

Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds for COVID-19 AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) HEERF III – Students Portion

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the "**American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)** (P.L. 117-2)." This third allocation of federal funds from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (*HEERF*) was established to prevent, assist, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The federal government has highlighted these funds to support our students with expenses related to the interruption of university operations due to the coronavirus, such as but not limited to housing, food, medical expenses, acquisition of electronic equipment, technology and internet, tuition expenses (tuition, fees, and laboratories), and expenses of care of dependents.

Funding Sources

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III)" is authorized by the ***American Rescue Plan Act*** (ARPA), Public Law 117-2, enacted on March 11, 2021, which provides funding in support of higher education institutions to serve students and ensure that learning continues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **ARPA** Funds are in addition to the funds authorized by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), Public Law 116-260, and the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security Act (CARES), Public Law 116-136.

ARPA Funds - HEERF III for Students

- (1) The University guarantees that the funds received for students will be used solely to offer financial aid to all students who are enrolled as a student at the University.

- a. On May 14, 2021, under the federal register "Final Rule of HEERF", the new definition of "student" is established, which is any student who is or has been enrolled since March 13, 2020, the date on which the National Emergency on the Coronavirus is declared.
- b. Students are not required to be eligible for Federal Financial Aid Title IV funds to receive HEERF grants.
 - i. Students who are or were enrolled during the national COVID-19 emergency are eligible for HEERF emergent financial aid, regardless of whether they have completed the Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA), or whether they are eligible for HEA Title IV funds.
- c. Priority will be given to students with *exceptional needs*, such as students eligible for the Federal Pell Grant, or students *with extraordinary financial circumstances*.
- d. Beyond Pell's eligibility, other types of exceptional needs could include students who are eligible for other federal or state aid is need-based, or have faced exceptional expenses, such as job loss (either the student or their parents, or spouses), reduced income, or food or housing insecurity.
- e. Undocumented or international students are eligible for these funds, as long as they have exceptional needs in order to receive funding from these programs.
 - i. This includes and is not limited to citizens, permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, DACA recipients, other DREAMers, and undocumented students.
- f. In no way will the University allow discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or sex in the distribution of these emergency funds to students. See, for example, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq., (Title VI), 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq. (Rehabilitation Act), 20 U.S.C. § 1681 (Title IX).
- g. The institution will not impose on you how to spend the emergency aid money received.

- i. The student may use these funds to cover any component of the cost of education or for expenses incurred due to the emergency of the covid pandemic, such as and not limited to tuition, food, housing, health expenses (including expenses incurred for mental health), expenses for caring for children or dependents, or expenses incurred to maintain distance study (electronic equipment and internet).
- h. Emergency funds under HEERF are not taxable to the beneficiary of such funds.
- i. HEERF emergency funds will not be considered for the calculation of the student's effective family contribution (EFC).
- j. HEERF funds are not considered federal financial aid funds, so the granting of these funds to students who have not completed the process to receive Title IV funds, such as additional documents required under the verification process, etc., cannot be stopped.
- k. If the student does not cash his check on time, it is the responsibility of the University to contact and guide him on the benefit of HEERF, before canceling the check.
- l. Funds recovered because of canceled checks (whether the student rejects it or for any other circumstance), will be re-distributed such funds to other eligible students who still reflect economic need.

Eligibility Requirements

Students who are eligible to participate in ARPA funds will need to meet the following requirements set forth for this program. For more information on therequirements, you can visit: <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility/requirements>.

- (1) Be enrolled in any of the academic programs of the University, and at any academic level, during the different academic terms from December 2021 to December 2021.
 1. Vocational Academic Programs, Associate Degrees, Baccalaureates, Masters and Doctorates.

- (2) Have completed the 2021-2022 Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA).
- (3) Demonstrated exceptional economic need.
 - a. Such as students receiving the Federal PELL scholarship, and all those students with high economic need who do not receive the Federal PELL scholarship.
 - b. Students who earned an "EFC" between zero (0) to \$5,846.00, during the process of completing their 2021-2022 academic year "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" (FAFSA).
 - c. Students who demonstrate extraordinary financial need including, for example, a loss of employment, reduced income, food or housing insecurity, extraordinary medical expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, among others.
 - i. Any student who identifies with any of these examples and whose EFC on their FAFSA is greater than zero (0) should immediately contact their Financial Assistance Officer for guidance on the appeals process of your EFC through the Professional Judgement process or Special Conditions.
- (4) Be a U.S. citizen, undocumented or international students, permanent resident, refugees, asylum seekers, DACA recipients, and DREAMers.
- (5) Complete The **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** Application that is available on the University's website, **www.caribbean.edu**, in its entirety.

Distribution of ARPA Funds

- (1) ARPA Applications will be evaluated, in the order of receipt thereof.
- (2) It will be verified that students who have completed the ARPA Application have also completed the 2021-2022 FAFSA, otherwise they will be contacted to assist you in the process of completing it.

(3) The *average* assignment to be assigned from ARPA to students from July or December 2021, will contemplate the following scales of the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and academic load:

Expected Family Contribution (EFC)	Undergraduate Students and Short Careers, 15 credits or more	Undergraduate Students and Short Careers, 12 to 14 credits	Undergraduate Students and Short Careers, 11 credits the least	Graduate Students 6 credits or more	Graduate Students Less than 6 credits
EFC cero (0)	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,200.00	\$1,900.00	\$ 2,200.00	\$1,700.00
EFC \$ 1 to \$5,846	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$1,500.00
EFC over \$5,846	\$ 1,600.00	\$1,400.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,000.00
Did not complete FAFSA 2021-2022	\$ 800.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 500.00	\$300.00

- The students of the Doctoral Program "Blend Learning" and who were enrolled in the term of Summer, July 21/BL1, will also be considered for the assignment of this aid.

Important:

- (1) The academic load will be determined at the time the student completes the procedure to access the funds and their ARPA application is evaluated.
- (2) The student who requests a reassessment of his original allocation of the ARPA emergency aid, will be granted a second evaluation and if he still maintains an economic need not covered with other economic aid administered by the University and if there are uncommitted funds, he could be considered for an increase of this emergency aid and include it in the next payroll to be processed.
- (3) The Finance Office will be limited to collecting the debt contracted with the University, to the students who have voluntarily authorized us to collect through their ARPA Application, marking the box of authorization of collections.

- a. If the student, after completing and sending us his ARPA Application, and who originally authorized us to collect from his aid the existing debt with the University, sends us an email indicating that he needs 100% of these funds to assist them during this pandemic, no type of charge will be made to the student's original assignment. You will be issued a check for the total allowance.
- (4) If after distributing the funds to the students there is a remnant of funds, the University will define the procedure for the distribution of these funds among the students. eligible pursuant to applicable requirements for students under ARPA.

For further questions or additional information, the student should send an email to: COVID19@caribbean.edu. The University will limit itself to answering the emails received through the institutional emails of our students (please, not personal emails).

Friday, July 23, 2021