

Grand Rapids Community College  
Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III

Second Quarter Report for the time period of April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021

July 10, 2021

**Acknowledgments of Signed Certification and Agreement Forms**

Following the March 11, 2021, passage of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP), Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) received notice on May 12, 2021, that it would receive an additional \$13,057,485 in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF III) for the purpose of providing financial awards to students affected by the COVID pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) provided a Grant Award notification to GRCC on May 12, 2021.

On April 13, 2020, Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Certification and Agreement. An unsigned copy is available for review at the Office of Postsecondary Education website. ED approved the signed agreement on April 22, 2020. ED did not require additional certifications for subsequent HEERF funding.

GRCC has received a total of \$49,336,952 in HEERF funding through the CARES Act, CRRSAA, ARP legislation, and Strengthening Institutions. A minimum of \$19,863,657 was designated for student grants. As of June 30, 2021, GRCC has disbursed \$18,855,086 of these funds to students and will be disbursing the remaining funding in the coming months.

**Total HEERF funding for student grants**

The HEERF funding as established by the three federal funding laws for student grants is as follows:

HEERF I (CARES Act)	\$3,403,086
HEERF II (CRRSAA)	\$3,403,086
HEERF III (ARP: American Rescue Plan)	\$13,057,485
<b>Total available for student grants</b>	<b>\$19,863,657</b>

**Total HEERF awarded to students**

As of June 30, 2021, GRCC has disbursed \$18,855,086 in HEERF funding to students.

HEERF I	\$3,403,086
HEERF II	\$3,403,086
HEERF III	\$12,048,914
<b>Total HEERF awarded to students</b>	<b>\$18,855,086</b>

**Number of Students**

For the awarding of HEERF III grants, GRCC identified 19,228 students as potentially eligible for a HEERF award. As of June 30, 2021, a total of 4,024 students received HEERF III grants, totaling \$12,048,914. The application became available to these students on June 21, 2021.

**Determination of eligible students**

For this round of awarding HEERF III grants to students, GRCC determined that students enrolled in credit, clock hour and apprenticeship programs would be awarded a \$3,000 grant as long as they answered "Yes" to at least one of the exceptional need categories on the HEERF application. Students in non-credit healthcare and other workforce programs longer than 6 weeks will be considered for \$1,500. Those enrolled in non-credit programs shorter than 6 weeks will receive \$1,000.

Additionally, GRCC established the following eligibility criteria:

- Students needed to be enrolled at GRCC at any time on or after March 1, 2020, up to and including Summer semester 2021.
- DACA, Undocumented, and International students were included.
- GRCC excluded the following students from eligibility: guest students, consortium students, and dual enrolled students, including middle college or concurrently enrolled high school students.
- Also excluded were students who previously received a \$3,000 award in the final round of HEERF II.

The application became available to these students on June 21, 2021.

Note: As of June 30, 2021, GRCC has HEERF III funds remaining. GRCC is reviewing federal guidelines and determining how to make HEERF III funds available to dual enrolled students, including middle college and concurrently enrolled high school students.

### Exceptional Need & Student Application

The HEERF guidelines state that institutions must prioritize HEERF awarding to students who have exceptional need. GRCC defined exceptional need as follows:

- *Students with exceptional need have encountered significant barriers to their academic success as the result of the Coronavirus pandemic.*

Such barriers include one or more of the following:

- Loss or reduction of income
- Housing
- Utilities
- Food
- Transportation
- Textbooks and/or required class supplies
- Outstanding tuition bills
- Technology (Internet service, computer, etc.)
- Physical/mental health care
- Child care
- Household family care

From June 21, 2021, through June 30, 2021, a total of 4,029 applications were submitted. The following table shows the number and percentage of students who attested to having an expense within an eligible category during their enrollment at GRCC.

Expenses	Students	Percentage
Child care	679	17%
Course Material	2,327	58%
Food	1,941	48%
Health Care	2,128	53%
Household	1,109	28%
Housing	1,330	33%
Loss of Income	3,142	78%
Technology	2,317	58%
Transportation	1,667	41%
Outstanding Tuition	1,224	30%
Utilities	1,591	39%

## **Communication**

GRCC sent both email and text messages to students to encourage them to apply for HEERF III. The content of those emails is listed below.

Additionally, faculty connections and relationships with GRCC students were leveraged to strategically communicate the upcoming HEERF III awarding process. The communications sent to FT and Adjunct faculty provided details for eligibility, how to apply for funds etc. Faculty worked with students over multiple semesters to encourage completion, student success, and support resources. They had firsthand knowledge for the student impact and struggles by COVID related circumstances. They were encouraged to reach out to their students with this information. A copy of the email that was sent to faculty is listed below after the student examples.

### EMAIL to STUDENTS

Dear [[Student's first name]],

Were you enrolled in classes at GRCC on or after March 13, 2020 - the date the Coronavirus National Emergency was declared? During the pandemic, have you experienced exceptional need, defined as having encountered significant barriers to your academic success?

If so, Grand Rapids Community College is pleased to notify you that you may be eligible for up to \$3,000 in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF).

These funds do not need to be repaid.

You do not need to be a financial aid recipient to receive these funds. If you do receive financial aid, accepting HEERF will not reduce your current or future financial aid.

DACA, undocumented, international students, and those pursuing completely online programs of study may now receive HEERF.

Apply now!

Sign into [MyGRCC](#). If you are unable to sign in, contact IT Student Support at (616) 234-4357.

Next:

- Select the Online Center
- Select the Higher Ed Emergency Relief tile
- Review general information about the GRCC Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds Application

- Click the Complete Application button, if you wish to be considered for funding
- Confirm you meet the eligibility requirements listed
- Select all barriers to academic success you experienced as the result of the Coronavirus pandemic
- Click the Submit Application button
- Update your BankMobile refund preference, if desired, following the instructions provided
- Confirm your contact information and update it, if necessary, in your Online Center

You will receive a separate email notification from BankMobile, if higher education emergency relief funds are disbursed to you.

If you have questions, the GRCC CARES Team can help. Please review our [Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds FAQs](#) or email us at [GRCC CARES@gcc.edu](mailto:GRCC_CARES@gcc.edu).

These are difficult times. GRCC has other resources available to help with a variety of challenges. Visit our GET HELP webpage – [gcc.edu/gethelp](http://gcc.edu/gethelp) – listing college and community resources for food and housing insecurity and other challenges.

We hope this will bring some relief to you during this unprecedented public health crisis.

#### TEXT MESSAGE

Grand Rapids Community College is pleased to notify you that you may be eligible for up to \$3,000 in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). These funds do not need to be repaid. Would you like more information? Reply Yes/No

#### EMAIL to WORKFORCE STUDENTS

Dear Workforce Training Student,

We are pleased to notify you that you may be eligible for Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), if you have experienced exceptional need, defined as having encountered significant barriers to your academic success as the result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

To determine your eligibility, you must have been enrolled and attended a workforce training class/program sometime between December 1, 2020 and April 29, 2021.

Please go to this link: [Care Act 2 for MTEC Students](#)

1. Fill in your contact information
2. Select all barriers to academic success you experienced as the result of the Coronavirus pandemic
3. Click the Submit Application button.

You will receive a separate email notification if you are approved for higher education emergency relief funds. If so, a check will be mailed to you within 14 business days of your application.

If you have questions, the GRCC CARES Team can help. Please review our Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds FAQs, email us at [workforcetraining@grcc.edu](mailto:workforcetraining@grcc.edu), or call (616) 234-4000.

These are difficult times. GRCC has other resources available to help with a variety of challenges. Visit our GET HELP webpage – [grcc.edu/gethelp](http://grcc.edu/gethelp) – listing college and community resources for food and housing insecurity and other challenges.

We hope this will bring some relief to you during this unprecedented public health crisis.

Stay Well.

Best,

President Pink

EMAIL to FACULTY

- Subject Line - **Help Your Student Access Available Funding**

I am seeking your help in identifying and communicating to students who may be eligible to receive higher education emergency relief funds. This financial assistance can make a difference in their daily lives, and reaching their academic goals.

We have attempted to reach students through email and text to let them know these dollars are available to them if they have had a loss or reduction of income, housing, utilities, food, healthcare, and/or child care expenses related to COVID-19 dating back to March 13, 2020. Our students have busy lives, and I hope your relationship with them can aid our efforts in getting this information to them. When possible, please consider sharing this message:

Students who meet the following criteria may be eligible to receive higher education emergency relief funds.

- were enrolled at GRCC on or after March 13, 2020 - the date the Coronavirus National Emergency was declared.
- students with exceptional need, which is defined as encountering significant barriers to academic success as the result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

DACA, undocumented, and international students are now eligible to receive higher education emergency relief funds.

Students can verify their eligibility and access these funds by taking the following steps:

Sign into [MyGRCC](#)

- and select the Online Center

- Select the Higher Ed Emergency Relief tile
- Review general information about the GRCC Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds Application
- Click the Complete Application button to be considered for funding
- Confirm the eligibility requirements listed are met
- Select all barriers to academic success experienced as the result of the Coronavirus pandemic
- Click the Submit Application button
- Update BankMobile refund preference, if desired, following the instructions provided
- Confirm contact information and update it, if necessary, in the Online Center

Students will receive a separate email notification from BankMobile, if higher education emergency relief funds are disbursed to them.

If students experience difficulty logging into MyGRCC, they should contact IT Student Support at [\(616\) 234-4357](tel:6162344357).

I hope this layered approach of communication can reach students who may not be aware they are eligible to receive these funds.

Thank you for the continued support of our students.

Tina Hoxie, Ed.D. Associate Provost/Dean of Student Affairs

### **Summary**

As noted above, GRCC received \$13,057,485 in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF III) for the purpose of providing financial awards to students affected by the COVID pandemic. As of the close of this current quarter, GRCC has disbursed most of those funds to students. GRCC is reviewing the remaining funding and examining additional options to disburse the balance of the funds over the next few months.

Report updated April 13, 2022