

# **Western Nebraska Community College's Report on funds received from the American Rescue Plan, 2021 (ARP) to provide Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF III) Student Grants**

## **Quarterly Report, December 31, 2021**

Western Nebraska Community College is required to provide regular reports to the U.S. Department of Education on the use of allocated funds authorized by the American Rescue Plan, 2021 (ARP), Pub. L 117-2, and distributed from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF III) for student grants. Funds received by Western Nebraska Community College under ARP were authorized by Congress and signed into law by the President on March 11, 2021. The information noted below is intended to not only meet the reporting requirements of the ARP but also provide information to the college community regarding WNCC's use of the student grant portion of HEERF III.

The Department exercises reporting authority under 2 CFR 200.328 and 2 CFR 200.329 to ensure that statutory requirements are met for ARP Section 2003(a)(1) Student Grant Programs. The ARP, with some changes, is a continuation of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). The amount each institution must use for financial aid grants to students is determined using formula factors in CRRSAA.

Under the ARP (a)(1) program, student portion funds must be used to provide financial aid grants to students (including students exclusively enrolled in distance education) which may be used for any component of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), or child care. In making financial aid grants to students, an institution of higher education must prioritize grants to students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants.

The following information must appear in a format and location that is easily accessible to the public. This information must be updated no later than 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter (September 30, December 31, March 31, June 30) thereafter, unless the Secretary specifies an alternative method of reporting:

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, the applicable amount of funds designated under the CRRSAA and ARP programs to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.*
  - Western Nebraska Community College signed the U.S. Department of Education Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students on April 20, 2020. The certification and agreement document was submitted April 29, 2020. No new application was required for HEERF II or HEERF III since WNCC received funds under CARES. The U.S. Department of Education provided WNCC with an electronically signed Grant Award Notification (GAN) for HEERF II on January 19, 2021, and for HEERF III on May 17, 2021.
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 under the CRRSAA and ARP programs.*
  - Western Nebraska Community College will receive a total of \$1,943,817 for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the CRRSAA (\$402,849) and ARP (\$1,540,968) programs.
3. *The total amount of Emergency Financial Aid Grants distributed to students under the CRRSAA and ARP programs as of the date of submission (i.e., as of the initial report and every calendar quarter thereafter):*
  - \$832,600.00 was distributed in emergency financial aid grants 944 WNCC students during the quarter ended December 31, 2021.
4. *The estimated total number of students at the institution that are eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the CRRSAA and ARP programs:*
  - Based on WNCC's Fall 2021 10-day enrollment report, 1,706 students were enrolled and would have been eligible for emergency financial aid grants.
5. *The total number of students who have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant to students under the CRRSAA and ARP programs.*
  - 944 eligible students were disbursed Emergency Financial Aid Grants during the quarter ended December 31, 2021.
6. *The method(s) used by the institution to determine which students receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants and how much they would receive under the CRRSAA and ARP programs.*
  - Western Nebraska Community College identified all students enrolled in credit classes for the Fall 2021 semester. WNCC prioritized students having exceptional financial need using the results of the 2021-2022 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on file with the college. Eligible students included those enrolled exclusively online, U.S. citizens, permanent residents,

international students, refugees, asylum seekers, DACA recipients, other DREAMers, and similar undocumented students.

- All Pell grant eligible students enrolled full-time received an award of \$1,500. Award amounts were then prorated based on enrollment level with no student receiving less than \$500. Students with Expected Family Contributions (EFCs) less than 18000 received awards of \$250 to \$1,000, based on enrollment level. Students with EFC of 18000 or higher or no ISIR received awards of \$200 to \$500, based on enrollment level. The Financial Aid Office obtained the eligible students' corresponding Expected Family Contribution from the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) created by the FAFSA. The data was stratified by EFC and by enrollment level.
- Students who had not submitted a 2021-2022 FAFSA at the time of distribution were provided the opportunity to file a FAFSA and receive a supplemental disbursement. Students not eligible to file a FAFSA were provided other application methods for determining financial need. Students qualifying for supplemental payments received the difference between their original payment and their newly calculated qualifying disbursement according to the disbursement chart below.
- The chart below shows the EFC and disbursement amounts by enrollment level:

EFC	Enrollment	Award Amt
0-5846	1 - 5.5 credits	\$500.00
0-5846	6 - 8.5 credits	\$750.00
0-5846	9 - 11.5 credits	\$1,000.00
0-5846	12+ credits	\$1,500.00
5847-17999	1 - 5.5 credits	\$250.00
5847-17999	6 - 8.5 credits	\$500.00
5847-17999	9 - 11.5 credits	\$750.00
5847-17999	12+ credits	\$1,000.00
18000+ or no FAFSA	1 - 5.5 credits	\$200.00
18000+ or no FAFSA	6 - 8.5 credits	\$300.00
18000+ or no FAFSA	9 - 11.5 credits	\$400.00
18000+ or no FAFSA	12+ credits	\$500.00

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

- WNCC [COVID-19 web](#) information
- WNCC students who received a distribution received an email describing eligibility requirements, payment amounts, allowable uses, and disbursement information. International students and other students who had not submitted a 2021-2022 FAFSA were sent a second email with instructions for filing an application for supplemental disbursements. Sample emails are below.

Sample email to students receiving Fall 2021 disbursement:

Dear (WNCC student name):

WNCC is pleased to announce that Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III) student grants will soon be released to students enrolled during the Fall 2021 semester as authorized by the American Rescue Plan (ARP).

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY:

- No application required.
- Students who are enrolled in Fall 2021 semester classes as of the date of this email will be automatically considered.
- Students with exceptional financial need will be prioritized. WNCC will utilize the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the 2021-2022 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for determination of financial need.
- Students enrolled exclusively in online courses are eligible.
- Non-United States citizens are eligible, including international students, undocumented, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA), and other DREAMer students.
- High school students/CollegeNOW! students will not be awarded in this round of funding.

GRANT PAYMENT AMOUNTS:

- EFC from the 2021-2022 FAFSA and enrollment level as of the date of this email will be used to determine the amount of payment according to the following payment grid:

EFC	Enrollment	Award Amount
0-5846 (Pell grant eligible)	1-5.5 credits	\$500.00
0-5846 (Pell grant eligible)	6-8.5 credits	\$750.00
0-5846 (Pell grant eligible)	9-11.5 credits	\$1,000.00
0-5846 (Pell grant eligible)	12+ credits	\$1,500.00
5847-17999	1-5.5 credits	\$250.00
5847-17999	6-8.5 credits	\$500.00
5847-17999	9-11.5 credits	\$750.00
5847-17999	12+ credits	\$1,000.00

18000+ or no FAFSA	1-5.5 credits	\$200.00
18000+ or no FAFSA	6-8.5 credits	\$300.00
18000+ or no FAFSA	9-11.5 credits	\$400.00
18000+ or no FAFSA	12+ credits	\$500.00

- The EFC used for your HEERF III payment may be found on your 2021-2022 Offer Letter in Financial Aid Self-Service in your student portal.
- Please refer to the above chart to determine your award amount; due to the large volume of checks, we will be unable to take questions asking about check amounts.
- HEERF III grants will not be applied to any current WNCC outstanding student account balance due.
- If you have not submitted a 2021-2022 FAFSA, you may still do so at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. You are strongly encouraged to submit your FAFSA as quickly as possible. FAFSAs received after the date of this email will be reviewed to determine whether a supplemental payment can be made according to the payment grid. Supplemental payments will be mailed on Friday, December 17, 2021.
- Funds are limited. There is no guarantee of supplemental funds. No student will receive more for the Fall 2021 semester than the scheduled grant amount listed for a Pell grant eligible student at the applicable enrollment level.

#### ALLOWABLE USES:

HEERF III grants provided to be used for:

- Any component of your cost of attendance
- Emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental), and child care

#### IMPORTANT DISBURSEMENT INFORMATION—PLEASE READ:

- Grants will be released to students by check on Friday, November 12, 2021.
- All checks will be available for pick up at the Scottsbluff campus main building, unless the WNCC Business office is otherwise notified PRIOR TO 5:00 P.M., MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8.
  - Students wishing to pick up their check at the Alliance or Sidney campus must email the WNCC Business office at [e-accounts@wncc.edu](mailto:e-accounts@wncc.edu).
  - Students wishing to have their check mailed must email their request to the WNCC Business Office at [e-accounts@wncc.edu](mailto:e-accounts@wncc.edu). Please provide your current mailing address. The email MUST originate from your WNCC email account.
- Photo IDs are required to pick up checks.
- Checks not picked up within one week will be mailed to the address on file.

Information about the American Rescue Plan and HEERF III student grants may be found at:

- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/arp.html>
- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/heerfiistudent.html>

Questions about these funds may be directed to either the WNCC Financial Aid Office at [financialaid@wncc.edu](mailto:financialaid@wncc.edu) or to the WNCC Business Office at [e-accounts@wncc.edu](mailto:e-accounts@wncc.edu).

WNCC wishes you the best of health and the successful pursuit of your academic goals.

#### Sample email to international students (Fall 2021):

Dear (WNCC student name),

WNCC recently distributed COVID-19 student grants (also referred to as Higher Education Emergency Relief Grants or HEERF III) to students enrolled for Fall 2021. Under the terms of the American Rescue Plan, institutions are required to prioritize HEERF III student grants to students with exceptional financial need. As prior email notices indicated, WNCC used the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the 2021-2022 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine level of financial need. Students without a FAFSA on file with WNCC were awarded lesser grant amounts.

As a WNCC international student who is ineligible to file a FAFSA, we would like to offer you an opportunity to apply for a supplemental HEERF III award for the Fall 2021 term should you have demonstrated exceptional need due to COVID-19. HEERF III funds may be used for:

- \* Cost of attendance items including tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and meals (on campus or off campus), transportation, and personal expenses

- \* Emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental), or child care

If you wish to submit a request for a supplemental HEERF III grant, please utilize the WNCC Foundation Request for Student Emergency Funds found here: <https://go.wncc.edu/EmergencyFund>

PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING YOUR REQUEST:

- \* When indicating the item for which you need emergency assistance, check "Other" and enter "COVID relief request".

- \* Explain in detail the expenses you are unable to cover with your current resources. If you are requesting assistance to cover the cost of attendance items listed above, please explain why your sponsor funds are not available to cover those costs.

- \* If you have incurred costs related to COVID-19, please explain in detail what those costs are and attach documentation.

Applications for supplemental HEERF III student grants for the Fall 2021 semester should be submitted no later than Friday, December 10, 2021. You will be notified of the decision and distribution plan for checks via your WNCC email. Checks will be released Friday, December 17, 2021. No student will receive more in total for the Fall 2021 term than was awarded to Pell grant eligible students.

Any questions about HEERF student grants or the application for supplemental funds should be submitted to me by replying to this email. Funds are limited and there is no guarantee that supplemental funds will be awarded.

Wishing you good health.

Sample email to non-FAFSA filers (Fall 2021):

Dear (WNCC student name),

WNCC recently distributed COVID-19 student grants (also referred to as Higher Education Emergency Relief Grants or HEERF III) to students enrolled for Fall 2021. Under the terms of the American Rescue Plan, institutions are required to prioritize HEERF III student grants to students with exceptional financial need. As prior email notices indicated, WNCC used the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the 2021-2022 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine level of financial need. Students without a FAFSA on file with WNCC were awarded lesser grant amounts.

If you are eligible to file a FAFSA, it is not too late; please submit a 2021-2022 FAFSA at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> and your resulting EFC will be used to determine whether you are eligible for a supplemental HEERF III distribution. FAFSA records received by WNCC no later than Monday, December 13, 2021, will be considered for a supplemental award for the Fall term. Please keep in mind it takes 3-5 business days for WNCC to receive your FAFSA record after you have submitted it. For free assistance filing the FAFSA, please contact:

- \* AIM Educational Opportunity Center at 308.633.0104, or

- \* EducationQuest Foundation at 308.708.7199

If you ARE NOT eligible to file a FAFSA, you may request a 2021-2022 College Funding Estimator report from EducationQuest Foundation by contacting Andrew Hunzeker at 308.708.7199, extension 207 or Nuria Lemus at 308.234.6310, extension 204. Students obtaining a 2021-2022 College Funding Estimator report will need the report to be delivered to the Financial Aid Office no later than Monday, December 13, to be considered for a supplemental HEERF III distribution for the Fall term. To submit, please:

- \* Deliver in person to the Welcome Center at the Scottsbluff campus, or the office at the Sidney or Alliance campus to go to the attention of Sheila Johns

- \* Upload and email securely at <https://docsafe.wncc.edu/filedrop/FINAID>

- \* Fax to WNCC Financial Aid Office, attention Sheila Johns, at 308.635.6732

- \* Mail to Sheila Johns, WNCC, 1601 E. 27th St, Scottsbluff, NE 69361

You will be notified of the decision and distribution plan for checks via your WNCC email. Checks will be released Friday, December 17, 2021. No student will receive more in total for the Fall 2021 term than was received by Pell grant eligible students.

Any questions about this email or HEERF student grants should be submitted to me by replying to this email. Funds are limited and there is no guarantee that supplemental funds will be awarded.

Wishing you good health.