

CARES Act Emergency Grant: The US Department of Education recognizes the disruptions and hardships that have been created due to the changes made in education to protect students against the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak. In response they have created a CARES Act Emergency Financial Aid Grant fund. These funds were given to colleges to disburse to current students to be used for costs related to food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care.

The Northeast Higher Education District (NHED) Colleges, which consist of Hibbing Community College, Itasca Community College, Mesabi Range College, Rainy River Community College, and Vermilion Community College, signed and submitted the Certificate of Agreements with the US Department of Education on 04/20/2020 for a total allocation of \$2,698,390 received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students of which a minimum of 50% of those funds are committed to students .

Who is eligible for the CARES funding? Based on criteria set forth by the U.S. Department of Education and Minnesota State, students that were enrolled in at least one ground-based course as of the Friday prior to spring break (March 6, 2020) are eligible. In addition, eligible students must have filed a FAFSA, or be eligible to file a FAFSA.

Who is ineligible for the CARES funding? Using the U.S. Department of Education and Minnesota State guidelines, students excluded from receiving CARES funding are the following:

- student whose classes were completely on-line as of March 6, 2020,
- students who withdrew and not enrolled as of March 6, 2020,
- PSEO and concurrent enrollment students,
- students paying the Senior Citizen rate,
- international students, or
- employees whose tuition is covered by tuition waiver.

How much will eligible students receive? All qualifying students will receive a \$300 CARES Base award, and all qualifying Pell eligible students will receive an additional \$600 CARES Supplemental Award. The funds were initially disbursed on 05-05-2020 to students as either a mailed paper check or through direct deposit depending on the student's preference in their eservices account.

Additional funds have been set aside to award to qualifying students on a case by case basis. Students that have experienced extenuating circumstances due to the disruption of school due to Covid-19 should contact an advisor/counselor or the financial aid office to request an application for these additional funds. Applications will be reviewed by a committee and students will be notified of the outcome in a timely manner.

Within the Northeast Higher Education District (NHED), which is made up of 5 colleges, an estimated 2114 students are eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 during the Spring 2020 semester and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

As of May 5, 2020 the following funds have been disbursed by NHED to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act as of the date of submission (i.e., as of the 30-day Report and every 45 days thereafter).

May 5, 2020: 2110 students have received a total of \$1,284,000

June 30, 2020: 2110 students have received a total of \$1,314,300

September 30, 2020: 2114 students have received a total of \$1,325,627

December 31, 2020: 2114 students have received a total of \$1,325,627

Instructions, directions, or guidance have been provided by the institutions to students concerning the Emergency Financial Aid Grants on the Colleges Official web site under Coronavirus (COVID-19) and via [e-mail](#) to the student's preferred e-mail address.

[Link email to:](#)

Dear [first name last name],

The federal government recently passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act with funds dedicated to supporting students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn.

To that end, we are pleased to award a \$300.00 grant to all students who meet the eligibility requirements of the CARES Act and a \$900 grant to those students who meet the eligibility requirements of the CARES Act and are also Pell-eligible. We recognize that college students are facing unexpected financial challenges during this time and hope that this grant helps to relieve some of that burden. Thank you for your flexibility this semester, and we wish you the best as you continue to work toward achieving your educational goals.

Note that at the time of drafting this letter, the federal government has not issued guidance regarding the tax status of this disbursement. Please be advised this grant may be counted as income on your 2020 taxes. If you have any questions about these grants, please contact the financial aid office at [xxx-xxx-xxxx].

This is a challenging time, and we know you may be feeling stress or anxiety. You can reach our campus counseling services at [xxx-xxx-xxxx]. In addition, United Healthcare is offering a free emotional support helpline for all students through Optum, one of their subsidiary companies. Their 24/7 toll-free helpline number, 866-342-6892, is free of charge and open to any student.

We will get through this together. Please know that our faculty and staff are dedicated to ensuring you meet your educational goals!

Sincerely,

Mike Raich
President

Aaron Reini, HCC interim Provost
Bart Johnson, ICC Provost
Shelly McCauley- Jugovich, MRC Provost
Shawn Bina, VCC Provost
Roxanne Kelly, RRCC Provost