

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT FORT KENT

CARES Act Funding Under Section 18004(a)(1) – Higher Education Emergency Relief Student Portion

Report for HEERF III Quarter ended 12/31/2021

Sponsor: U.S. Department of Education
Award Number: P425E201773
Award Amount: \$1,045,794
Report Period: 10/1/2021 - 12/31/2021
Report Date: 1/10/22

SUMMARY:

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 awarded \$1,045,794 of student emergency funds (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, or HEERF) for the University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK) to distribute to eligible students in need of aid. In an effort to thoroughly identify need, UMFK will use three approaches: 1) Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) of current students as an objective method of determining need by income and support, 2) outstanding balances from prior periods as evidence of student financial hardship, and 3) explanation of financial hardship, prioritizing students with “exceptional need.” UMFK will distribute HEERF III aid strategically to support its students in meeting their basic needs and enabling them to stay on-track to timely degree completion. Recipients will be provided the option to receive a direct payment or consent to the award being applied to their student account

ELIGIBILITY: Employees with tuition waivers and students who are solely enrolled as early college high school students will be excluded from all rounds. Students who were enrolled on or after March 13, 2020 to present will be eligible for at least one of these distribution opportunities. While international students were not eligible in previous HEERF rounds, per U.S. Department of Education guidance, they can be recipients of HEERF III aid and UMFK has included them in its distribution plan detailed below.

DISTRIBUTION METHODOLOGY:

UMFK is planning to award funds in rounds:

- 1) In the first round, automatic distributions will be made to students currently enrolled with an EFC of \$20,000 or less, with those students with EFC of \$5,846 or less (Pell level) receiving larger amounts. Eligibility will be determined using data available as of September 15. In both of these groups, we will make the assumption full-time students generally have more need than part-time students, and pro-rate distributions accordingly. Students taking 12 or more credit hours as of September 15 will be considered full time. Students taking 11 credit hours or less as of September 15 will be considered part time. Recipients will be provided the option to receive a

direct payment or consent to the award being applied to their student account, using the following language: *“In accordance with federal guidelines, please choose whether you would like the funds applied directly to your student account or you would like to receive a direct payment of these funds. Your payment preference does not impact your eligibility for these funds or the amount of funds you will receive.”* Students enrolled in the UMFK nursing program at UMPI will receive a distribution from only one campus.

	# of students	Distribution	Total
FT students with EFC<\$5847: (Pell level)	167	\$2,000	\$334,000
PT students with EFC<\$5847: (Pell level)	96	\$1,100	\$105,600
FT students with EFC>\$5847, <\$20,000:	76	\$800	\$60,800
PT students with EFC>\$5847, <\$20,000:	52	\$430	\$22,360
TOTAL	391		\$522,760

2) The second round will be through an application process, in which students who were enrolled on or after March 13, 2020 to present and have outstanding balances will be eligible to apply for funds to cover any component of the student’s cost of attendance or for eligible emergency costs that have arisen due to the coronavirus including tuition, food, housing, health (including mental health care), child care or school-related transportation.

3) The third round will be through the same application process, in which all current students will be sent notifications and be eligible to apply.

Unused funds from each of these phases will roll from one approach into the next, but estimated usage of the funds in each of the three phases is generally 50%, 25%, and 25%, respectively.

Disbursements to Date

Distribution Type	Number of Students to Which Aid Has Been Distributed	Total Amount of Aid That Has Been Distributed	Amount of Funds Remaining for Disbursement
Based on EFC Applications	386	\$513,660	\$0
Total Students Awarded	519	\$985,700	\$60,094

APPLICATION PROCESS:

In the second and third rounds, UMFK will open an application-based process. In the second round, starting near October 2, 2021, notifications will go out to students who were enrolled at any point from March 13, 2020 to present who have an outstanding balance. Approximately two weeks later, in the third round, notifications will go out to all current students giving everyone the opportunity to apply for remaining funds.

Applications will ask students to explain current financial hardship, amount request and for which eligible expenses, which per U.S. DOE guidance, includes any component of the student's cost of attendance or emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus. Again, applicants will be asked if they elect to apply any award to their student account using the following question: *“In accordance with federal guidelines, please choose whether you would like the funds applied directly to your student bill or you would like to receive a direct payment of these funds. Your payment preference does not impact your eligibility for these funds or the amount of funds you will receive.”*

Application rounds (notifications) will continue, if necessary, until funds are exhausted. Maximum awards will be subject to application demand and disbursements awarded in previous rounds.

COMMUNICATION TO STUDENTS:

Email with links to applications will be sent when students become eligible to apply. Additional communication methods may also be used as deemed necessary.

INTERNAL CONTROL STRUCTURE:

Eligibility requirements have been approved by UMFK's President and UMFK's Chief Business Officer (CBO) in consultation with the Dean of Students, Financial Aid Office, and Student Financials Office. Any changes will be made by UMFK's President and communicated by UMFK's CBO.

Copies of any and all communications and reporting related to this aid program will be housed in the office of the CBO.

Data to determine student eligibility for the first round will be provided by the Financial Aid Office and posted by the Student Financials Office. Awards will be disbursed via either check or direct deposit.

Second and Third Round awards will be determined by a committee based in Student Affairs. Determined by the request of the student, awards will be either applied to account balances or refunded by check or direct deposit. Student Affairs will keep record of determination of need.

Samples of determinations will be reviewed and documentation retained by the Student Financials office.

All campuses were required to submit their initial plans to the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration's Office for review by members of his staff, including the Director of Government & Community Relations and the Director of Accounting and/or Manager of Cost Accounting & Compliance.