

**Important Information for Spring 2020
Students—CARES Act Student Emergency
Financial Aid Grant**

**Wednesday, May 20, 2020
1:45 p.m.**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law on March 27, 2020, to provide economic relief from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The CARES Act established and funded the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) to distribute money to colleges and universities, part of which is to be used for emergency financial aid grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a letter dated April 9, 2020, United States Secretary of Education Dr. Betsy DeVos stated that in regard to the student portion of the HEERF funds, “the only statutory requirement is that the funds be used to cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (including eligible expenses under a student’s cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care).” She also wrote that institutions may choose to distribute funds to all eligible students, which the College has elected to do.

East Central Community College (ECCC) has chosen to distribute these emergency financial aid grants to all Section 484 eligible students who meet all eligibility requirements in the Spring 2020 semester as described in the CARES Act Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (*see the Navigation Bar to the right*). ECCC believes that these students have been impacted by the disruption of campus operations in the Spring 2020 semester due to COVID-19 in one or more of the eligible expenses listed above or others included in a student’s cost of attendance. In addition, as required by the United States Department of Education, ECCC has signed and returned a Certification and Agreement on April 23, 2020, stating that no less than 50 percent of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act, or an allocation of \$1,303,155, must be provided as emergency financial aid

grants to students for costs and expenses related to the disruption to campus operations caused by COVID-19.

The CARES Act FAQ includes such information as the following:

- eligibility requirements implemented by the College for Spring 2020 students;
- reason(s) why Spring 2020 students would not be eligible for the grant;
- expenses covered by the grant including “expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (including eligible expenses under a student’s cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare);”
- what to do with grant funds if you are awarded a grant but you feel you were not impacted by the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19;
- grant amounts for eligible students based on enrollment status on March 13, 2020, and eligibility or non-eligibility for a Pell Grant; and
- additional, important information regarding the CARES Act Student Emergency Financial Aid Grant.

It is IMPERATIVE that students take the time to read the questions and responses in the CARES Act FAQ in their entirety.

According to the United States Department of Education, one basic requirement for a student to be eligible to receive a CARES Act Student Emergency Financial Aid Grant is that he/she must be eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA). The FAFSA data for students who have already completed a [2019-2020 FAFSA](#) will be used to determine a Spring 2020 student’s eligibility to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the HEA of 1965, as amended, as required by the federal government. If a student is determined to be eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the HEA of 1965, as amended, and is determined to have met all other eligibility requirements, then his/her enrollment status as of March 13, 2020, and his/her eligibility or non-eligibility for a Pell Grant as described in the CARES Act FAQ, will be determined. The amount of a grant will be based on an eligible student’s enrollment status on March 13, 2020, and his/her eligibility or non-eligibility for a

Pell Grant. Eligible students in this category (*already completed and submitted a [2019-2020 FAFSA](#)*) will be included in the first group of grant funds to be disbursed. Students eligible to receive these grant funds will be notified via a message to ECCC student email accounts once the grant funds have been applied to their account and disbursed.

Approximately 140 ECCC students may be eligible for an emergency financial aid grant but have not completed and submitted a [2019-2020 FAFSA](#). Those students must complete and submit the [2019-2020 FAFSA](#) (*which uses 2017 tax information*) between now and Friday, June 5, 2020, at studentaid.gov to be considered for an emergency financial aid grant. The FAFSA data will be used to determine a Spring 2020 student's eligibility to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the HEA of 1965, as amended, as required by the federal government. The FAFSA data will be reviewed as it is received from the federal government. Please know that completion and submission of the [2019-2020 FAFSA](#) will not guarantee eligibility for a student emergency financial aid grant. If after receiving and reviewing FAFSA data, a student is determined to be eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the HEA of 1965, as amended, and determined to have met all other eligibility requirements, then his/her enrollment status as of March 13, 2020, and his/her eligibility or non-eligibility for a Pell Grant as described in the CARES Act FAQ, will be determined. Eligible students in this category (*have not already completed and submitted a [2019-2020 FAFSA](#) but do so on or before June 5, 2020*) will be included in the second group of grant funds to be disbursed. Students eligible to receive these grant funds will be notified via a message to ECCC student email accounts once the grant funds have been applied to their account and disbursed.

The College anticipates the first group of grants will be disbursed during the week of May 18-22, 2020, to Spring 2020 students who have already completed a [2019-2020 FAFSA](#), have been determined to be "Section 484 eligible," and have met all other eligibility requirements as described in the CARES Act FAQ. Students in the second group who have not already filed a [2019-2020 FAFSA](#) but do so on or before June 5, 2020, are determined to be "Section 484 eligible," and have met all other eligibility requirements as described in the CARES Act FAQ can expect to receive their CARES Act Student

Emergency Financial Aid Grant on or before June 30, 2020. In both cases, funds received through the student emergency financial aid grant will be disbursed via BankMobile, the College's partner in distributing student financial aid funds.

If you have completed and submitted a [2019-2020 FAFSA](#), there is nothing further you have to do to be considered for an emergency financial aid grant. If you have any questions regarding the grant, please see the FAQ addressing which office to contact for particular questions. For your information and use, the CARES Act FAQ has been added as a button on the right side navigation bar on the College's webpage devoted to our COVID-19 response, www.eccc.edu/coronavirus.

In addition to the webpage, students should check their ECCC email on a daily basis. Important updates and messages like this one will also be distributed to ECCC student email accounts on a regular basis.