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Federal funding

Where can I find Penn State's Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund reporting information?

[Penn State's Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund reporting information is available here.](#)

How is Penn State awarding student emergency grants from its federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II allocation?

Penn State was allotted nearly \$85 million from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II as part of the federal [Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act \(CRRSAA\)](#), which was signed into law on Dec. 27, 2020. As prescribed by law, \$27.5 million of Penn State's allocation was awarded to students in the form of emergency financial aid grants, matching the dollar amount Penn State students received last year under the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#).

Penn State distributed the CRRSAA student grants via two rounds of funding. In the first round, the University [awarded grants totaling nearly \\$25.6 million to approximately 23,000 students](#). These first-round grants prioritized students with exceptional financial need, as required by the CRRSAA, based on data from the 2020-21 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students who are Pell Grant-eligible were each offered \$1,200, and all other students identified for an award were offered \$1,000 each. Students who were offered grants in the first round had until 5 p.m. on June 1 to accept or decline the aid.

The University [opened an application-based second round of funding](#) on June 7 to disburse the remaining \$1.9 million to students in need who were not identified to receive funding during the first round. As of June 10, all CRRSAA student grant funds have been awarded and the application has closed.

What can a CRRSAA grant be used for?

A CRRSAA grant may be used to cover any component of a student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to COVID-19, including tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), and child care, provided that the expense was incurred on or after March 13, 2020.

How will students be notified if they receive a CRRSAA grant, and how do they access the funds?

Students who were offered a first-round grant received notification via their Penn State email account from the Office of Student Aid and had until 5 p.m. on June 1 to accept or decline the funding in LionPATH.

Students who applied for a grant in the second round will receive notification via their Penn State email account if they are awarded funding. All CRRSAA second-round awards will be refunded directly to the student. Students will be provided with information on how to enroll in eRefund to receive the funds via direct deposit, or to update their bank account information for eRefund. Students who do not enroll in eRefund will have a paper check sent to their permanent address on file.

Will students who receive a CRRSAA emergency grant have to pay this money back?

No. The student emergency grants do not have to be paid back.

Will receipt of a CRRSAA emergency grant impact a student's current or future eligibility for federal student aid?

No. The emergency grants will not be counted as estimated financial assistance in the current year of the award, and therefore will not impact other aid resources, nor as income for federal student aid purposes for future years of eligibility.

Are there any tax implications associated with the grants that students should be aware of?

According to the Internal Revenue Service, emergency financial aid granted to a student by an institution of higher education because of an event related to the COVID-19 pandemic is not included in the student’s gross income and is not taxable.

Regardless of CRRSAA grant eligibility, are there additional resources available to support students experiencing financial hardship and/or distress?

Complete Penn State provides resources such as financial aid for students who are within one or two semesters of completing their first associate or bachelor’s degree and experience a situation that negatively impacts their ability to complete their degree. **Eligible students are invited to request support here.**

For assistance in navigating state and federal assistance programs, **Student Affairs’ Guide to Public Assistance website** can help. In addition, the Office of **Student Care and Advocacy** can assist students with financial issues and help students apply for the Student Emergency Fund.

Penn State encourages any student experiencing mental health distress to reach out to local campus and community resources. For emergent mental health needs, Penn State’s 24/7 Crisis Line is available at 877-229-6400 for enrolled students or individuals concerned about enrolled students. The Penn State Crisis Text Line is also available for 24/7 mental health support by texting “LIONS” to 741741. Individuals supporting students can learn more about how to help students in distress via the University’s **Red Folder** website.



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