

**Southwestern University**  
**Federal CARES Act/HEERF Grant Report**  
**October 9, 2020 Update - FINAL REPORT**

**Note: As of October 9, 2020, Southwestern University has awarded all Section 18004(a)(1) - Student Portion (a.k.a. HEERF Grant) funds that were allocated to and received by the university. This is the final report for those funds.**

On April 9, 2020 Southwestern University received notice from the US Department of Education regarding the availability of Emergency Financial Aid Grants provided under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. The notification provided information for how Southwestern could request and utilize these funds. The university subsequently received notice on May 6, 2020 indicating the requirements for reporting the activity related to the emergency funding. The information provided below is in accordance with the May 6, 2020 notice

- 1) Southwestern University signed and returned to the Department the Certification and Agreement on April 11, 2020, in which Southwestern University agreed to use no less than 50% of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants (a.k.a. HEERF Grants) to students.
- 2) Southwestern University was notified by the Department that it will receive a total amount of **\$1,213,449** of funds under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act, of which **\$606,725** was to be disbursed as emergency HEERF Grants to students, and **\$606,724** was allocated for institutional expenditures.
- 3) **As of October 9, 2020 Southwestern University has distributed a total of \$606,725 of HEERF Grants to students.**
- 4) It is currently estimated that 1421 students at Southwestern University are eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (a.k.a. Title IV eligible students), and thus eligible to receive HEERF Grants under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.
- 5) **As of October 9, 2020, a total of 665 Southwestern University students have been awarded HEERF Grants.**
- 6) To determine which students may receive HEERF Grants and the amount of the grants, Southwestern University applied the following methodology:
  - a) All students who were enrolled at Southwestern University in the Spring 2020 semester or who were participating in an approved study abroad program in the Spring of 2020 were identified. International and DACA (i.e., non-Title IV eligible) students were excluded.
  - b) Using the students identified in section (a), three tiers of students were identified based on the student's Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) as reported on their 2019-20 FAFSA. Students were assigned to a tier based upon their EFC, and the award amount was determined using the following criteria:

Group	Criteria	Award Amount
Tier 1	EFC range: 0 - 5576	\$1,000
Tier 2	EFC range: 5577 - 20994	\$750
Tier 3	EFC above 20994 or FAFSA not filed	Variable amounts based upon information provided in an application, number of applicants, and available funds. Individual awards will not exceed \$750

*Note: For Tier 1 and Tier 2, the EFC ranges that establish eligibility for a Pell Grant and a Texas Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG), respectively, were utilized to assign students to a tier. Due to restrictions on these grants such as*

*maximum Lifetime Eligibility, number of years a student may receive these funds, fund allocation limits, and (in the case of TEG) Texas residency requirements, some students in Tier 1 and Tier 2 may not have actually received a Pell Grant or TEG in the 19-20 school year*

- c) Title IV eligibility was confirmed for Tier 1 and Tier 2 students using the available FAFSA information and student records. After confirming Title IV eligibility, HEERF grants were automatically awarded to the Tier 1 and Tier 2 students with no action required from the recipients.
  - d) For Tier 3 students, awards are available via an online [application](#), with a June 3, 2020 deadline for application submission. Applications will be reviewed after the June 3 deadline and Title IV eligibility will be confirmed. Individual award amounts will be determined using information collected on the application. Tier 3 students who have not yet filed a FAFSA for 2019-2020 will be required to do so in order to establish Title IV eligibility.
  - e) After disbursing funds to Tier 3 students, remaining HEERF grant funds were distributed to Tier 1 students. Those with an EFC from 0 to 5520 received \$79 each, and those with an EFC between 5521 and 5576 received \$56 each.
- 7) All Southwestern students were notified of the availability of the HEERF Grants via an email sent to their SU email accounts. In addition, the HEERF grant announcement and FAQs was posted on Southwestern University's Financial Aid Office webpage. The announcement contained guidance and instructions to students regarding HEERF Grant eligibility and, in the case of Tier 3 students, instructions for submitting the application. In addition, Tier 1 and Tier 2 students were sent individual award notifications via their SU email accounts, which contained information about their specific award amounts, expected payment dates to receive their funds, and information about how to set up direct deposit if applicable. A message was also sent to all Spring 2020 SU Parents about the HEERF grants.

The links to the announcement and sample emails are below.

## Text for HEERF announcement to campus

**Southwestern University  
HEERF General Communication**

**TO:** The Southwestern Campus Community  
**FROM:** James Gaeta, Associate Dean of Enrollment Services  
Brenda Thompson, Associate Vice President for Accounting and Finance, Controller  
**SUBJECT:** CARES Act/Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)

Southwestern University is pleased to announce the availability of emergency grants for students from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). These funds have been made available through the CARES Act, and provides direct emergency financial aid grants to students. In total, the university was allocated \$606,725 in HEERF funding for direct assistance to students.

Guidance from the US Department of Education indicates that these funds are intended to assist students with expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due the COVID-19 epidemic, including eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care. The guidance asked Southwestern to prioritize students with the greatest need, and develop policies that help to distribute these funds as widely as possible. In addition, students must meet Federal Title IV eligibility requirements in order to receive HEERF funds.

At Southwestern, this means that to receive a HEERF Grant a student must:

- have been enrolled at Southwestern in the Spring of 2020 or have been participating in an approved study abroad program
- Meet Federal Title IV eligibility requirements, which include (but are not limited to) the following: be a US Citizen or eligible noncitizen, have a valid Social Security number, be registered with Selective Service (if the student is male), have a valid high school diploma or equivalent. A full listing of Title IV eligibility requirements may be found in the Frequently Asked Questions page.

Students who do not meet Title IV eligibility requirements (such as international students or non-US citizens who are not eligible for Title IV funds) but who have emergency funding needs may still submit a HEERF application to be considered for emergency grant funding from the Southwestern Emergency Fund.

**HEERF Grant criteria and application process:** Southwestern will use a hybrid approach to determine the amount of HEERF grant that a student will receive, where students meeting certain criteria will automatically receive an award in a set amount, with the remainder of students submitting an application to be considered for funding.

A student's Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) as determined through the *2019-2020 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* will be used to assign that student to an award tier. The amounts awarded in each tier are as follows:

Group	Eligibility criteria	Award Amount per student	Application Required?
Tier 1	EFC range: 0 - 5576	\$1,000	No

Tier 2	EFC range: 5577 - 20994	\$750	No
Tier 3	EFC above 20994 or FAFSA not filed	Variable amounts, not to exceed \$750. The actual amount a student receives will be based upon information provided through an application, the number of applicants, and the available funds.	Yes. Students in this tier may submit the <a href="#">SU HEERF Grant Application</a> . Application deadline is June 3, 2020

**Grant notification and disbursement:** Tier 1 and Tier 2 students have been identified and will be notified of their eligibility and award amount on May 20, 2020 via their SU email account. If the student has set up direct deposit for student account refunds, the funds will be automatically disbursed via direct deposit beginning May 22, 2020.

After submitting an application, Tier 3 students will be reviewed for Title IV eligibility, and will be required to file a FAFSA at studentaid.gov if they have not yet done so. Those meeting Title IV eligibility requirements will be notified of the outcome of their application, to include the final amount of their HEERF award, via their SU email account. Those who do not meet Title IV eligibility requirements will be considered for a grant from the Southwestern Emergency Fund, and will be notified of the outcome of that review via their SU email account. Funds will be disbursed via direct deposit or paper check no later than June 19, 2020.

Students are encouraged to set up direct deposit if they have not done so already as soon as possible but no later than June 1, 2020. Instructions on how to set up direct deposit may be found on the [Student Account webpage](#).

More details about the HEERF Grants may be found in the Frequently Asked Questions page.

Southwestern is pleased to be able to assist students during this challenging time. Questions regarding the HEERF Grants may be directed to the following offices:

Questions regarding general HERFF eligibility, the FAFSA, and Title IV eligibility:  
 SU Financial Aid Office: 512-863-1259 or [finaid@southwestern.edu](mailto:finaid@southwestern.edu)

Questions regarding general HERFF eligibility, direct deposits, and student refunds  
 SU Business Office: 512-863-1928 or [studentaccounts@southwestern.edu](mailto:studentaccounts@southwestern.edu)

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### What are the CARES Act's HEERF grants for students?

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CARES Act established the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) to provide funding to universities to provide emergency financial aid grants directly to students. A total of \$606,725 was awarded to Southwestern University (SU) to provide direct grants to Southwestern University students. The purpose of these grants is to assist students with expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19

pandemic. Qualifying expenses may include food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, or child-care expenses.

### **Which students are eligible to receive HEERF grants?**

#### **To be eligible to receive a HEERF grant SU students must meet the following criteria:**

- Must have been enrolled at Southwestern University or have been enrolled in an approved study abroad program for the Spring 2020 semester.
- Are currently or could be eligible to participate in Federal Title IV programs. Eligibility requirements include:
  - Be a U.S citizen or national, a permanent resident, or an eligible noncitizen;
  - Have a valid SSN, except for residents of the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau
  - Be registered with the Selective Service (if male at least 18 years old)
  - Have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
  - Be enrolled as a regular, degree-seeking student
  - Maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP)
  - Sign the certification statement on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form stating that you will use federal student aid only for educational purposes;
  - Not owe an overpayment (refund) on Title IV grants, such as the Pell Grant or Supplemental Grant
  - Not be in default on a Title IV loan, such as a Direct Subsidized or Unsubsidized Loan;
  - Have returned any fraudulently obtained Title IV funds,
  - Not have fraudulently received Title IV loans in excess of annual or aggregate limits;
  - Have repaid any Title IV loan overpayment amounts in excess of annual or aggregate limits, if obtained inadvertently;
  - Not have a federal or state conviction for drug possession or sale

### **How will SU determine if I meet the Title IV eligibility requirements?**

Submission of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will allow SU to confirm a student's Title IV eligibility. As such, students who apply to receive HEERF funds but have not already completed the 2019-2020 FAFSA will be required to complete the process prior to receiving any HEERF funds. SU will use the student's Spring 2020 Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) status to determine whether a student is maintaining their status. Students with a Satisfactory or Probation status will be considered to have met the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirement.

### **What if I am an international student or do not meet the Title IV eligibility criteria?**

SU students who do not meet the Title IV eligibility criteria (such as international students or ineligible non-US citizens) but need financial assistance should still complete the online [Southwestern University HEERF Grant Application](#). Although some students may not be eligible to receive the HEERF grants, they are eligible to be considered for assistance from the Southwestern University Emergency Fund.

### **How will SU award the HEERF funds?**

Based on guidance from the US Department of Education, the institution's award process should include priority to students with the greatest need, while at the same time establishing a maximum funding threshold for each student to ensure that the funds are distributed as widely as possible. In accordance, SU determined that it will award grants to students using various Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) levels calculated from the 2019-20 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

SU will use a hybrid approach to award the HEERF grants directly to students. The majority of the funds will be awarded directly to two tiers of students that have already filed a FAFSA and meet certain eligibility criteria as noted below. All other students are eligible to complete an application process to be considered to receive the Tier 3 awards.

Group	Eligibility criteria	Award Amount per student	Application Required?
Tier 1	EFC range: 0 - 5576	\$1,000	No
Tier 2	EFC range: 5577 - 20994	\$750	No
Tier 3	EFC above 20994 or FAFSA not filed	Variable amounts, not to exceed \$750. The actual amount a student receives will be based upon information provided through an application, the number of applicants, and the available funds.	Yes. Students in this tier may submit the <a href="#">SU HEERF Grant Application</a> . Application deadline is June 3, 2020

#### **As an SU student, what do I need to do to receive a HEERF Grant?**

##### Tier 1 or Tier 2 Students:

Since all Tier 1 and Tier 2 students have already completed the 2019-2020 FAFSA, no action is needed to receive these funds. Tier 1 and Tier 2 students are not required to submit an application and will be notified of their award through their SU email account. Funds will be sent to students via direct deposit or paper check. Tier 1 and Tier 2 students who have already set up direct deposit will receive their funds as soon as May 22 or shortly after entering their direct deposit information. Instructions for setting up direct deposit can be found on the [Student Account webpage](#). Students without direct deposit entered by June 1, 2020 will have a paper check mailed to their permanent home address on record at SU on June 5, 2020.

##### Tier 3 Students:

All students not already part of Tier 1 or Tier 2 will be considered part of the Tier 3 student group. Students in Tier 3 must submit the [Southwestern University HEERF Grant Application](#) to be considered for these funds. The deadline to submit an application is June 3, 2020. In addition, Tier 3 students that have not filed a FAFSA will be required to do so prior to receiving any funding.

#### **When is the deadline to submit the online SU HEERF Grant Application?**

The [Southwestern University HEERF Grant Application](#) is now open. The deadline to submit the application is Wednesday, June 3, 2020. Only students in Tier 3 need to submit an application.

#### **If I am a Tier 1 or Tier 2 student and have received a notification of eligibility, may I submit an application for additional funds?**

No. After awarding the Tier 1 and Tier 2 students, we expect that the remaining funding will be fully utilized by the Tier 3 students.

#### **How will I be notified if I am receiving a HEERF grant?**

The student's SU email account will be used for notification of all HEERF grant awards. In addition, recipients will be able to review their award amount on Self Service, in the 2019-20 award year.

**How will the funds be disbursed?**

In order to expedite the release of emergency grant funds to students, electronic disbursement via direct deposit is strongly encouraged as opposed to a paper check. Instructions for setting up direct deposit can be found on the [Student Account webpage](#). If you are not signed up for direct deposit, a paper check will be mailed to your permanent home address. To update your permanent home address please complete the [address change form with the Registrar](#).

**When will the funds be disbursed?**

Tier 1 and Tier 2 who already have direct deposit set up will have their funds disbursed electronically on May 22. We will continue to contact students that have not set up their direct deposit information and will release their payments in the next echeck process after their banking information is received. For those that have not set up their direct deposit information by June 1, paper checks will be mailed to the student's permanent home address by June 5. It is anticipated that Tier 3 funds, awarded through the application process, will be disbursed electronically or mailed to the student's permanent home address no later than June 19.

## Text for notification emails to Tier 1 and Tier 2 students

Text for email announcement to Tier 1 and 2 students - those WITH direct deposit:

SUBJECT: Southwestern University - CARES Act/Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Notice

Dear (student name)

We are pleased to inform you of your eligibility to receive a Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Grant that was made available as part of the CARES Act. General information and eligibility criteria for the HEERF Grant was announced to the Southwestern community and is available on the SU website.

Based on the information we have in our records, we have determined that you will receive a grant in the amount indicated below. You do not have to submit an application for these funds; the funds will automatically be sent to you.

(insert award name and amount here)

We will send these funds via direct deposit to the same bank account that we have on record for your student account refunds. The funds should appear in your bank account on Friday, May 22.

We understand the challenges that many students face due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are pleased to be able to provide you this assistance during this time. If you have any questions about these funds, you may contact either of the offices below:

SU Financial Aid Office - 512-863-1259 or [finaid@southwestern.edu](mailto:finaid@southwestern.edu)

SU Business Office - 512-863-1928 or [studentaccounts@southwestern.edu](mailto:studentaccounts@southwestern.edu)

Sincerely,

James Gaeta, Associate Dean of Enrollment Services

Brenda Thompson, Associate Vice President of Finance and Accounting, Controller

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Text for email announcement to Tier 1 and 2 students - those WITHOUT direct deposit:

SUBJECT: Southwestern University - CARES Act/Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Notice

Dear (student name)

We are pleased to inform you of your eligibility to receive a Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Grant that was made available as part of the CARES Act. General information and eligibility criteria for the HEERF Grant was announced to the Southwestern community and is available on the SU website.



Based on the information we have in our records, we have determined that you will receive a grant in the amount indicated below. You do not have to submit an application for these funds; the funds will automatically be sent to you.

(insert award name and amount here)

YOUR STUDENT ACCOUNT IS CURRENTLY NOT SET UP FOR ELECTRONIC REFUNDS, WHICH WILL DELAY YOUR PAYMENT. Please immediately go to your WebAdvisor Self Service account and select "Banking Information" to enter your information so that SU can efficiently send your HEERF grant electronically to your account. Information about signing up for direct deposit is available on our Student Account Refunds page.

Students who do not sign up for direct deposit by June 1, 2020 will receive their funds via a paper check mailed to the student's permanent home address by June 5. If you need to change your permanent home address, please complete the Registrar's address change form.

We understand the challenges that many students face due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are pleased to be able to provide you this assistance during this time. If you have any questions about these funds, you may contact either of the offices below:

SU Financial Aid Office - 512-863-1259 or [finaid@southwestern.edu](mailto:finaid@southwestern.edu)  
SU Business Office - 512-863-1928 or [studentaccounts@southwestern.edu](mailto:studentaccounts@southwestern.edu)

Sincerely,

James Gaeta, Associate Dean of Enrollment Services  
Brenda Thompson, Associate Vice President of Finance and Accounting, Controller

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## **Text for Supplemental notifications for Tier I students:**

Student name - ID#

Dear nickname

We are pleased to inform you of your eligibility to receive an additional amount of Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Grant funds that were made available as part of the CARES Act. These funds are being distributed to Tier 1 students from the funds that remained after the initial disbursement of HEERF Grants to Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 students.

We have determined that you will receive a Supplemental HEERF Grant in the amount of \$<amount>. You do not have to submit an application for these funds; the funds will automatically be sent to you.

As with the initial disbursement of HEERF Grant funds, we will send these funds via direct deposit to the same bank account that we have on record for your student account refunds. The funds should appear in your bank account on Friday, June 26.

We understand the challenges that many students continue to face due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are pleased to be able to provide you this assistance during this time. If you have any questions about these funds, you may contact either of the offices below:

SU Financial Aid Office - 512-863-1259 or [finaid@southwestern.edu](mailto:finaid@southwestern.edu)

SU Business Office - 512-863-1928 or [studentaccounts@southwestern.edu](mailto:studentaccounts@southwestern.edu)

Sincerely,

James Gaeta, Associate Dean of Enrollment Services

Brenda Thompson, Associate Vice President of Finance and Accounting, Controller