What is the CARES Act – Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund?

Legislation passed by Congress to establish the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and funded the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) to provide emergency financial aid grants to students and institutions. The total amount that WMU Cooley Law School received in federal funding is $405,235, of which half, or $202,618 must be provided to students. On April 13, 2020, WMU Cooley Law School signed the Certification and Agreement to receive the first installment ($202,618) to be used to provide emergency financial aid grants to students for related expenses due to the disruption of campus operations because of coronavirus such as: food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare expenses.

Funding allocations were set by a formula mandated in the CARES Act, which significantly weights the number of full-time students, while also taking into account the total population of the school (minus students who were enrolled full-time online before the outbreak per the Department of Education). For more information on the methodology, please click here.

Who is eligible for the CARES Act – Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund?

Students who meet the criteria for federal financial aid (Title IV funding) and demonstrate financial need due to the disruption of campus operations can be considered for these funds. To be considered Title IV eligible under Section 484 of the Higher Education Act, the student must:

- Be currently enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a degree or certificate program that is not exclusively an online program;
- For currently enrolled students, be making satisfactory academic progress;
- Not owe an overpayment on Title IV grants or loans;
- Not be in default on a Title IV loan;
- Have a FAFSA on file and/or be eligible for federal financial aid (click here to complete your FAFSA online or visit studentaid.gov);
- Be a U.S. citizen or national, permanent resident, or other eligible noncitizen;
- Have a verified Social Security Number;
- Not have a federal or state conviction for drug possession or sale, with certain time limitations; and
- Incurred expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus such as: food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare.

If you do not meet the Title IV eligibility requirements for the CARES Act – HEERF resource, your application will be reviewed and processed based on demonstrated need utilizing limited emergency funding raised through the Student Relief Fund through WMU Cooley Law School.

How do I apply for the WMU Cooley Law School CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds or the WMU Cooley Law School Student Relief Funds?

On April 10, 2020, an email was sent to students regarding the application process to apply for the Student Relief Funding. This application is also being used to screen for students who would be eligible for the Department of Education CARES Act – Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. To submit an application, you must use your school email address (cooley.edu). Please click here to access the application.
How long does it take to receive notification that I am eligible to receive emergency relief funding?

It is our goal to review applications and process eligible students in a timely manner. The timeframe may vary depending on volume and time/date of submitted applications. On average, the Department of Education funding has been awarded to students within 3-5 business days from the approval of an eligible student’s application (timeframe dependent on student’s preferred method of receiving payment – check / direct deposit). Mail services have experienced a delay during the COVID-19 outbreak. If you would like to set up direct deposit please contact the Business Office at businessoffice@cooley.edu. The committee will review applications on a continual basis as funding sources are available.

How much emergency funding may I receive?

The amount of available relief is capped at $2,000 in order to distribute the funds to as many students as possible who have demonstrated a need. However, the maximum amount is subject to change depending on the volume of requests and levels of need identified by students.

Awards have been and will continue to be made on a first-come, first-serve basis and on a case-by-case basis. Preference will be given to students who have provided documents indicating need due to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus and who are first time applicants.

After receiving an award, you may apply again for additional funding (demonstrating need) however, priority will go to first time applicants who have not yet received emergency funding.

Can I apply this emergency funding directly to my balance?

No. Federal guidelines do not allow WMU Cooley Law School to apply CARES Act – HEERF grants to student account balances. Institutions are required to make the grant payment directly to the student.

Are the CARES Act HEERF Grants taxable?

The Secretary has not yet released an official statement regarding this matter however the IRS has updated their website regarding this matter. Click here for more information.