

May 26, 2020

Betsy DeVos
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Re: *Essex County College*
HEERF Student Emergency Aid Funds Reporting

Dear Secretary DeVos:

As required by Section 18004(e) of the CARES Act, Essex County College (“College” or “institution”) submits its initial report concerning the receipt and distribution of the funds allocated to it under the Act.

1. On April 14, 2020, the College signed and returned to the Department of Education (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.”
2. The institution has received \$3,876,331 for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students, the total amount that it expected for that purpose.
3. As of the date of this submission, the College has distributed \$ 848,120.
4. The estimated total number of students at the institution eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 of Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants is 3,600.
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 is 3,621.
6. In order to distribute the Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students, the College first had to determine eligibility.

Following the guidance of the United States Department of Education, to be currently eligible, a student must:

- Be either a full or part-time Degree/Certificate/Credential-Seeking enrolled for the Spring 2020 semester.

- Eligible to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to verify the following general eligibility requirements.
- The student must have a valid Social Security number.
- Be a U.S. citizen or have qualifying non-citizenship status.
- Have earned a high school diploma or GED.
- Have registered for selective service (if the individual is male and under 26 years of age).
- Fulfilled the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards of Essex County College at the beginning of the Spring 2020 Term.
- A student enrolled in classes for a program that was offered exclusively online during the Spring 2020 Term is not eligible for an emergency grant.
- A student who is in default on a Title IV loan (or who owes refund money on a Title IV grant) is also ineligible for CARES Act funding.
- Non-matriculating students will be considered on a case by case basis.

Once eligibility is determined, the funds will be distributed in two, or possibly three, phases.

Phase 1:

An initial \$200 payment will be made to all currently enrolled Essex County College students who meet the current DOE/CARES Act guidelines.

Budget Amount: \$ 720,000 (approximately)

Phase 2:

Student can apply for additional assistance based on their need. An application is required for additional funding. The minimum additional funding that will be provided to students will be \$240.

Following the Federal guidelines, the amounts awarded under Phase 2 will be based on the level of need in each of the following areas, including, but not limited to:

- Housing
- Child Care
- Healthcare
- Food
- Purchase internet access
- Textbooks

Process for Phase 2 Disbursements

- All students will receive \$240 upon the submission of the CARES Act application which demonstrates need due to the disruption of campus operations because of COVID-19

- Students will receive an additional \$40 for each box checked on the application, demonstrating one of the areas of need listed above.
- Students who request additional funds in the essay section beyond these amounts will be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to funding availability.

Budget Amount: \$ 3,156,331 (approximately)

Phase 3:

Should any funds remain after Phase 1 and Phase 2 distributions, it will be available for:

- Any late-arriving Phase 2 applications
- Students with special needs
- Students with needs in subsequent semesters (subject to all funds being disbursed within one year of the signing of the Certification and Agreement.)

Budget Amount: Unknown at this time

7. The College has used many methods to make students aware of the availability of Emergency Financial Aid Grants seeking to ensure that the greatest number of eligible students took advantage of the program.

- The College's website contains a link on its front-page directing students to information about the availability of awards and the application for a Phase 2 distribution. The link may be found at <https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.essex.edu%2F&data=02%7C01%7C%7C8ae8c0fb684e486d15a708d7f79ef831%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637250134441310334&sdata=S3KNPFFOUajN28vjdCh88DStpdHHVqKUL64vGfNi%2BFY%3D&reserved=0?> and <https://www.essex.edu/caresact/>
- Various social media services were used, such as:
 - Facebook: [facebook.com/EssexCountyCollege/photos/a.315538618492206/3061076537271720/?type=3&theater](https://www.facebook.com/EssexCountyCollege/photos/a.315538618492206/3061076537271720/?type=3&theater) and <https://www.facebook.com/eccstudentlife/photos/a.441586259217190/3923247547717693/?type=3&theater>
 - Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CALAPiG15pK/?igshid=33alwkd12ozl>
 - YouTube: <https://youtu.be/tsfaZtMnV7w>
- Postcards were also sent to all possibly eligible students: <https://mail.essex.edu/owa/#> and <https://mail.essex.edu/owa/#> We felt that this

method was especially important to ensure that those who do not have ready access to the Internet and email be fully informed. It also provides the information that allows the application for Phase 2 relief to be made on the telephone, rather than online.

Respectfully submitted,
Essex County College, by
