VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY

**CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund**

On March 27, 2020 the Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law. This act included funding to institutions of higher education, referred to as the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), providing students with grants to offset the unexpected expenses they may have incurred as campus operations were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. VCSU will use at least 50% of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Grants to students.

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| **EMERGENCY GRANTS TO STUDENTS** |
| Total Funds Available | Date Application Submitted | Date Application Approved | Date Funds Drawn Down |
| $226,471 | 4/232020 | 5/04/2020 | 7/02/2020 |

The VCSU CARES Act Distribution Report was first published on 6/03/2020 (30 days from receipt of the funds) and is updated every 45 days.

Initial guidance indicated that recipients needed to be Title IV eligible students. VCSU then determined which students met this requirement and were enrolled at least half-time. The cARES Act Grant funding does exclude students who are not a U.S. citizen or national, permanent resident, or other eligible non-citizen. It also excludes students enrolled in strictly on-line academic programs. Eligible students were notified on May 8, 2020 to complete and submit the CARES Act Grant Application to apply for funds to cover expenses related to COVID-19. The maximum grant award is $400.

The CARES Act Grant Application became available May 8, 2020. VCSU determined that at least 594 students were eligible to participate and eligible. Distributions began May 15, 2020. The total number of students who have received an Emergency Grant funds as of May 31, 2020 is 250. Funds disbursed under initial guidance (through May 31, 2020) totaled $97,300

Students who submitted applications and were approved were sent an email to their VCSU email notifying them of the disbursement. Students who did not have direct deposit established were mailed the check to their home address (indicated in Campus Connection).

On May 22, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education notified institutions of a change in the minimum eligibility requirements for students receiving a CARES Act grant. Previously, all directives clearly stated that grant recipients must be eligible to receive Title IV financial aid. The most recent guidance waived that requirement. Following that notification, VCSU determined they would make the funds available to all students (except for non-citizens and students in on-line programs). Our goal was to disburse funds as equitable as possible. As the process evolves and as additional guidance is received from the U.S. Department of Education, VCSU will continue to document and make funds available to all eligible students.

After this change in guidance, all VCSU on-campus students will be notified of the opportunity to submit applications.

*Last Updated: 6/03/2020*

Following VCSU’s initial reporting, on June 17, 2020, the Department of Education declared the distribution of coronavirus emergency relief grants to students can only go to those who meet Title IV eligibility requirements. At that time, the VCSU Cares Act Grant Application was updated to reflect this change.

Recognizing that the COVID-19 situation has significantly affected students who lived in our residence halls, VCSU determined that $69,000 would be awarded to 276 students, regardless of previous established financial need or prior eligibility, to defray any expenses experienced due to residence halls being closed. This was awarded through a block award process. These awards were in the amount of $250.

Further, $23,200 of the CARES Act funding was awarded to eligible student enrolled in Summer Term 2020 that were impacted by COVID-19 to assist them with related expenses to attend courses. Eligible students were awarded funds in the amount of $300 and $400 depending on the enrollment level. Funds were offered in a block award process as well.

To date, VCSU has awarded a total of $206,900 directly to assist students.

*Last Updated: 7/17/2020*