

Grand Rapids Community College
Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III

First Quarter Report for the time period of January 1, 2022 – March 31, 2022

April 4, 2022

Acknowledgments of Signed Certification and Agreement Forms

Following the March 11, 2021, passage of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP), Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) received notice on May 12, 2021, that it would receive an additional \$13,057,485 in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF III) for the purpose of providing financial awards to students affected by the COVID pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) provided a Grant Award notification to GRCC on May 12, 2021.

On April 13, 2020, Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Certification and Agreement. An unsigned copy is available for review at the Office of Postsecondary Education website. ED approved the signed agreement on April 22, 2020. ED did not require additional certifications for subsequent HEERF funding.

GRCC has received a total of \$49,336,952 in HEERF funding through the CARES Act, CRRSAA, ARP legislation, and Strengthening Institutions. A minimum of \$19,863,657 was designated for student grants. As of March 31, 2022, GRCC has disbursed \$19,310,086 of these funds to students. The remaining fund balance is \$553,571.

Total HEERF funding for student grants

The HEERF funding as established by the three federal funding laws for student grants is as follows:

HEERF I (CARES Act)	\$3,403,086
HEERF II (CRRSAA)	\$3,403,086
HEERF III (ARP: American Rescue Plan)	\$13,057,485
Total available for student grants	\$19,863,657

Total HEERF awarded to students

As of March 31, 2022, GRCC has disbursed \$19,310,086 in HEERF funding to students.

HEERF I	\$3,403,086
HEERF II	\$3,403,086
HEERF III	\$12,503,914
Total HEERF awarded to students	\$19,310,086

Number of students

During the current quarter of January 1, 2022, through March 31, 2022, GRCC disbursed \$455,000 to 182 students.

Determination of eligible students

For this round of HEERF III grants to students, GRCC determined that students enrolled in the previous fall semester 2021 who had an outstanding balance from fall semester of greater than or equal to \$100 and who self-attested to having exceptional need would be eligible for a \$2,500 grant. GRCC identified 496 students who were enrolled in fall semester and had a balance that met the criteria. GRCC sent email and text communications to these students. The online form was made available to students on March 4, 2022. The online form closed on March 18, 2022.

To receive the funds, the students had to submit an online form via their individual GRCC Student Online Center. By submitting the form, the students confirmed they met all eligibility criteria, including having experienced exceptional need.

Exceptional Need & Student Application

The HEERF guidelines state that institutions must prioritize HEERF awarding to students who have exceptional need. Following HEERF guidance, the acceptance form provided students with a further explanation that "Exceptional need is defined as having encountered significant barriers to academic success as the result of the Coronavirus pandemic. Examples of significant barriers include those related to loss or reduction of income, housing, utilities, food, transportation, textbooks, required class supplies, technology (including internet service, computer, etc.), physical/mental health care, childcare, household family care, and/or outstanding tuition and fee bills."

During this round, students had to attest to the fact that they met the definition of exceptional need. GRCC did not require students to specify areas of need or barriers faced.

Communication

GRCC sent both email and text messages to students to encourage them to apply for HEERF III. The content of those communications is listed below.

EMAIL to STUDENTS sent on March 4, 2022

Dear [Student's first name],

Grand Rapids Community College is pleased to notify you that you may be eligible for up to \$2,500 in federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). This is money that does not need to be repaid, and it is intended to help you through these challenging times.

We understand the Fall 2021 semester was difficult for our students on many levels. You might have needed to withdraw from classes or were unable to fulfill your financial commitment to GRCC, creating barriers to continuing your education.

You do not need to be a financial aid recipient to receive these funds. If you do receive financial aid, accepting HEERF will not reduce your current or future financial aid.

DACA, undocumented, international students, and those pursuing completely online programs of study are eligible to receive HEERF.

Complete the acceptance form now! Here's how:

Sign into MyGRCC. If you are unable to sign in, contact IT Student Support at (616) 234-4357.

Next:

- Select the Online Center
- Select the Higher Ed Emergency Relief tile
- Review general information about the GRCC Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds Acceptance Form
 - Click the Complete Form button to certify that you meet eligibility requirements and wish to be considered for funding
- Click the Submit button
- Update your BankMobile refund preference, if desired, following the instructions provided
- Confirm your contact information and update it, if necessary, in your Online Center
- You will receive a separate email notification from BankMobile if Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds are disbursed to you.

While you are under no obligation to do so, if, after receiving your funds, you wish to use any to repay a past due balance, please contact the Student Financial Services Office at 616-234-4020 for assistance.

If you have other questions, the GRCC CARES Team can help. Email us at GRCC_CARES@grcc.edu.

GRCC has other resources available to help you with a variety of challenges. Visit our GET HELP webpage – grcc.edu/gethelp – listing college and community resources for food and housing insecurity and other challenges.

We hope this will bring some relief to you during this unprecedented public health crisis.

TEXT to STUDENTS sent on March 7, 2022, and also on March 14, 2022

Message

Hello <FIRST NAME> , Grand Rapids Community College is pleased to notify you that you may be eligible for up to \$2,500 in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF). These funds do not need to be repaid. Would you like more information? Reply yes/no

Auto-Replies

If YES , then reply:

Please visit this website that details more information:
<https://bit.ly/3zjzAIS>

If NO , then reply:

Thank you, have a wonderful day!

Summary

As noted above, GRCC received \$13,057,485 in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF III) for the purpose of providing financial awards to students affected by the COVID pandemic. As of the close of this current quarter, GRCC has \$553,571 in HEERF III funds remaining. GRCC is finalizing plans to award remaining funds to eligible students and anticipates the remaining HEERF III student allocation will be disbursed in full by June 30, 2022.