

**From:** USC Financial Aid Office <financial.aid@usc.edu>

**Sent:** Friday, August 21, 2020

**Subject:** Update on Distribution of CARES Act Funds



Dear Student,

As you may know, Congress made approximately \$19.2 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding available to USC to help with expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19. Fifty-percent of the funds were required to be used as direct emergency grants to students and the remaining funds could be used to offset institutional costs as a result of COVID-19. Early on, President Folt decided to direct 100% of USC's CARES Act funding towards emergency grants to students.

In spring 2020, we acted quickly to stand up an application process. Financial Aid Office staff reviewed thousands of applications to assist as many eligible students as possible in meeting their emergency financial needs. To date, we have awarded \$10.5 million to nearly 5,800 students. Our report on the receipt and use of funds is posted [here](#).

Under the Department of Education's eligibility guidelines, international students and students enrolled exclusively in an online program were not eligible to receive CARES Act funds. The Financial Aid Office and Student Basic Needs Department collaborated closely to ensure those who were not

eligible for CARES Act funding had access to appropriate resources.

We now plan to distribute the remaining \$8.7 million to undergraduate and graduate students who meet all federal financial aid eligibility requirements, are enrolled in fall 2020, and meet the following criteria. At the undergraduate level, we will provide approximately 5,200 awards of \$1,000 to high need students as well as students awarded work study who may have difficulty finding a job. At the graduate level, we will provide approximately 7,000 awards of \$500 to graduate students with financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

CARES Act emergency grants will be distributed directly to eligible students' accounts after September 4 (the last day to add/drop). A refund will be issued by ACH transfer or check. Because we will be using financial aid data to determine eligibility for grant funds, there will be no separate application process. You will be notified if you are selected to receive an emergency grant the week of September 7, although it may take a few weeks for funds to be distributed given the volume of grants.

We know that the financial hardships caused by COVID-19 go far beyond what CARES Act funds can cover and we will continue to explore ways we can support you. Please [contact](#) our office with any questions.

Fight on,

Thomas McWhorter  
Dean of Financial Aid

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