

Angelo State University CARES Act Student Aid Report #4 (10/10/2020) – FINAL REPORT

PR/Award No. P425E200004

Introduction

On March 27, 2020, the President of the United States signed the CARES Act (H.R. 748), which provides emergency relief funds to organizations and individuals affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), found in Section 18004 of the CARES Act, provides funding to institutions of higher education “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.” This report provides details on the first award Angelo State University (ASU) received under the HEERF, the funds for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.

ASU issued its final grants from the CARES Act Student Aid award to students on August 28, 2020, so this fourth report also serves as a final project report.

Acknowledgement of Funding and Certification

ASU reviewed, signed, and returned the [U.S. Department of Education’s Certification and Agreement](#) for these funds on April 10, 2020, and we received our grant award notification on April 17, 2020. In keeping with the terms of the certification, ASU will 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 directly to students.

Total Award

ASU received a total of \$6,359,561 under Section 18004(a)(1) of the HEERF, of which at least **\$3,179,781** has been provided directly to students impacted by campus disruptions due to the novel coronavirus.

Funds Distributed to Date

As of the close of business on September 30, 2020, ASU has awarded the full **\$3,179,781** in direct grants to students.

Student Eligibility

The total number of ASU students eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and therefore eligible to receive CARES Act emergency financial aid grants is **5,319**¹. Of those students, **2,659** have received an award as of September 30, 2020.

¹ The number of eligible students excludes those ineligible for Title IV aid (e.g., non-degree seeking students enrolled in dual credit courses, non-U.S. citizens) as well as those enrolled exclusively in online programs prior to March 13, 2020, which the U.S. Department of Education [deemed ineligible](#) to receive CARES Act funds.

Methods Used to Determine Which Students Receive Aid and How Much

ASU created an online grant application in which each student indicated: 1) whether they had been impacted financially by the coronavirus, and 2) what specific financial needs they have in each area (food, housing, technology, course materials, health/child care, and other costs). The Financial Aid office evaluated each application based on the information provided, and they awarded funds based on each student's identified needs and the availability of funding. If students failed to provide sufficient documentation regarding their needs, the Financial Aid office contacted them to obtain additional information before issuing an award.

During the spring semester (April-early May), provided that the students were eligible to receive funds and identified legitimate needs, grants of up to \$1,500 were automatically approved. To ensure the availability of funds for as many needy students as possible, mid-level managers and senior administrators reviewed requests exceeding \$1,500 to determine the necessity for and feasibility of providing larger awards.

During the beginning of the summer (late May-early June) as well as the middle of the summer (late June-July), students with financial needs related to the disruption of campus due to COVID-19 were eligible to receive up to \$500 for their needs.

Finally, at the beginning of the fall semester (mid-August), ASU issued its final request for applications to the students. To determine which students would receive an award during this period, ASU gave priority to students who had not previously received CARES Act funds or who had only received limited funds during the previous cycles, and all recipients were eligible to receive up to \$500 for their needs.

Instructions or Directions Given to the Students

In accordance with the Secretary of Education's instructions for institutions to issue aid to students as soon as possible under the student aid portion of the CARES Act HEERF, Interim President Angie Wright sent ASU students, faculty, and staff advance notice of the program on Monday, April 20.

Thereafter, ASU's Office of Communications and Marketing sent an email message to all students, regardless of their eligibility, to inform them of the availability of funds under the CARES Act on April 23, 2020. ASU also communicated the same information via its newly created CARES Act webpage and as an announcement in RamPort, ASU's student information portal. Staff emailed additional notices to students through the beginning of May to ensure they had multiple reminders of and opportunities to request financial support.

ASU provided similar information and instructions to students before the first summer session commenced on May 18, 2020, with a follow-up going out on May 21, 2020. The same information and instructions were issued to students prior to the second summer session on June 29, 2020.

ASU issued its final communication regarding CARES Act funds to all eligible students at the beginning of the fall semester on August 19, 2020. The emailed instructions and application form contained similar information to those provided in previous funding periods.

As with previous announcements, the communications contained the following information:

- General instructions on the purpose and allowable uses of funds,
- Application periods,
- A link to the online application,
- Contact information for questions, and
- Acknowledgement of the federal government as the source of funding.