



May 12, 2020

Dear Students,

As part of the CARES Act, American Jewish University has applied for and been awarded \$111,218.00. Half of that money is designated for direct support for students, the other half to assist the university with financial loss and additional expenses incurred as a result the COVID-19 pandemic. Universities are still receiving direction from the Federal Department of Education on guidelines for the institutional support, and just last week received final clarification on the direct student aid support.

On April 9, 2020, the Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, released a letter to college and university presidents detailing the funding available from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The letter indicates, “...each institution may develop its own system and process for determining how to allocate these funds, which may include distributing the funds to all students or only to students who demonstrate significant need... With that said, I would like to encourage the leadership of each institution to prioritize your students with the greatest need, but at the same time consider establishing a maximum funding threshold for each student to ensure that these funds are distributed as widely as possible.”

On April 21, 2020, the Department of Education issued additional guidance for this funding. This document reflects the University’s understanding of this guidance.

**Campuses are making myriad decisions about COVID-19 and therefore need flexibility as they develop their local emergency grant funding to meet the needs of their students. In general, the plans should reflect the following principles:**

- Efficient Delivery: Campuses should prioritize delivery in Spring 2020.
- Equity: Campuses may provide broad-based support (e.g., a base award to all students), but are also encouraged to provide additional support to groups that may require additional assistance (e.g., low-income, parenting students).
- Direct Emergency Grant Payments: The Department’s guidance is clear that funds should be delivered directly to students, not to pay for past due bills, to reimburse prior expenditures by the campus (e.g., to pay back the campus for purchased laptops), or to replace lost wages.
- Beyond the Cost of Attendance: The Department also has made it clear that this funding can be made available to students without regard to the normal total cost of attendance limits. Nor will it impact future financial aid allocations.

**Campuses are encouraged to take the following considerations, among others, into account as they consider how to deploy the federal funds in conjunction with their own institutional financial aid:**

- The Department has limited the awards to students eligible for Title IV financial aid authorized under the Higher Education Act. Undocumented students and international students are not eligible for support using these federal dollars.

- Undergraduate and Graduate students must have filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be considered.
- Campuses are also encouraged to consider targeting particularly vulnerable populations for additional support, e.g., student parents, former foster youth, disabled students, and formerly incarcerated students.
- Both graduate students and undergraduate students will face financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Using the federal criteria and guidance, AJU established a group for the disbursement of funds who determined:**

- All AJU students have been impacted by COVID-19
- Funding should go to all eligible full time students
- Dollar amounts awarded are set on available funds and the number of students
- All funds will be disbursed to the eligible full time students who filed a FAFSA application

**Awards will be provided to students who meet all of the following eligibility criteria:**

- Title IV aid eligible
- Currently enrolled full time

Using these principles and based on the available funds, AJU has allocated an equal amount to all eligible students for distribution.

The Accounting Office will begin disbursing funds the week of May 11, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Financial Aid at [financialaid@aju.edu](mailto:financialaid@aju.edu).