



Emergency Financial Aid Grant for Students under the

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA)

On December 27, 2020, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act* (CRRSAA) was signed into law. Section 3144(a)(1) of the CRRSAA and (a)(4) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260 (December 27, 2020), provided an additional \$22.7 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). The Department of Education has disbursed these funds to the Universities and as a result, Westfield State University has been allocated \$7,216,874. Of this allocation, Westfield State is required to award \$2,256,030 in direct student aid to students.

These funds may cover any component of the student’s cost of attendance or be allocated for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus. Costs include, but are not limited to tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care) or child care. The CRRSAA requires that institutions prioritize students with *exceptional need* (such as students who receive Pell Grants), in awarding financial aid grants to students.

Westfield State University is committed to getting funds to students as quickly as possible. The University has decided to award block grants to students in order to expedite the process. Under this plan, students will receive block grants based on their Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the FAFSA that was filed for the 2020-2021 academic year. The University will also be adjusting grants based on the enrollment status of students (full-time vs. part-time; undergraduate vs. graduate). Students will receive block grants according to the following breakdown:

Undergraduate Students			
EFC	0 - 5711	5712 - 12,000	12,001 +
Full-Time	\$1,000	\$600	\$250
Part-Time	\$900	\$500	\$250
Graduate Students			
EFC	0 - 2500	2501 - 10,000	10,001 +
	\$500	\$300	\$200

Calculation

Through the process of determining the best allocation for the CRRSAA funding, the University was committed to ensuring that our students with the most need are prioritized. To do this, the University felt that the EFC from the FAFSA provided the most efficient way to determine who our students with exceptional need were.

For the purposes of this calculation, a full-time student is defined as any student enrolled in 12 or more credits for the Spring 2021 semester (as of February 19, 2021). In determining the amount to give a student based on their enrollment, the University acknowledged that Cost of Attendance is different if a student is full-time or part-time for a given semester. Students who are full-time have a higher Cost of Attendance than students who are part-time and therefore, greater need.

For Graduate Students, the determination was made that we would give grants based on a student's EFC, regardless of enrollment status. Graduate Students have a wide range in cost of attendance, financial need, and enrollment, so the University felt that it was best to apportion the grants based on EFC, while ensuring that Undergraduates were prioritized.

For the purposes of the EFC, the University used the information that had been submitted on the FAFSA as of February 19, 2021. The University will make attempts to update a student's EFC if it changes after February 19, 2021 and use the new EFC as the deciding factor when awarding Block Grants.

The decision by the University is final and not subject to appeal or reconsideration.

Students without a FAFSA

Under the calculation made by the University, only students who have filed a FAFSA as of February 19, 2021 were considered for a grant under the CRRSAA. Students who did not file a FAFSA will be eligible to either file their FAFSA for the 2020-2021 academic year, or file an affidavit affirming they are eligible for Title IV financial aid.

Students who file the FAFSA will be eligible to be slotted into the appropriate category on the grid, based on their EFC. **The FAFSA must be completed in its entirety and received by to the Financial Aid Office no later than March 22, 2021. To ensure that the FAFSA is received on time, students must submit the FAFSA no later than March 16, 2021.** The FAFSA can be completed by visiting: <https://studentaid.gov/>

Students who choose to file the affidavit will be eligible for a \$200 grant. The affidavit will require students to attest they have financial need. **The affidavit must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office no later than March 22, 2021.** The affidavit can be found by clicking here and submitting the form.

Outstanding Balance

Grants awarded under the CRRSAA are required to be awarded directly to students and cannot be applied directly to a student's account without their consent. Students will still be eligible to receive their grant, even if they owe an outstanding balance to Westfield State.

For students who wish to have the grant applied to their outstanding balance, they must submit an affidavit to the University and give their consent to have the grant applied their outstanding balance. **The affidavit must be submitted to the Financial Aid Office no later than March 22, 2021.** The affidavit can be found by clicking here and submitting the form.

In the event the grant is more than enough to cover the outstanding balance, the remainder of the grant will be refunded to the student. A student who submits an affidavit may revoke their consent at any point prior to the grant disbursing.

Enrollment

Students must be matriculated in a degree granting program at Westfield State in order to receive the grant.

Students who cease enrollment at Westfield State University prior to the disbursement of funds will no longer be eligible for the grant.

Timeline

March 15th: Initial email is sent to students announcing the CRRSAA Grants and plan

March 16th: Students are notified if they are eligible to receive a grant and the amount

March 29th: Deadline to submit affidavit for block grant

March 29th: Deadline to submit Outstanding Balance Consent Form

March 31st: Funds are disbursed to student's accounts

Timeline is subject to change

At the discretion of the Director of Financial Aid, a Block Grant may be awarded or adjusted based on information communicated to the Director. In such instances, the Director will note the change and the rationale for the awarding or adjustment of a Block Grant.

The University will be awarding most of the funds through the Block Grant process. Students who have exceptional need beyond the amount awarded through the Block Grant should contact the Financial Aid Office at financialaid@westfield.ma.edu to inquire about additional funds under the HEERF. Any additional award must fit within the rules and regulations surrounding HEERF grants.