

# CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund

## Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) funds Process

On July 14, 2020 Orion Institute was notified of a grant that will be received as part of the CARES Act in response to the COVID 19 crisis. This grant is known as the Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) funds. The purpose of this grant is twofold; first, to assist current students who are facing financial hardship related to the COVID-19 crisis. Second, to provide the institution with financial assistance for issues related to loss of revenue from the COVID-19 crisis. No less than 50% of grant monies received are to be directed specifically to students adversely affected by this crisis.

In order to comply with the intentions of this grant, Orion Institute has established the following process for determining, documenting, and disbursing no less than 50% of monies to students in need.

1. All eligible students will be notified of the grant opportunity
2. Affected students will contact Orion Institute finance department who will provide application and deadline for submission.
3. The application will require demographic information and must include an explanation by the student regarding the ways in which they have been adversely affected financially by the COVID-19 crisis.
4. The student will be required to have a valid 19-20 or 20-21 FAFSA on file with the school. The student may also be required to submit proper documentation supporting their explanation; this may include copy of layoff notice, work closure or decrease in payroll hours, proof of loss of childcare, note from physician regarding exposure, illness, or increased risk of illness related to COVID-19 for self or immediate family member for whom they provide care, or other documentation as deemed appropriate.
5. The Orion Institute committee will be responsible for determining which students receive funds, should there be a need greater than allocation.
6. Preference will be given to students who are directly affected by loss of job and/or COVID-19 illness.
7. Students receiving funds will be notified of amount, including when and how they should expect these funds. This notification will come from Orion Institute RESPONSE TEAM.
9. Funds will be issued to the student by August 31, 2020 via check

10. All applications and documentation will remain property of Orion Institute and will be considered part of the student's permanent record for at least five years.

11. Copies of applications and documentation may be provided to FA Solutions (third party Financial Aid provider), Orion Institute's financial auditors, accrediting agencies, and federal financial aid compliance as needed.

12. The portion of the funds (not to exceed 50%) which is assigned to the institution will be used directly in support of any department which has experienced either a direct or indirect loss of revenue related to the COVID-19 crisis.

13. The Finance Team will maintain a separate line item for these funds (both student and institute).

## Introduction

If you are an Orion Institute student experiencing a short-term financial need due to the disruption of campus operations caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19), please fill out the application to be considered for a one-time emergency student grant from the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. These emergency funds can pay for expenses such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care.

The recently enacted federal CARES Act provided money to colleges and universities to distribute for emergency student grants. The purpose of the money is to provide financial assistance to students for specific expenses that are a direct result of the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus. This funding is separate from additional financial aid you may receive from Orion Institute.

## What Does This Funding Cover?

The following is a list of expenses that can be considered for grant assistance if they were "related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus."

- Food
- Housing
- Course materials
- Technology (such as having to buy a computer when courses were moved online)
- Health care
- Child care

Awarded undergraduate students will receive \$500.00. In the spirit of serving as many of Orion Institute's most in need students, and because CARES Act funding is limited, we appreciate students applying for a grant only if it is truly needed.

## Eligibility

Students who meet all criteria below are eligible to apply:

1. Working towards a degree or certificate at Orion Institute.
2. Enrolled during the spring/summer term (or during quarters/terms that include the national emergency period) in at least one on-ground/in-person course, even if that course moved to an online format due to the pandemic. If funds for emergency financial aid grants to students remain after Orion Institute assists the spring/summer term students using its distribution formula, Orion Institute will use the remaining funds to provide emergency financial aid grants to students during the summer/fall terms, using the same distribution formula.
3. Have a valid 2019-20 or 20-21 FAFSA on file with Orion Institute's Office of Financial Aid.
4. Students must also attest that they have experienced any of the aforementioned disruptions.

Students who are ineligible, or apply but do not receive a CARES Act grant, but still have financial need, should visit Orion Institute's Financial Aid Office and discuss your individual financial situation.

## How to Apply

To apply, CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Application were emailed to all students enrolled to their email address on file with Orion Institute. If you have not received your application, please contact the finance office at

However, before doing so, please review the eligibility requirements, as not all students are eligible to receive funding.

**Applications must be submitted by 11:45 p.m. on August 24, 2020.**

## FAQs

### **Q: How do I know if I am eligible to apply?**

A: Students who meet all of the following criteria are eligible to apply: (1) working towards a degree or certificate at Orion Institute; (2) Enrolled during the spring/summer term (or during quarters/terms that include the national emergency period) in at least one on-ground/in-person course, even if that course moved to an online format due to the pandemic. If funds for emergency financial aid grants to students remain after Orion Institute assists the spring/summer term students using its distribution formula, Orion Institute will use the remaining funds to provide emergency financial aid grants to students during the summer/fall terms, using the same distribution formula.

(3) have a valid 2019-20 or 20-21 FAFSA on file with Orion Institute's Office of Financial Aid.

### **Q: What is my deadline to apply?**

A: Applications must be submitted by 11:45 p.m. on August 24, 2020

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### **Q: Will everyone who applies for a CARES Act grant receive one?**

A: No, based on the limited funding we received from the U.S. Department of Education, it will be distributed to students with demonstrated need.

**Q: Do I need to repay this grant?**

A: No, money received through this fund does not need to be repaid. This fund does not impact nor replace any financial aid you may currently receive, and it is a one-time grant.

**Q: How many times can I apply?**

A: Once.

**Q: How much will I receive?**

A: Awarded undergraduate students will receive a one-time grant of \$500.00

**Q: When will I know if I will receive a grant?**

A: Our goal is to award emergency grants by the end of August 2020 and you will receive a notification to your email address we have on file by then.

**Q: How will I receive the grant money?**

A: Emergency grants will be processed via check. You will be notified when you may pick up the check. You may also request it to be mailed to your mailing address on file.

**Q: What if I currently owe tuition or other expenses to Orion Institute?**

A: The full amount of the emergency grants will be given directly to students and will not pay outstanding balances owed to Orion Institute. Any outstanding balance owed to Orion Institute remains the responsibility of the student.

**Q: If I receive a grant from the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, is it taxable?**

A: No. Emergency financial aid grants under the CARES Act are qualified disaster relief payments per the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and will not be taxable.

**Q: What if I am ineligible, or apply but do not receive a CARES Act grant, but still have financial need?**

A: Students who are ineligible, or apply but do not receive a CARES Act grant, but still have financial need, should contact the financial aid office directly by calling 563-386-3570 or emailing [vbelle@orion.edu](mailto:vbelle@orion.edu) to discuss your individual financial situation.

**Q: Who can I contact if I have other questions about the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund?**

A: Students can submit questions to the following email address: [COVID19Grant@orion.edu](mailto:COVID19Grant@orion.edu).