



May 15, 2020

Dear Eagle Family,

Many of you are wondering how the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act will be distributed to EWU students. This message provides background information, including the criteria used to develop EWU's approach, as well as the criteria required for students to receive emergency relief funds, how those funds will be distributed, and resources to access additional funds.

**Be sure to read all of the information included in this email, as funds will automatically begin to be distributed immediately.**

In addition, information on eligibility, funding amounts, and details of the program are posted on the [COVID-19 website](#). We also have FAQs available to help answer questions.

### **Background and EWU's Approach**

On April 29 we were officially notified that EWU would receive \$4.9 million to provide grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible expenses include educational related costs such as technology, food, housing, course materials, healthcare, and childcare.

Our allocation was determined by the U.S. Department of Education. In the way the law was written and in clarification provided by the U.S. Department of Education, it is clear Congress intended funding to go to students with greatest need.

The \$4.9 million is a lot of money, but divided among EWU's thousands of students, the awards are much smaller than everyone would like them to be.

Throughout this process, we have worked to ensure that all eligible students receive some relief. We have worked with the Department of Education and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators to determine eligibility for the grants. We consulted the Washington Student Achievement Council, peer institutions in Washington and around the country, and experts in student equity and access.

Our goal was focused and clear: to create a program that follows the law, is fair for all students, and supports those with the most need as demonstrated by a student's FAFSA, Pell Grant eligibility or WASFA.

## **Student Eligibility Criteria for Emergency Relief Funds**

To be eligible, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be a fully admitted, degree seeking undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, or graduate
- Be enrolled at least full-time on May 12, 2020
- Be a Title IV eligible FAFSA filer
- Not be enrolled in a fully online program as of March 13, 2020
- Be maintaining satisfactory academic progress
- Be financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

Because the crisis affects all students, EWU has created a separate fund for students who cannot complete the FAFSA but who qualify for HB 1079 status under Washington State's Real Hope Act. These students may receive funding using similar principles as the federal HEERF funding so long as they have a WASFA on file.

### **Distribution of Funds**

All qualified students will automatically receive funding via a mailed check or an electronic refund to the bank account on record. Always update your directory information in EagleNet because checks and important documents will be sent to the address listed there. **We will begin distributing funds immediately.**

As funds are released, we encourage you to protect yourself against scams targeting financial aid, COVID-19 federal stimulus, and HEERF funding. Enroll in two-step verification via Duo to verify your identity and prevent unauthorized access to your EWU accounts. You can enroll at [ewu.edu/2fa](http://ewu.edu/2fa) or contact the IT Help Desk team at [helpdesk@ewu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ewu.edu).

### **Additional Emergency Funds**

EWU has set aside nearly \$1 million of the HEERF funds for students in crisis over the coming months. Students who don't receive awards but meet other eligibility requirements and students attending during summer or fall may apply for additional consideration through the EWU Financial Aid & Scholarships. The university will review applications as soon as possible. When these funds are exhausted, no additional awards will be made.

Information about the application process will be posted online at the [COVID-19 website](#).

Supporting students and the Eagle family through this crisis is our top priority, and we want to once again thank all the generous donors who have come forward to support the [EWU Student Emergency Fund](#). Students in crisis who may not qualify for the federally funded grants outlined above should consider applying for EWU's emergency grants.

**Thank You to the Eagle Family**

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we took the necessary time to make decisions that demonstrate our commitment to our university mission and our students.

We also want to thank the Washington delegation for their hard work and unanimous support of the CARES Act.

Together we will endure and prevail, and our sacrifices and compassion and courage in this time will mark us forever as members of the Eagle family.

We're here for you, and we're all here for each other. Be safe and be well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sauders", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rob Sauders  
Vice President for Student Affairs



