

CARES Act provides emergency grants for eligible OU students



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[The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#), which was passed by Congress and signed into law in March, will provide \$13,796,824 to Oakland University in higher education emergency relief funding.

By law, half of the funds received by institutions must be distributed directly to students in the form of emergency grants to cover expenses related to unexpected financial needs due to the coronavirus pandemic. This means that \$6,898,412 will be available for OU students in the form of emergency grants.

OU is currently developing a plan to equitably and fairly distribute the CARES Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) grants. At this point, the funds have yet to arrive. Once they do, and the university has determined how to distribute the expected \$6.8 million of emergency student funding, the campus community will be notified of the process.

This will include clear instructions on how students who are eligible for Title IV federal financial aid can request the grants to help with their expenses related to campus disruptions due to COVID-19. To apply for an emergency grant, students must be eligible for federal aid as determined through filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students who have not yet filed the 2019-2020 FAFSA can still do so at studentaid.gov. OU students who are not eligible for Title IV federal financial aid may apply for other emergency grants through the [OU COVID-19 Special Relief Fund](#).

“OU will use the CARES Act Student Emergency Funds and the OU COVID-19 Special Relief Fund to support students through this extraordinary time,” said Dawn Aubry, associate vice president for Enrollment Management at OU. “We recognize that many of our students have incurred expenses as a result of the pandemic. Our goal is to get this money into the hands of our students as quickly as possible, so that they can complete their Oakland education.”

As required by the U.S. Department of Education, Oakland submitted a certification form to receive the funding. The OU CARES HEERF Student Emergency Fund Oversight Committee members are working to establish the process for how students apply for CARES Act funds, and document protocols for awarding emergency grants to students and the means of distributing those funds.

The expenses can be anything within the meaning of “cost of attendance” as defined in the Higher Education Act, including but not limited to food, housing, course materials, technology, health care and child care expenses. The grants will be available to all Title IV federal financial aid students, including undergraduate and graduate degree seeking students, through [OU Student Financial Services](#). Details on how students can apply for the emergency aid will be shared as soon as they are available.

These federal dollars will supplement OU’s ongoing efforts to provide financial relief for students in need of assistance. Since the pandemic began, Oakland has already disbursed grants from the OU COVID-19 Special Relief Fund to 51 students who needed financial support for a variety of reasons.

For more information on the CARES Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) grants, contact OU Student Financial Services at finservices@oakland.edu.

For more information on the COVID-19 Student Relief Fund, contact the OU Dean of Students office at deanofstudents@oakland.edu.