



**Emergency Financial Aid Grant for Students under the  
Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act**

Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act, Pub. L. No. 116-136 (March 27, 2020), authorizes the Secretary of Education to allocate formula grant funds to higher education institutions. Section 18004(c) of the CARES Act requires each institution to use no less than fifty percent of the funds received to provide emergency financial aid grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

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 are eligible to receive **\$400** for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus, with students whose Expected Family Contribution (EFC) makes them eligible for Pell Grant will receive **\$500**.

The University has determined that as a result of the shift to online learning, students incurred expenses in areas such as food, housing, and technology. In determining the amount for the block grants, the University focused on the switch to online learning and the expenses students have incurred as a result of the switch. The University has come up with the following items that students may have incurred:

- Technology
  - While on campus, students had access to computer labs to work on papers, projects, and conduct research. With the disruption of operations, students no longer have access to these facilities and may have been required to purchase a computer to use at home in order to continue their studies.
    - Estimated cost for a computer: \$400 - \$1,000
  - The University does not assume that students have access to internet at their home or temporary dwelling to support the move to online learning. And in the event they do, their access may be affected by inadequate technology or lower capabilities that would prevent the student from fully engaging in their online learning.
    - Estimated cost for internet: \$120 (300 Mbps for two months, at approx. \$60 per month)
  - The University provides printers on campus for students to utilize while they are studying on campus. With the shift to online learning, students may still need to print papers and articles for assignments, as well as scan items to faculty for grading.
    - Estimated cost for All-in-One Printer, ink, and printing paper: \$140

Total expenses incurred as a result of switching to remote learning: **\$660 - \$1660**

### **Calculation**

Based on the number of students eligible for the grant at the University, it was decided that the funds should be split equally amongst all eligible students based on the allotment that has been given to the University. Taking in to account that not all students incurred these expenses, while others may have incurred higher expenses, the University took the higher end of the estimate and funded 25% of the total amount, rounding down to \$400.

We further concluded that students with higher need would have most likely have a higher cost due to the disruption, as their need would suggest they do not have access to resources at the same rate as students with less need. To account for the disparity that students with higher need would face, the University took the higher end of the estimate and funded 30% of the total amount, rounding up to \$500.

### **Additional Expenses**

The University recognizes that not all students incur expenses at the same rate and that some students may have greater expenses in other areas, such as food, housing, child care, health care, and travel expenses. The University is committed to meeting the needs of students who have expenses above and beyond the block grant, and has an established application for students who have additional expenses.

For students with additional expenses that are approved, the block grant will be subtracted from the total amount of technology expenses the student has submitted.

### **Deadlines**

Students who have submitted their FAFSA and are eligible for Title IV financial aid will be notified of their receipt of the block grant. Students who have not submitted their FAFSA and would like to be considered for the block grant must submit their FAFSA by June 2, 2020. Students who are not able to submit a FAFSA and would like to receive the block grant must submit an affidavit to the Financial Aid Office indicating they are eligible for Title IV financial aid, as well as copies of their proof of citizenship and selective service registration (for men ages 18-15).

The deadline for submitting an application to receive additional CARES Act funding will be June 2, 2020. Applications will be reviewed in the order they are submitted and funds will be disbursed as long as they are available.