that we've decided to redirect to our students.

UMS deeply regrets that U.S. Department of Education guidelines do not permit us to pay CARES Act money to our international students, who we value as essential members of our university communities. The disruptions

they've experienced are no less than – and in many cases exceed – that of other members of our communities. I've therefore asked our Presidents to look for other ways to support international students using unrestricted resources, including the privately raised crisis funds already in place at several of our universities. Students who were enrolled in exclusively online programs before the onset of the pandemic are also ineligible for relief under the federal guidelines.

I'd like to specifically acknowledge the contributions of your student representatives to the UMS Board of Trustees. They provided invaluable input to my team on how this money should be distributed, showing incredible care and compassion for their fellow students in those conversations.

In closing, I'd like to pay tribute to you. Your determination and dedication to stick with your studies through the disruptions and anxieties caused by the pandemic has been nothing short of extraordinary. The resiliency you've shown will serve you well and far into the future.

Best of luck on your exams next week – you are almost there, and we are right there with you. And to our graduating seniors, if I might share a part of a favorite Irish proverb, may the road rise up to meet you, and may the wind always be at your back.

Sincerely,

Dannel P. Malloy
Chancellor

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Matthew R. Morrin

Dean of Students

Chief Student Affairs Officer

University of Maine at Fort Kent &

University of Maine at Presque Isle

207.834.7562

Appendix B: University of Maine at Fort Kent Letter to Students
Sent: May 5, 2020

[Original Letter Available Here](#)

May 5, 2020

Dear Student,

The University of Maine at Fort Kent has been allocated \$313,019 in funding through the federal CARES Act. The Act requires that these dollars go directly to students to cover emergency expenses arising from the disruption in campus operations. The University of Maine at Fort Kent will begin distributing CARES Act funds to eligible students starting the week of May 4, 2020.

UMFK will distribute approximately 85% of the allocation directly to degree-seeking students (excluding students enrolled in on-line degree programs) who are Title IV eligible (studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements). The remaining approximately 15% has been reserved for emergency payments for students with exceptionally critical financial needs as a result of the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19.

85% Distribution

The 85% distribution will be based on the number of credit hours in which a student is currently enrolled for the spring 2020 semester. Distribution of payments to students will be based on the following enrollment tiers:

	Current Credits for Spring 2020	Dollar amount of Payment
Tier 1	12-plus credit hours	\$580
Tier 2	6- 11.99 credit hours	\$300
Tier 3	1 – 5.99 credit hours	\$200

Please view your MaineStreet Message Center (mainestreet.maine.edu) for additional information regarding the amount of payments that will be made to eligible students, how eligible students will receive this funding, and if you must submit any additional information to qualify for payment.

15% Reserved for Emergency Payments

UMFK has reserved 15% of the available CARES Act funding for emergency payments for students with exceptionally critical financial needs as a result of the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19. Students with additional financial need as described above can submit an application using the link below. Any additional funds approved are in addition to automatic payments to qualifying students noted above.

Students selected to receive additional funds will be notified of award amounts, as well as any additional requirements that must be met to be eligible to receive funds, at their @maine.edu email address.

Click [here](#) to complete the electronic application for additional student emergency funds.

If you are unable to complete the application electronically, please email or call Student Affairs to request a PDF version of the application.

Applications will be reviewed by Student Affairs beginning on May 8, 2020. Applications must be submitted by June 5, 2020.

Tax Information

Please be aware that emergency funds (including both automatic payment amounts and any funds granted through the application process) will likely be considered taxable income for 2020. Additional guidance regarding the tax implications on these payments will be updated on the UMFK website as it is made available by the Department of Education.

If you have questions, please contact the applicable office below:

Questions regarding eligibility: Financial Aid at lisa.michaud@maine.edu

Questions regarding your expected payment: Business Office at umfkbus@maine.edu

Questions regarding your application for emergency payments: Student Affairs at umfk.studentaffairs@maine.edu

Sincerely,

Tex Boggs

Interim President and Provost

Appendix C: Email Messages to Students

Email Sent May 12, 2020

Date: Tue, May 12, 2020 at 11:05 PM

Subject: {UMFK Students} UMFK CARES Fund & Financial Resources Info

To: Matthew Morrin <matthew.morrin@maine.edu>

Hi UMFK Students,

I hope that you are safe and well. It was definitely an interesting semester and you should be proud of all that you did to adjust and persevere. I know that the current COVID-19 situation is impacting all of us in different ways and we are here to support you if we can - or connect you to resources that may be able to provide assistance. There are some programs to assist you financially if you qualify. I encourage you to apply for the [UMFK CARES Act Emergency Funds soon](#). We are reviewing applications as they are submitted. The deadline to submit is June 5, 2020. Listed below are two other resources - The HOPE Program and Maine Rent Assistance. These are community programs that may be able to provide assistance.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Stay safe, be well - and enjoy the summer!

Matt

The graphic is a rectangular box with a dark border. The top section has a light background and contains the text "FINANCIAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE" in bold, black, sans-serif font on the left. To the right is a logo consisting of a black paw print with the letters "U", "M", "F", and "K" in white circles on the four toes, and a black heart with the word "CARES" in white text inside it. The bottom section has a dark background and contains the text "CARES ACT EMERGENCY FUNDS" in bold, white, sans-serif font at the top. Below this is a white icon of a money bag with a dollar sign on it. To the right of the icon is the text "UMFK has set aside 15% of the available CARES Act funding for emergency payments to meet critical student needs. Students will be able to apply for emergency funds until the resources are expended." in white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right of the section is the text "**Must be Title IV eligible" in white, sans-serif font.

[Click Here to Apply for CARE Act Funds](#)

Email Matthew.Morrin@maine.edu for questions.

Email Sent May 17, 2020

Date: Sun, May 17, 2020 at 8:03 PM

Subject: {UMFK Students} UMFK CARES Fund -Funding Still Available

To: Matthew Morrin <matthew.morrin@maine.edu>

Hi UMFK Students,

I sent this info to you last week and want to make sure you can easily find it if needed. Please check out these programs that may be able to assist you financially if you qualify. I encourage you to apply for the UMFK CARES Act Emergency Funds soon, We are reviewing applications as they are submitted. The deadline to submit is June 5, 2020. Listed below are two other resources - The HOPE Program and Maine Rent Assistance. These are community programs that may be able to provide assistance.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Stay safe, be well - and enjoy the summer!

Matt

The graphic is a rectangular box with a dark border. The top section has a light background and contains the text "FINANCIAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE" in bold, black, sans-serif font on the left. To the right is a logo consisting of a heart shape with the letters "UMFK" in circles above it and the word "CARES" inside the heart. The bottom section has a dark background and contains the text "CARES ACT EMERGENCY FUNDS" in bold, white, sans-serif font at the top. Below this is a white icon of a money bag with a dollar sign. To the right of the icon is the text: "UMFK has set aside 15% of the available CARES Act funding for emergency payments to meet critical student needs. Students will be able to apply for emergency funds until the resources are expended." At the bottom right of the dark section is the text "**Must be Title IV eligible" in white.

[Click Here to Apply for CARE Act Funds](#)

Email Matthew.Morrin@maine.edu for questions.

Email Sent June 1, 2020 and June 3, 2020

Good Morning UMFK Students,

I want to remind you that the deadline to apply for assistance from the [UMFK CARES Act Emergency Fund](#) is this Friday, June 5, 2020 at 5:00 pm. Please make sure to apply before this deadline.