

Report on the Use of Funds Distributed to USC from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) and American Rescue Plan Act, 2021 (ARP)¹

First posted July 2, 2021

Updated October 8, 2021

Final Report posted January 7, 2022

The U.S. Department of Education published a [Notice of Public Posting Requirement of Grant Information for Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund \(HEERF\) Grantees on May 13, 2021](#), directing universities to report quarterly on the receipt and use of funds received from the HEERF under the CRRSAA and ARP. The following report contains the information listed in the Department of Education's notice.

USC signed and submitted the [Funding Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the CARES Act](#) to the Department of Education on April 10, 2020. USC has drawn down supplemental grant funds, which constitutes acceptance of the [CRRSAA Supplemental Agreement](#) as well as the [ARP Supplemental Agreement](#). USC is distributing the student portion of funds as emergency financial aid grants to students in accordance with section 314 of CRRSAA and section 2003 of the ARP.

In fall 2021, 8,694 enrolled students received a total of \$11,565,900 in emergency financial aid grants under the CRRSAA and ARP. In fall 2021, USC estimates that 21,178 students were eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. In the fourth quarter of 2021 (October 1-December 31), USC received \$6,280 in emergency grant funds for students under the CRRSAA and \$9,139,041 in emergency grant funds for students under the ARP.² Cumulatively, as of December 31, 2021, USC has received its full allocation of \$9,639,280 in emergency grant funds for students under the CRRSAA and \$26,948,541 in emergency grant funds for students under the ARP.

The CRRSAA and ARP require institutions to prioritize financial aid grants to students with exceptional need. For spring 2021, USC used financial aid data to distribute funds to undergraduate and graduate students who completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), were enrolled in spring 2021, and met the following criteria. At the undergraduate level, Pell Grant recipients received \$2,500, and other high need students received \$1,000-\$2,000. At the graduate level, students enrolled exclusively in an online program received \$1,500 and other graduate students received \$1,000 based on financial need as determined by the FAFSA. This reflects the fact that online students were not eligible for CARES Act funding that other graduates received in the fall. In addition, international students who have worked with Student Basic Needs in the past received \$1,000. To determine exceptional need for international students who have not worked with Student Basic Needs, USC used a limited application for international students to make awards of \$500 or \$1,000.

For fall 2021, USC again used a limited application to determine exceptional need for international students. Eligible international students were awarded \$500 or \$1,000. USC then used financial aid data to distribute remaining funds to undergraduate students. Pell Grant recipients received \$1,600, and other high need students received \$1,200.

¹ The final report covering HEERF fund expenditures for grants authorized by Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is available [here](#) and incorporated by reference.

² USC requests funds on the Department of Education's Grants Management system to cover expenses as needed.

USC used multiple communication channels to share information about emergency grants, which included updating the [frequently asked questions](#) on the university's support funds website and displaying a banner on the [Financial Aid Office website](#). To inform international students about the grant application, the Office of International Services posted information on its [homepage](#) and included an announcement in its monthly International Update email to international students. In addition, USC used its social media accounts to remind international students of the deadline to apply for the grant. In fall 2021, international students received a direct email when the application became available and a final reminder before the deadline.

USC provided further guidance to individual grant recipients by email. Students who were awarded an emergency grant received a notification with instructions to complete and sign an acceptance form certifying that they would use the funds only for components of the cost of attendance or emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus and will maintain documentation and allow USC to review if requested. The form also required students to indicate whether they would like the grant applied to any outstanding balance on their student account or refunded directly to them. USC used both phone and email campaigns to remind students to complete the certification to receive the grant.