

## N OFFICE OF SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

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# Revision of *Federal CARES Act* from *Tue, 05/12/2020 - 16:52*

## CARES Act Background

On March 27th, 2020, Congress enacted the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (*CARES Act* (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7481>)), which President Trump signed into law. This bipartisan economic stimulus legislation contains significant resources for states, hospitals, businesses, organizations, families, and individuals to address the economic impact of COVID-19. For more information about the CARES Act and the University of Nebraska, visit [nebraska.edu/CARES](https://nebraska.edu/covid-19/CARES-Act) (<https://nebraska.edu/covid-19/CARES-Act>).

## Education Stabilization Fund

The CARES Act includes the Education Stabilization Fund, which provides support for K-12 and higher education. The school [allocations](#) (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/allocationsforsection18004a1ofcaresact.pdf>) are largely based on the number of students from lower-income families in attendance. The higher education portion of the Education Stabilization Fund is titled the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), of which the University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) was allocated \$15,628,700. The first half of the funding authorized by the HEERF is designated exclusively for emergency grants to students and the second half of the funding is designated to help institutions. For students, that is \$7,614,350 to UNL students and \$200,000 to students at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) for emergency financial assistance grants.

## Student Allocation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

On April 29, 2020, Nebraska reported how it is distributing the funds to students through [Nebraska Today](https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/76m-in-federal-stimulus-to-be-distributed-to-students/) (<https://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/today/article/76m-in-federal-stimulus-to-be-distributed-to-students/>). Further details about the process and administration of the student allocation are as follows:

- On April 9, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) [announced](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/bulletins/285b376) (<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/bulletins/285b376>) the student allocation of the stimulus funding for higher education through the CARES Act. The announcement included details about the process, including the [allocation](#) (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/allocationsforsection18004a1ofcaresact.pdf>) and the application process via a [Certification of Agreement](#) (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/caresheerfcertificationandaagreementfinalombapprovedforissuance.pdf>) through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov/) (<https://www.grants.gov/>). More information is available on the U.S. Department of Education website at [ed.gov/coronavirus](https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus) (<https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>).
- Nebraska signed and returned the Certification of Agreement on April 15, 2020 confirming that Nebraska intends to 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 to students. On April 24, 2020, Nebraska received the [award notification](https://nebraska.edu/-/media/projects/unca/docs/cares-act/unl-cares-act-heerf-grant-award-notification-042720.pdf?la=en) (<https://nebraska.edu/-/media/projects/unca/docs/cares-act/unl-cares-act-heerf-grant-award-notification-042720.pdf?la=en>).
- The amount of the allocation awarded to Nebraska for student emergency grants was \$7,814,350 for UNL and NCTA students.
- As of May 12, 2020, the total amount of Emergency Financial Aid Grants distributed to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act was \$4,842, 059 to 4,255 students. This is out of an estimated total number of 12,819 students at UNL and NCTA eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and thus potentially eligible to receive the Emergency Financial Aid Grants under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.
- In alignment with ED's recommendations that institutions prioritize students based on their socioeconomic circumstances providing for emergency financial aid grants, students can receive CARES funds in one of two ways, recognizing that many students were impacted by the COVID-19 disruption to campus operations:
  - About three-fourths of the federal funds will be distributed to students via direct grants, based upon their demonstrated need as calculated by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid previously submitted for the 2019-20 academic year. Students eligible for these funds will receive an email from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid indicating that they qualify for this grant, and they will need to fill out a simple form indicating they were adversely financially impacted by COVID-19. Those grants will begin to be distributed by May 8th. Approximately 5,200 UNL students would be eligible to receive \$1,200 payments through this mechanism.
  - Remaining funds will be distributed in the form of emergency grants to cover unexpected costs such as housing, food, technology, or health care that resulted from the pandemic. Students will receive an email from Scholarships and Financial Aid indicating that they may qualify. To apply for those funds, students should login to their MyRED portal and click on the financial aid tab, where they will find a link to an application. There is no deadline to apply for an emergency grant, but students are urged to apply as soon as possible because funds are limited. Eligibility will be determined based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Education and requests will be reviewed promptly.
- Eligible students were emailed with instruction to either login to MyRED and navigate to the Financial Aid To Do List to claim the \$1,200 federal grant support through CARES Act emergency funds based on expenses incurred due to COVID-19 or login to MyRED and navigate to the Financial Aid tab to access the Federal CARES Act Emergency funds application to request assistance with expenses incurred due to COVID-19. Student recipients of an emergency grant received a message that that stated the following:

*Per your emergency funding request, we have added a spring 2020 grant to your account which will refund to you. If you have not already done so, make sure you have [set up Direct Deposit](https://studentaccounts.unl.edu/payment-credits-refunds#direct-deposit) (<https://studentaccounts.unl.edu/payment-credits-refunds#direct-deposit>) with the Office of Student Accounts as this is the fastest way to receive funds. You can login to MyRED to see your grant and make sure you look in the 2019-2020 aid year.*

*We understand that the amount granted to you may not be what you requested or what you might need at this time. The amount provided is based on the limited amount of funds available and prioritized to support as many students as possible who were impacted by COVID-19. You may use these funds to help support your food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, childcare, and other expenses related to attendance at the University of Nebraska and the campus disruption due to COVID-19. Since this will refund to you and not credit your student account, please be sure to check your student account in MyRED to make sure you are current on your balance due.*

*We recognize you may be managing a variety of difficulties given the current circumstances and we aim to support you as much possible. Many students, like yourself, are finding this time to be challenging and struggling to pay for basic needs such as rent, food, and monthly bills. Our website continues to be updated with resources you may find helpful to supporting your basic needs or other questions related to finances: <https://financialaid.unl.edu/covid-19-resources> (<https://financialaid.unl.edu/covid-19-resources>).*

*The University continues to provide helpful updates regarding COVID-19 at <https://covid19.unl.edu/> (<https://covid19.unl.edu/>).*

*If you have questions about emergency funding due to COVID-19 or other options for financial aid, you can contact Husker Hub at [huskerhub@unl.edu](mailto:huskerhub@unl.edu) (<mailto:huskerhub@unl.edu>) or by phone at 402-472-2030.*