

Mills College CARES Act Reporting

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act which established the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). This fund was created to assist enrolled college students and higher education institutions with the unprecedented financial crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Since March 2020, the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund has distributed three funding allotments: [HEERF I](#) (2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act); [HEERF II](#) (2021 Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act); and [HEERF III](#) (2021 American Rescue Plan).

Student Emergency Grants

Recognizing that the effects of the coronavirus would present both immediate and long-term challenges to our students, Mills allocated HEERF I, II, and III funds to eligible students during the 2020 and 2021 academic years.

HEERF I Distribution

- On April 30, 2020, Mills notified students of the funds available and provided instructions (appended below) on how to apply for spring 2020 grants.
- The fall 2020 application opened on Wednesday, August, 26, 2020 (the first day of classes), for all enrolled students via email. We encouraged students to apply for a grant once per semester.
- In accordance with federal guidelines, a summary of the distribution of these funds was updated in 2020 until all funds were distributed in October 2020.

As of October 12, 2020, 100% of emergency grants were distributed to students.

Total Amount Distributed	\$567,791
Estimated Number of Eligible Students	725
Number of Students who Applied for an Award	388
Number of Students who Received an Award*	322
Total Amount Awarded	\$567,791
Average Award	\$2,104.63

* Reasons for declines: not eligible for Title IV funding, not COVID-19 related, no verification of loss of income, no active enrollment for eligible relief term, current Mills employee

Emergency Grant Awarding Criteria

Students who receive the Emergency Financial Aid Grants are identified based on the following awarding criteria:

Urgent Financial Need—Full Award: \$4,500.00

Demonstrated Financial Need Criteria (all 3 criteria must be met):

1. Outstanding expenses; **AND**
2. Little to no access to financial resources; **AND**
3. Loss/change of employment/income

Partial Financial Need—Full-to-Partial Award: \$1,500.00–\$3,000.00

Demonstrated Financial Need Criteria (2–3 criteria must be met):

1. Outstanding expenses; **AND**
2. Little to no access to financial resources; **AND**
3. Loss/change of employment/income

HEERF II Distribution

- HEERF II funding was allocated for students in spring 2021.

Total Amount Distributed	\$660,890
Estimated Number of Eligible Students	878
Number of Students who Applied for an Award	396
Number of Students who Received an Award*	381
Total Amount Awarded	\$660,890
Average Award	\$1,646

Grant Eligibility Criteria

Students who receive the Emergency Financial Aid Grants are identified based on the following awarding criteria:

Full Need (\$2,200)

Demonstrated Financial Need Criteria (all 3 criteria must be met):

1. Title IV eligibility; **AND**
2. Full Pell Grant award; **AND**
3. Expected family contribution is zero

Demonstrated Need (\$1,500)

Demonstrated Financial Need Criteria (2 criteria must be met):

1. Title IV Eligibility; **AND**
2. Loss of employment/income; **AND/OR**
3. Reduction/change in work

Partial Need (\$1,000)

Demonstrated Financial Need Criteria (2 criteria must be met):

1. Title IV eligibility; **AND**
2. Outstanding expenses; **AND/OR**
3. Little to no access to financial resources

HEERF III Distribution

- On September 1, 2021, Mills notified eligible* students that they will have their student accounts brought current through the relief of HEERF III funds.
- Remaining student-designated funds will be distributed to Mills students enrolled for fall 2021 by the end of October.

Funds Distributed Between November 2021 and March 2022

Total Amount Distributed	\$1,324,359
Estimated Number of Eligible Students	719
Number of Students who Received an Award*	823
Total Amount Awarded	\$1,324,358

Grant Eligibility Criteria

Students are eligible to receive a grant distribution in fall 2021 if they meet the following criteria:

1. Have a past due account balance from a prior term
 2. Are enrolled at Mills for fall 2021
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Federal Relief Funds Available

Dear Students,

Mills College has received detailed information on additional federal relief aid for students. If you are affected by loss of income, housing, or other emergency expenses associated with COVID-19, please read all of the information in this letter **carefully** for details on how to apply for federal relief aid.

What is this relief aid for students?

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act has made available nearly \$12.56 billion in funds to institutions of higher education in the form of a Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). Of the amount allocated to each institution under this formula, at least 50 percent must be used directly to provide students with emergency financial aid grants to help cover expenses directly related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

Mills College has been allocated \$1,135,582 with \$567,791 (50%) earmarked to assist students during this unprecedented time. Taking into consideration that the effects of the coronavirus present both immediate and long-term challenges, we will be splitting the funds to assist students immediately and reserving a portion to assist students into the 20/21 academic year. Students are eligible to apply once per semester.

Who can apply for this assistance?

Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in “ground-based” academic programs (excludes online MA in Educational Leadership) who are eligible for Title IV funding may receive emergency grants. The US Department of Education has advised that DACA, undocumented, and international students are ineligible to apply.

We can assess your eligibility for Title IV funding if you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If you have not completed a FAFSA and are planning to return to Mills for the fall, please complete the 2020-2021 FAFSA (fafsa.ed.gov). If you are not returning in the fall, please complete the 2019-2020 FAFSA.

DACA and undocumented students can contact deanofstudents@mills.edu to determine if there are any alternative, designated institutional or private (non-federal) forms of assistance.

How do I apply?

Step 1. Gather necessary supporting documents. Take a photo or scan documents and email them to finaid@mills.edu

Step 2. Complete the brief 3-part online [COVID-19 Grant Application Form](#) for review by **August 1**.

Note: The next application cycle for the fall semester will open in September with a new link to an updated application form.

What can the money be used for?

The guidance from the US Department of Education states that the monies are intended for **“expenses directly related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.”** The form lists several such expenses, including, “food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child-care.” Though it doesn’t specify “transportation,” Mills interprets this as another valid expense.

Can I use the money to pay for an outstanding balance on my student account?

Yes, you have the option to use the refund to apply towards your outstanding student account balance. However, the money will be directly passed on to you through check or eRefund. If there is a balance owed on your student account, the money will not automatically be used to pay down your debt. Once you have received the funds, please contact Student Accounts in order to make payment arrangements as needed.

What are the necessary supporting documents?

If you have experienced a change in your employment through termination, reduction in hours, or business closure, you are required to demonstrate these changes by providing documentation. An official termination letter or email from your employer is adequate documentation.

To Submit Documentation:

1. Take a photo, scan or forward the documents supporting employment change or loss.
2. For your security, please redact any data that shares your social security number, TaxID, or other personal identification information. Please do not redact your name.
3. Email finaid@mills.edu the documents with personal identifying data redacted with the subject: **CARES Documents**

Please note: As new guidance is being provided by the federal government, we may follow up requesting additional supporting documents.

What is the awarding criteria being used and how much money can I receive?

Urgent Financial Need - Full Award: \$3,000.00

Demonstrated Financial Need Criteria (all 3 criteria must be met):

- A. Outstanding expenses; **AND**
- B. Little to no access to financial resources; **AND**
- C. Loss/change of employment/income

Partial Financial Need - Full to Partial Award: \$500.00 - \$2,000.00

Demonstrated Financial Need Criteria (2-3 criteria must be met):

- A. Outstanding expenses; **AND/OR**

- B. Little to no access to financial resources; **AND/OR**
- C. Loss/change of employment/income

Please note: Funds received may be taxable. As new guidance is being provided by the federal government, we may follow up with more clarity.

Does the money need to be repaid?

No, money received through this fund does not need to be repaid.

Would this funding reduce my financial aid?

No, these funds are not considered financial aid.

How soon will I be notified?

Applications are reviewed and notified of the outcome of their appeal weekly. Please note that processes may be delayed as a result of application volume.

How soon will I be able to receive the money?

Students enrolled in eRefund can receive funds in their bank account within 2 business days of the award posting to their student account. Students not enrolled in eRefund will have paper checks mailed out within 2 weeks of the award posting to their student account.

Note: If there is a balance owed on your student account, this money will not be used to pay down your debt. It will be directly passed on to you through check or eRefund.

How do I sign up for eRefunds?

To sign-up:

1. Log in to the Mills Resource Portal.
2. Under the 'myMills Resources' section, click on 'Account Billing and Payments'.
3. Click on 'Receive Refunds Electronically'. You will be asked to enter your bank account and routing information.
4. Double check that you have entered your banking information correctly. ***If an eRefund deposit is returned to the College by your bank, you will be charged a \$35 fee by the bank before the refund will be reissued.***

You may edit your bank account information, add new bank account information, or withdraw from eRefund at any time through the Mills Resource Portal.

**If you or someone you trust does not have a US bank account to receive an eRefund, a check will be mailed to the address you provide.*

How soon after I receive the money can I apply again?

Students are able to apply once each semester (spring/fall) for available funds. The new form for the next academic term will open on the first day of instruction and be sent to all Mills students.

We have a goal to assist as many students as possible with this federal funding. More students are eligible to receive this funding compared to other federal aid. This one-time funding is limited, and we are offering it to students for this year and next year. Please be aware that completing an application does not guarantee approval or additional funding.

We look forward to partnering with you through this uncertain and very difficult time. If you have any questions regarding any portion of this communication, please email the Office of Financial Aid at finaid@mills.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angela Hammi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Director of Financial Aid