



## AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP)

### HEERF III QUARTERLY STUDENT EXPENDITURE REPORT

SEPTEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2021

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#### OVERVIEW

As part of the American Rescue Plan of 2021 (ARP) Millersville University received \$8,013,094 in funding from HEERF III designated for student awards, while the institutional share was \$7,870,697. In all, Millersville University received \$15,883,791 between both portions of the HEERF III funds. All \$8,013,094 in student funding has been and will continue to be distributed to students, per the agreement and supplemental agreements that were completed.

To date, Millersville has spent \$6,686,000 in student funds to 3,140 out of approximately 12,664 potential award recipients, leaving \$1,327,094 to be spent by May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, which is 1 year since our HEERF III award notification. However, Millersville intends to fully expend these funds by the spring 2022 term.

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#### AGREEMENT & CERTIFICATION

Millersville University originally completed the [Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020. On April 12, 2021, Millersville subsequently completed the [Supplemental Agreement: \(a\)\(1\) Student Aid Portion \(CFDA 84.425E\)](#) in compliance with the guidelines for HEERF II: Student Aid Portion for Public and Nonprofit Institutions (a)(1). With the completion of these two agreements, Millersville University automatically qualified for HEERF III funding with no further agreements necessary.

Our colleagues in charge of the institutional share of these funds are implementing evidence-based practices to monitor and suppress coronavirus in accordance with public health guidelines. Additionally, these colleagues will conduct direct outreach to financial aid applicants about the opportunity to receive a financial aid adjustment due to the recent unemployment of a family member or independent student, or other circumstances, described in section 479A of the Higher Education Act of 1965 ([20 U.S.C. 1087tt](#)).

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## **COMMUNICATIONS**

While Millersville acknowledges that HEERF III does not fall under the CARES Act, it was decided that the university should refer to HEERF III in a similar manner as HEERF I & II, which was named the CARES Relief Fund. Therefore, HEERF III has been referred to as the “CARES 3 Relief Fund” to ease potential confusion amongst students.

Multiple methods of outreach have been used to advertise the availability of this round of awards, including some of the changes we were able to put into place, like providing the option for students to indicate that they wish to have their award applied to their balance first. Then, if additional funds are left, the student is refunded the difference.

Emails were sent to all currently enrolled students notifying them that the CARES 3 Relief Fund was available and applications were open. These announcements were sent to 12,664 students on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. We supplemented the first communication with an announcement in the University’s daily email newsletter. The advertisement for CARES 3 was broadcast through this daily newsletter for approximately 10 business days.

Additionally, we worked closely with Marketing to post several announcements over a period of weeks through all University-related social media accounts. This included a personalized video with one of our student workers and award recipients explaining to students the benefits and lack of barriers in applying for these funds compared to previous rounds. We made a special effort to advertise that current enrollment is not required, so long as they were enrolled at any point on or after March 13, 2020. This was in an attempt to make sure our international, DACA, and other non-citizen students were aware that they were eligible to apply for this round of funding.

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## **THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

In order to establish eligibility for HEERF III funds, Millersville University utilized an application. The application was nearly identical to the application created for HEERF II awarding, including the change made during the HEERF II application process in adding an optional question regarding SNAP benefit recipients. We chose to keep this option for students who may not have a FAFSA on file but are still considered exceptionally financially needy.

The most significant change provided students with a two-step option to have their CARES 3 Relief Funding applied to their university balance first. In order to avoid students accidentally selecting this option, we required that students not only click a check box to indicate this choice, but they also had to manually enter their names to help ensure that students did not accidentally choose an option they did not originally want to select.

The following data was collected for both eligibility and record-keeping purposes:

- Name
- MU ID #
- Email address
- Mailing address
- Phone Number
- Enrollment Status as of date of application
- Housing Status as of date of application
- 2021-2022 FAFSA EFC, if applicable
- Grade level
- Title IV Program Eligibility

Although some of the data points we collected are no longer necessary under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) HEERF III funds, for potential researching and data collection on the population of students who have applied, we have continued to collect the information. For CARES 3, we did not have any restrictions on who could apply, so long as they still had an active Millersville University login.

Once an application was submitted, all of the information was logged to a custom reporting table which could be cross-referenced with additional parameters, and a line item on the student's account was created named 'CARES 3'. The status of this item begins in an 'N' status, indicating received and awaiting review. Once funds have been allocated to the student, the status of the CARES 3 line item is changed to an 'S', indicating the application has been processed and satisfied and the student has been awarded.

To date, we have only denied applications for students who are not currently enrolled and/or have not been enrolled at any other point between March 13, 2020 through the Fall 2021 semester. Due to the relaxed restrictions surrounding award eligibility, Millersville University has currently only denied 11 students out of 3,151 applicants.

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## **AWARDING AND REFUNDS**

In contrast to HEERF I & II, a few additional application questions did factor into the amount each student was awarded in order to truly prioritize our neediest students.

**The HEERF III awarding structure is as follows:**

- **0 – 5846 EFC and/or indicates “Yes” for SNAP Benefits: \$3,000**

- **5847 – 15,000 EFC and/or indicates “Yes” for Loss of Income/Employment: \$2,000**
- **15,000 + EFC and/or no 2021-2022 FAFSA on file: \$1,000**

Students were awarded with different award and refund codes to separate the students who wished to apply the funds to their balance versus those who simply wanted the refund for the award in full. We subsequently named the funds CARES 3B (for applying to the balance) and CARES 3 (for strictly pass-through awards). We worked very closely with Student Accounts to ensure all refunds were processed correctly. To date, all funds have been correctly distributed to students and, at this time, are fully reconciled with what we have currently drawn down.

Award notifications were sent to the students’ Millersville University emails with the amount and information regarding how they would receive from their grant. As with HEERF I & II awarding, the students’ accounts were used as a pass-through to deliver the funds directly to the students while preventing the award from paying any charges.

In accordance with federal guidelines, all ARP HEERF III funds were kept separate from any students’ financial aid awards, if they had any. The only place students were able to view their CARES 3 Relief Fund award was on their student account detail after funds had paid out.

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