

Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) Issued via American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) “HEERF III”

PURPOSE. The American Rescue Plan Act, signed into law on March 11, 2021, provided for \$1.25 million¹ to Independence Community College (ICC) to issue as direct grants to students. These Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (referred to herein as HEERF-III) will be utilized by ICC to reach two primary goals: (1) directly reduce student’s burden of educationally-related expenses to students based on need; (2) reduce students’ outstanding balances to ICC incurred since the emergency declaration on March 13, 2020.²

ICC’s student population faces many obstacles due to their significant socioeconomic disadvantages.³ The above-stated goals are intended to assist students reach their educational goals by alleviating the financial strain of owing for their cost to attend. ICC will prioritize those students with the greatest need, based on FAFSA EFC. The student’s total balance due to ICC will be a secondary factor since students who have high outstanding balance incurred since the emergency declaration are most likely to have faced obstacles in obtaining aid or completing their program of study.

In addition to its traditional degree-seeking students, ICC serves its community through concurrent enrollment course available to area high school students. ICC serves area high schools in counties that are below the poverty line.⁴ Offering general education courses to this exceptionally needy population will assist students in continuing their education despite the depressed economy due to COVID-19.

GRANT AID TO STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED

POLICY. The following policy will guide ICC in its awarding of grant aid directly to students. Grant aid to students enrolled beginning Fall 2021. ICC shall allocate a portion of its total HEERF-III student funding to direct aid to students that are currently enrolled.

1. *ICC additionally received \$1.25 million to apply toward institutional costs*
2. *HEERF II Public and Private Nonprofit Institution (a)(1) Programs (CFDA 84.425E and 84.425F) Frequently Asked Questions. Published 1-14-2021. Updated 3-19-2021.*
3. *Seventy percent (70%) of ICC first-time, full-time freshman are Pell Grant recipients. IPEDS 2020-21.*
4. *In Wilson County, 11.30% of the population is below the poverty line with a median income of \$29,747. In Montgomery County, 12.60% of the population is below the poverty line with a median income of \$30,997.*

1. Students must meet the minimum qualifications:
 - a. Be enrolled at ICC*
*International students have additional criteria (see below)
2. ICC shall award grants to students based on the following calculation:
 - a. Direct cost to attend less any institutional, outside, and Title IV Federal Student Aid; and
 - b. No award shall exceed the direct cost to attend, less Room & Board.
 - c. Students demonstrating exceptional financial need, defined as those students with 0 EFC on the 2021-22 FAFAS shall receive an additional payment regardless of the calculation listed above:
 - i. Full-time students shall receive \$400
 - ii. Part-time students shall receive \$200
3. The awarding of grants is not contingent upon a student authorizing payment of the grant to outstanding charges with ICC.

*International and DACA students are eligible per U.S. Department of Education guidance issued May 11, 2021. In furtherance of the goal to award direct grant aid to students demonstrating exceptional need, international students will be required to apply for consideration of aid in which they must demonstrate their individual exceptional need for Emergency Relief Funds.

PROCEDURE. The following outlines the process to distribute grant aid to students.

1. No application is required. Students are evaluated after certification for each term and are awarded based on the criteria stated above.
2. Grant aid shall be passed through student accounts via the Billing Office.
3. Students are invited to authorize ICC to apply their award to any outstanding balance with ICC, but receipt of the award is not contingent upon completing any authorization.
4. Students who do not authorize payment of outstanding charges shall receive the grant aid as a payment directly to them through the standard process for issuing student refunds.
5. Students shall receive notice of the following:
 - a. This policy;
 - b. The timeline for awarding and issuing payment;
 - c. The amount of the award; and
 - d. Their option to authorize or not authorize payment of outstanding charges.

GRANT AID TO FORMER STUDENTS WITH OUTSTANDING BALANCE

POLICY. Grant aid to students enrolled at any time since March 13, 2020. ICC shall allocate a portion of its total HEERF-III student funding to direct aid to students previously enrolled and with an outstanding balance due to ICC.

1. Student must meet the minimum qualifications:
 - a. Be enrolled at least half-time since March 13, 2020;
 - b. Be Degree or Certificate-seeking since March 13, 2020;
 - c. Be a U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen; and
 - d. Owe any balance to ICC.
2. Students with the highest need, based on the lowest EFC of the 2019-20, 2020-21 or 2021-22 FAFSA EFC shall receive priority in distribution of grants.
3. Priority shall be given to students with the highest outstanding balance amongst students with EFCs within the same range (using the Pell Grant award chart range).
4. No award shall exceed the total balance owed to ICC.

PROCEDURE. The following outlines the process to distribute grant aid to students enrolled since March 13, 2020 with outstanding charges.

1. Students must submit an application to ICC for consideration to receive a student grant under this section.
2. Grant aid shall be passed through student accounts via the Billing Office.
3. Students are invited to authorize ICC to apply their award to any outstanding balance with ICC, but receipt of the award is not contingent upon completing any authorization.
4. Students who do not authorize payment of outstanding charges shall receive the grant aid as a payment directly to them through the standard process for issuing student refunds.
5. Students shall receive notice of the following:
 - a. This policy;
 - b. The timeline for awarding and issuing payment;
 - c. The amount of the award; and
 - d. Their option to authorize or not authorize payment of outstanding charges.

GRANT AID TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED

POLICY. The following will direct ICC in its awarding of grant aid directly to high school students enrolled beginning Fall 2021. ICC shall allocate a portion of its total HEERF-III student funding to

direct aid to high school students that are currently enrolled.

1. Students are eligible to receive a student grant in the amount of the cost of one three credit hour general education course, which is \$195.
 - a. Students enrolled in general education courses and incurring additional course or consumable costs, shall receive an increased award equivalent to such cost.
 - b. Students enrolled in vocational courses and incurring additional course or consumable costs, shall receive an increased award equivalent to such cost.
2. Student must meet the minimum qualifications:
 - a. Be enrolled as an ICC NOW student;
 - b. Be enrolled in a general education course resulting in a balance owed to ICC of \$195.
3. Students shall receive notice of the following:
 - a. This policy;
 - b. The timeline for awarding and issuing payment;
 - c. The amount of the award; and
 - d. Their option to authorize or not authorize payment of outstanding charges.