

CARES ACT HEERF Fund Quarterly Report

Dickinson College

Information as of January 29, 2021

Table of Contents

	Page
Overview- Student Emergency Relief Grants	1
Information provided to students	1-3
Institutional fund report- final	4
Appendix A: Awarding Policies and Procedures	5
Appendix B: Statement on Institutional Share	6

The following report is required to be updated and published on the Dickinson College website on a quarterly basis. It contains information on both the student and institutional portion of the aid received.

Overview—Student Emergency Relief Grants

Dickinson has signed and returned a certification and agreement to participate in the CARES act emergency relief funding provided by the Department of Education in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of this agreement, Dickinson will distribute at least 50% of this funding to students via emergency relief grants for a total amount of at least \$718,034.00. As of 1/29/2021, Dickinson has provided a total of \$709,486.29 of this funding to 277 students who have demonstrated need and requested assistance.

Based on the criteria provided by the Department of Education, Dickinson has determined that 1267 students were eligible to apply for these grants as of April 21, 2020. This number was calculated based on students who have a valid FAFSA on file. While there may be others that could qualify, the current guidance from the Department of Education requiring Title IV eligibility of recipients means the FAFSA is the only current practical method of determining eligibility. A second review of eligible students as of the 2021-2022 academic year increases the number to 1276 based on new FAFSA filings.

The College has determined that a simple application be the method to determine if students experienced COVID expenses. The eligible amount is determined by either available student documentation (including the student information system, Banner) or standard expenses used in the official Cost of Attendance. Requests for funds outside of these standard practices are reviewed by committee. To prioritize these limited funds, refunds already received from the college for living expenses will be considered when determining eligibility. A full explanation of the College's guidelines for awarding CARES act grants can be found in Appendix A

Priority notice of the application availability was given to Pell Grant recipients and students who had been in contact regarding hardship.

Information Provided to Students

The following Email was sent to all Pell Recipients on April 24, 2020:

Hello,

The Office of Financial Aid hopes you are staying safe and well.

We are reaching out to Pell Grant eligible students to inform them of newly available federal emergency grant funding. We want students with the highest levels of financial need, according to FAFSA results, to receive early notice of this availability.

To qualify for the grant, you will need to have experienced expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19 such as food, housing, course materials, unanticipated travel, technology, health care, and child-care expenses. Students with significant financial need will receive priority consideration.

Please be considerate of your fellow Dickinson students and only apply for amounts you truly need so that we may benefit the most students possible with these limited funds. You can complete the brief [application here](#).

Please let us know if you have any questions.

All my best,

Leah Young
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Application Instructions

Dickinson College has received limited federal aid from CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund for the purpose of providing emergency grants to eligible domestic students for their expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19, including, but not limited to food, housing, course materials, unanticipated travel, technology, health care, and child-care expenses. This form, along with any current financial aid data will be used to determine eligibility for grant funding. However, a previous financial aid application is not mandatory but students applying for the grant must file a FAFSA (either for 2019-2020 or 2020-2021) if they have not already done so.

NOTE: Due to Department of Education guidance, we are not able to award these funds to International students or undocumented students. Guidance is not yet clear on whether students who graduated in May of 2020 are eligible for funding. These graduates may apply, but their applications will be put on hold until we have final guidance on how we may award these.

You will be notified of the outcome of your application as soon as possible, generally within 2-4 weeks. If approved, funds will be distributed via check or direct deposit (if you have this set up).

Please be considerate of your fellow Dickinson students and only apply for amounts you truly need so that we may benefit the most students possible with these funds. The maximum grant is currently limited to \$4,000.

If you have any questions on the status of your application, please contact finaid@dickinson.edu

Approval verbiage

For students found eligible for CARES grant funding, the following email is sent upon processing.

Dear _____,

I'm pleased to inform you that your grant application for funding through the CARES act for COVID-19 related expenses has been approved in the amount of \$XX.XX.

If you have direct deposit set up with the College, the approved amount will be deposited directly into your bank account in approximately 5-7 business days. Otherwise a check will be mailed to the home address on file.

We hope these funds help ease the financial strain of COVID-19 and allow you to continue your studies uninterrupted.

All our best,
Office of Financial Aid

Appendix A: Awarding Policies and Procedures

Dickinson College

CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Policies and Procedures

This document serves as an official guideline to the distribution of emergency grants through the CARES Act. This document was developed and implemented on April 17, 2020 in accordance with guidance received from the signed [certification form](#) required to access the CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund.

Allocation

Dickinson College will allocate half of the \$718,034 funding for emergency grant applications filed prior to June 30, 2020. The remaining half is reserved for the 2020-2021 fiscal and academic year, beginning July 1, 2020. If there are unused funds remaining after June 30, 2020, these will be rolled for utilization in the 2020-2021 fiscal and academic year.

All funding must be spent by April 21, 2021, one year from the date Dickinson College received CARES act funds.

Methods of Application

Dickinson College will accept applications for emergency grant funding through three methods. Methods one and two are strongly preferred:

1. Directly from the student through a [web form](#)
2. From an authorized Dickinson staff member on behalf of the student through a separate [web form](#)
3. Documentation from FinOps showing a direct payment to the student for eligible funds during the eligible period outlined by ED. This must capture the following information upon submission to Financial Aid:
 - how grants were distributed to students
 - the amount of each grant awarded to each student
 - how the amount of each grant was calculated, and
 - any instructions or directions given to students about the grants.

Grant Amount Calculation

The webform options capture data related to the types of expenses incurred. For the items selected and detailed by the student, amounts will be calculated as follows, with a maximum grant of \$4,000 unless significant extenuating circumstances warrant otherwise. To prioritize these limited funds, refunds already received from the college for living expenses will be considered when determining eligibility.

Expense	Determination
Food	The amount of the meal plan credited to their spring student account, the standard 54% of the board expense in the spring semester COA for the

	time left in the semester, or the amount requested, whichever is less.
Housing	The amount of housing credited to their spring student account, the standard 54% of housing expense in the spring semester COA for the time left in the semester after disruption, or the amount requested, whichever is less.
Travel, Course Materials, Technology, Health Care, or Childcare	The amount reported by student if receipts are provided. The approver also has the option of using 54% of the appropriate spring semester component of the cost of attendance in absence of a receipt if no other committee review is needed. If an expense falls outside of the cost of attendance, it will be flagged for committee review.
Other	Reviewed by committee for eligibility and amount determination

Funding allocated through financial operations will be determined based on NACUBO guidance and best practices, and keeping with Department of Education recommendations prioritizing high need recipients. A student may qualify for additional funding above the \$4,000 through the combination of webform and financial operations methods, though care should be taken to ensure that the total amount stays below the Pell Grant Maximum of \$6,395 for 2020-2021, unless extreme circumstances are presented.

Application Review and Approval Process

As often as is practical, but no less than once a week, applications via webform will be reviewed by a financial aid staff member. Pell Grant recipients will be prioritized in review. All requests for food and housing as well as travel, technology, health care, and childcare with receipt documentation or as a percentage of the cost of attendance (or billed cost) can be approved by a single reviewer up to the maximum grant amount. For students with significant proven financial need and detailed expenses above the \$4,000 maximum, the application should be forwarded for committee review.

A committee of at least 3 members comprised of financial aid staff and/or financial operations staff will review applications for expenses designated “other” or those without receipts and outside the cost of attendance. This review will be completed no less than once every two weeks, with a goal of meeting weekly.

Grant Distribution Process

Upon approval of any web form applications, the [Dickinson College Payment Voucher](#) will be completed by Financial Aid and submitted to Financial Operations. This will then initiate the process to cut a check or direct deposit to the student.

A report showing the date payments were processed for these students should be provided to financial aid office each week. This will be recorded on the applicant tracking sheet once received.

If method 3 was used to submit the grant funding request, the date students received the funds should be provided.

Tracking and Reporting Requirements

Tracking spreadsheets for web form applicants will be maintained by financial aid noting all the required reporting items. For items submitted by FinOps via method 3, back up documentation will be maintained in the COVID-19 Emergency Grants Folder accessible to the Financial Aid team on OneDrive. Dickinson College awaits guidance on the methods of reporting, but we are mandated to report 30 days from the date the funds were received (April 21, 2020) and every 45 days thereafter via a web report.

Appendix B: Statement on Institutional Share

In addition to the \$718,034 provided by the Department of Education for emergency relief grants to students, Dickinson received \$718,034 for use by the institution to assist with costs and losses related to COVID-19. The decision was made to provide this institutional funding to students in accordance with the suggested use by the Department of Education. Therefore, this amount was used in full to provide gross refunds and credits of room and board to students during Spring 2020 rather than adjusting the refunded or credited amounts to students based on their financial aid package. This decision was made to assist students with their ongoing costs of attendance as a result of COVID-19.

Due to Dickinson's decision to use all CARES Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund allocations to provide financial assistance to students, there is no direct impact on employee retention as a result of its use. It is Dickinson's priority to provide maximum support for its students during this crisis as well as continued retention of its employees through every means available. Other sources of funding and internal reserves have been used to assist in ongoing employee retention at Dickinson College.

As a result of the indirect benefits of HEERF funding in addition to other CARES funding, donations, and reserve usage at Dickinson, the college was able to retain all full- and part-time staff through June 30, 2020, maintaining full pay even for those unable to work remotely.