



American
Jewish
University

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II (HEERF II)

On December 27, 2020, the President, Donald J. Trump, signed the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), Public Law 116-260.

This new law gave the U.S. Department of Education (Department) approximately \$22.7 billion to distribute to institutions of higher education to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus through the HEERF. This law has some similarities — as well as important differences — from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (P.L. 116–136) that was enacted on March 27, 2020.

In total, the CRRSAA authorizes \$81.88 billion in support for education, in addition to the \$30.75 billion former Secretary DeVos expeditiously provided last spring through the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Public Law 116-136.

The full press release is available here:

<https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-quickly-makes-available-more-21-billion-taxpayer-funds-support-continued-education-colleges-universities>.

As part of the CRRSAA, American Jewish University has been awarded \$170,995.00.

\$55,609.00 of that money is designated for direct support for students, the other part is to assist the University with financial loss and additional expenses incurred because of the pandemic.

The CRRSAA requires that an institution receiving funding under section 314(a)(1) provide the “same amount” in financial aid grants to students from the new CRRSAA funds that it was required or which it would have been required to provide under its original CARES Act Student Aid Portion award.

The Department of Education issued additional guidance for this funding. This document reflects the University’s understanding of this guidance.

The Department of Education notice indicates that “an institution of higher education must prioritize grants to students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants” but recipients do not have to exclusively be Pell recipients or Pell eligible. Unlike the CARES Act, HEERF, even students exclusively enrolled in distance education are eligible to receive aid from these funds, and The Department of Education has indicated that its interim final rule dictating that CARES Act/HEERF student aid recipients be Title IV eligible to receive funds is not applicable to CRRSAA funds. Further, the aid may be used for any component of the student’s cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to the coronavirus pandemic, such as tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), or childcare.

There are certain restrictions for institutions in passing along this aid to student recipients. Schools may not condition the receipt of financial aid grants to students on continued or future enrollment in their institution. Institutions may not use awarded financial aid grants to satisfy a student’s outstanding account balance unless it has obtained the student’s written (or electronic) affirmative consent, or it requires such consent as a condition of receipt of or eligibility for the financial aid grant.

Because this aid is meant to be provided in full to students, schools may not charge any indirect or administrative costs to funds made available under this CRRSAA allocation. Additionally, The Department of Education indicates that schools must minimize the time between drawing down their funds from and

paying out the aid, stating that if schools do not pay distribute funds “within 15 calendar days it may be subject to heightened scrutiny by the Department, Recipient’s auditors, and/or the Department’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG).”

Using the federal criteria and guidance, AJU established a group for the disbursement of funds.

- All AJU students have been impacted by the pandemic
- 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 the following eligibility criteria:

- are Title IV aid eligible
- are 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 February 8th, 2021.