

## The CARES Act

Shortly after the Governor of Indiana issued the Stay-at-Home order, Indiana University Northwest signed and returned the certification and agreement form that allowed us to receive funds allocated to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) by the CARES Act. IU Northwest used these funds to provide the mandated amount of at least 50% of the fund to students in the form of emergency financial aid grants.

The amount of CARES Act money allocated to IU Northwest was based in part on the number of IU Northwest students enrolled during the spring 2020 semester who were eligible to receive Pell grants. The estimated total number of students at IU Northwest who were eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and therefore eligible to receive an emergency financial aid grant through the CARES Act, was 2,426.

On May 12, 2020, IU Northwest was awarded HEERF funds in the amount of \$1,473,606 to distribute directly to students. In the interest of fairness, transparency, and consistency, we decided to first award students who had an expected family contribution (EFC) of \$6,000 or less, based on information in students' 2019-2020 FAFSA -- \$500 to dependent students and \$1,000 to independent students. These students received awards regardless of whether or not they had applied for emergency assistance, if they met criteria established by the U.S. Department of Education, namely:

- The student must have been enrolled at IU Northwest during the spring 2020 semester on the date that the funds were received by IU Northwest; and
- the student could not have been attending exclusively online classes prior to March 13, 2020, meaning they must have been enrolled in at least one face-to-face course; and
- the student must have already been eligible to receive federal financial aid.

In the first round of grants, we awarded students who had an expected family contribution of \$6,000 or less, based on information in students' 2019-2020 FAFSA, whether or not they applied for funds -- \$500 to dependent students and \$1,000 to independent students. Prioritizing this initial pool of students resulted in our awarding 1,488 students a total of \$1,070,500 in CARES Act funds, which were refunded directly to the students beginning on May 12, 2020.

In the second round of grants, we awarded all other eligible applicants, using the previously mentioned criteria of \$500 for dependent students and \$1,000 for independent students.

After the applications closed on June 15, we made the final round of awards to students who requested more than their initial award amount on a *first-requested, first-considered basis* until the funds were exhausted. By June 30, 2020, IU Northwest had disbursed the remaining \$403,106 of CARES to a total of 392 applicants.

Students were notified of the availability of CARES Act grants on April 29 in an email message that went out to all students using the IU Northwest student mailing list. This message was also provided to faculty and advisors, who were encouraged to pass it along to their students. The invitation to apply for emergency financial assistance was also posted on the Student Affairs [Emergency Resources website](#). On May 28, another message was sent to all spring 2020 students who had not yet applied for CARES Act funds informing them that the deadline to apply was June 15, 2020.