

Angelo State University CRRSA Act Student Aid Report #1 (Jan. – Mar. 2021)

PR/Award No. P425E200004

Introduction

On December 27, 2020, the President of the United States signed the CRRSA Act (H.R. 133), which provides emergency relief and stimulus funds to organizations and individuals affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), found in Section 314 of the CRRSA Act, provides funding to institutions of higher education to: 1) “defray expenses associated with coronavirus,” 2) “carry out student support activities authorized by the HEA that address needs related to coronavirus,” and 3) “provide financial aid grants to students.” This quarterly report provides details on the award Angelo State University (ASU) received to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students.

Acknowledgement of Funding and Certification

By virtue of drawing down funds from the ED on March 10, 2021, ASU agreed to the terms and conditions of the U.S. Department of Education’s [updated Certification and Agreement](#). In keeping with the terms of the certification, ASU will use the full amount of funds received under Section (a)(1) of the CRRSA Act HEERF II award to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants directly to students.

Total Award

ASU received a total of \$3,179,781 under the Student Aid portion of the CRRSA Act.

Funds Distributed to Date

As of the close of business on March 31, 2021, ASU has awarded **\$1,257,777** in direct grants to students from the Student Aid portion of the CRRSA Act.

Student Eligibility

The total number of ASU students eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and therefore eligible to receive CRRSA Act emergency financial aid grants is **6,562**¹. Of those students, **2,307** have received an award as of March 31, 2021.

Methods Used to Determine Which Students Receive Aid and How Much

ASU created an online grant application in which each student indicated: 1) whether they had been impacted financially by the coronavirus, and 2) what specific financial needs they have in each area (food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, child care, and/or tuition).

¹ The number of eligible students includes all enrolled, degree-seeking U.S. citizens and non-citizens eligible for Title IV federal financial aid, including students enrolled in distance education.

The Financial Aid office evaluated each application based on the information provided, and they awarded funds based on each student's identified needs and the availability of funding. If students failed to provide sufficient documentation regarding their needs, the Financial Aid office contacted them to obtain additional information before issuing an award.

During the first half of the spring semester (January-March), provided that the students were eligible to receive funds, identified legitimate needs, and applied for funds, grants of up to \$800—or up to \$1,000 for students with exceptional need—were automatically approved.

Note: ASU received the Institutional Aid portion of funds under the CRRSA Act before the Student Aid portion and decided to use a significant portion of those funds for student aid in late January; the dollar amounts for those funds are documented separately in the quarterly report for Institutional/MSI funds.

[Prioritization of Students with Exceptional Need](#)

The CRRSA Act requires that institutions prioritize students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants, in awarding financial aid grants to students. ASU determined exceptional need first by Pell Grant eligibility and then among other undergraduate students with an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of less than \$10,000 and a “need gap,” (defined as the cost of attendance – EFC – gift aid) greater than \$5,000. Students meeting these criteria did not have to provide additional comment in their applications to be eligible, and ASU considered these students' applications first and provided a higher maximum grant of \$1,000.

[Instructions or Directions Given to the Students](#)

In accordance with the Secretary of Education's instructions for institutions to issue aid to students as soon as possible, President Ronnie Hawkins sent ASU students, faculty, and staff advance notice of the program on Thursday, January 21, 2021. ASU made initial awards to students from the Institutional portion of CRRSA Act funds in late January/early February, as documented in the separate Institutional/MSI funds report. ASU also created a [CRRSA Act webpage](#) to disseminate information to the student body and the community at large.

Seeing that students' financial needs due to the pandemic were extensive, ASU's Office of Communications and Marketing informed students of an additional opportunity to request support during the spring semester on March 1, 2021. ASU opened the application to request additional funds—this time, under the Student Aid tranche of funding—on March 3, 2021.

The communications before, during, and after the award of funds contained the following information:

- General instructions on the purpose and allowable uses of funds,
- Application periods,
- A link to the online application,
- Contact information for questions, and
- Acknowledgement of the federal government as the source of funding.