

Disclosure

CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Emergency Financial Aid Grants for Students First 30-Day Report – May 13, 2020

In accordance with the Announcement posted by the US Department of Education on May 6, 2020 (<https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/050620HigherEdEmergencyReliefFundRptg>), Mountain Empire Community College herein discloses the following required information pertaining to its use of HEERF funds for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.

- 1. An acknowledgement that the institution signed and returned to the Department the Certification and Agreement and the assurance that the institution has used, or 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.**

Mountain Empire Community College signed and returned its Certification and Agreement to the US Department of Education on April 13, 2020. This Certification and Agreement provided assurance that the college intends to use 50% of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid to Students. The college received its Grant Award Notification from the Department on April 28, 2020.

- 2. The total amount of funds that the institution will receive or has received from the Department pursuant to the institution's Certification and Agreement [for] Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.**

Mountain Empire Community College received a total of \$697,462.00 from the Department pursuant to its Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.

- 3. The total amount of Emergency Financial Aid Grants distributed to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of the date of submission (i.e., as of the 30-day Report and every 45 days thereafter).**

The total amount of Emergency Financial Aid Grants distributed to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of May 13, 2020 [thirty (30) days from the date of the institution's Certification and Agreement to the Department] is \$520,800.

- 4. The estimated total number of students at the institution 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.**

The estimated total number of students at Mountain Empire Community College 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 is 744 students.

5. The total number of students who have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

The total number of MECC students who have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act, as of May 13, 2020, is 744 students.

6. The method(s) used by the institution to determine which students receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants and how much they would receive under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

In distributing CARES Act Emergency Grant Aid to students, MECC's goal is to support as many students as possible, especially those with the greatest financial need. Students who may be eligible for grant aid are identified as those who were enrolled as of March 13, 2020 and:

- Completed a FAFSA for the 2019-20 academic year
- Are Title IV Eligible as of Spring 2020
- Be actively enrolled in 6 or more credits that are financial aid approved for program placement
- Have a family income below the College's established EFC ceiling of 200,000 for credit students.

In addition to these basic eligibility requirements, the process for determining which students receive a grant takes into consideration:

- Valid EFC
- Citizenship confirmed by SSA or DHS or overridden by staff in Database Matches
- Dependency status not rejected
- Satisfactory Academic Progress status of Y, A, P, or W
- Not in dual enrollment and/or ineligible curriculums
- Aid Processing Status of Packaging Completed
- Review Status of Complete
- Complete ISIR checklist for Aid Year 2020
- Recent High School Completion checklist not set to initiated
- FA Load of H, T, or F
- Not in all online courses as of 3/13/2020

As of May 13, 2020, MECC distributed \$700 to 744 individual eligible students totaling \$520,800.

A portion of MECC's CARES Act allocation for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students (i.e., the remaining 25%) has been set aside for students who did not demonstrate need as documented on a FAFSA, but may now have need following the disruption due to COVID-19. Current students (those eligible students enrolled in Spring 2020) have until June 30, 2020, to file a FAFSA and request funds if they did not receive a grant, but had a documentable emergency related to COVID-19. Those students and any student with a FAFSA on file who believes they have a documented COVID-19 emergency may apply for funds using a [web-based application posted to MECC's website](#). MECC

students that have experienced a financial hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic may qualify for an additional federal CARES ACT grant, which provides emergency funding to college students.

Emergency Grant Awards

As of May 13, 2020, \$520,800 in Emergency Financial Aid Grants have been distributed to 744 students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES ACT.

To determine eligibility for awards, all students are required to submit an application [available here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15n8Ltmwz_bLu_R_gcJFPecs6mHOwiRpTiMCgXgXyc9c/viewform?edit_requested=true). (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/15n8Ltmwz_bLu_R_gcJFPecs6mHOwiRpTiMCgXgXyc9c/viewform?edit_requested=true).

Applications are reviewed by a Committee of College administrators and staff to ensure that all students meet eligibility requirements.

7. Any instructions, directions, or guidance provided by the institution to students concerning the Emergency Financial Aid Grants.

Instructions, directions and guidance concerning the Emergency Financial Aid Grants were provided to students by the college by means of the [CARES Act Page of the college's website](#) and a letter sent by email to all students on May 6, 2020, which read as follows:

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

Mountain Empire Community College will receive \$1,394,924 from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) created as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The US Department of Education has mandated half of these funds must be used exclusively to support students facing urgent needs created by the coronavirus pandemic as a result of the disruption of campus operations. The other half is to be used to offset expenses MECC has encumbered related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible students will receive up to \$700 in CARES Act funds.

Funds will be distributed to students in two ways — through direct payments to qualifying students or via application to MECC CARES Emergency Assistance Fund. Direct payments will be made with MECC's online payment system, TMS, in the form that students have chosen to receive their normal refunds (either by direct deposit or check). IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU VERIFY YOUR MAILING ADDRESS IN SIS in order to make sure your payment is sent to the correct address.

*Only students who meet the following criteria are eligible to receive funds under the **direct payment method**. To be eligible for the direct payment portion of the funds, students must have been enrolled as of March 13, 2020, and:*

- *Must have completed a FAFSA for the 2019-20 academic year*
- *Must be Title IV Eligible as of Spring 2020. This eligibility is determined by the completed FAFSA application which requires*
- *Confirmation of eligibility under HEA Section 484 requirements*
- *Enrollment in a degree or certificate program that is eligible for Title IV funding*

- *Must be actively enrolled in 6 or more credits that are financial aid approved for program placement*
- *Must have a family income below the College's established EFC ceiling of \$200,000 for credit students.*

*Twenty-five percent of the aid to students has been designated for the **MECC CARES Emergency Assistance Fund**. Students who have not completed the FAFSA and were therefore not eligible for the direct payment option, may still be eligible to apply to receive funds under the MECC CARES Emergency Assistance criteria. Likewise, students who were not enrolled in at least six credits may qualify. All applicants under this category **must file a 2019-20 FAFSA prior to June 30, 2020**. Students do not have to be deemed eligible to receive Pell funding to become eligible, but will have to be deemed Title IV eligible. This means that students must have a verified social security number, registration for selective service (if the student is male), U.S. citizenship or eligible non-citizen, have a high school diploma or GED, have met satisfactory academic progress and be enrolled in an approved program of study under Title IV guidelines. Without a FAFSA on-file, the College cannot verify this information. In addition to the FAFSA, students seeking assistance under this program must complete the application found at this link: [MECC CARES Emergency Fund Application](#).*

*Unfortunately, pursuant to the Department of Education guidelines, **certain students are not eligible to receive funding under either category of the CARES Act**. Students who are not eligible include:*

- *Dual Enrollment, Concurrent Enrollment, and current Homeschool students*
- *Students enrolled in **all online classes***
- *DACA or ineligible citizenship status for Title IV aid*
- *Contract/3rd party payers*
- *Incarcerated in federal or state penal institution*
- *Non-credit (including FastForward) students*

***Students meeting the criteria for the direct payment method should expect to receive payments by June 1, 2020.** No further action is required on your part. Students who seek funding under the MECC CARES Emergency Assistance Fund will be processed as applications are received and verified. For more information on payments, please contact the MECC Business Office at 276.523.2400. If you have questions regarding the Emergency Assistance Application, please contact MECC's Student Services Office at 276.523.2400 ext. 288.*

A Student Information Center message was sent to students identified to receive the award which read as follows:

Mountain Empire Community College has received funding from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) created as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). These funds are being made available to offset expenses that may have occurred in relation to disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. You are encouraged to use these funds to pay for course materials and technology as well as food, housing, health care, and childcare.

You will be receiving **\$700** in relief funds (HEERF). Direct payment will be made with MECC's online payment system, TMS, in the form that you have chosen to receive your normal refund (either by direct deposit or check). **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU VERIFY YOUR MAILING ADDRESS IN SIS** to make sure your payment is sent to the correct address.

You should expect to receive your payment by June 1, 2020. No further action is required on your part. For more information on payments, please contact the MECC Business Office at 276.523.7475.

If you have questions about the tax implications of the funding that you receive you should direct your questions to a tax professional. The tax implications, if any, are uncertain at this time.