POLK STATE COLLEGE

Updated April 5, 2021
Revised July 9, 2021

Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund

Award Number: P425E202915

Recipient: Polk State College

Report # 6

1. Polk State College signed and submitted the *CARES Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students Certification and Agreement* April 21, 2020 and received the $3,058,025 *CARES* student allocation April 25, 2020 (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF I) funding.

2. Polk State College received an additional award of $3,058,025 under the HEERF II funding, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA)*, on January 17, 2021. The Certification and Agreement was acknowledged by drawing down grant funds on January 21, 2021.

3. Pursuant to guidance provided on May 6, 2020, by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, on May 21, 2020 Polk State College posted required information about the *CARES Emergency Financial Aid Grants* in a publicly accessible place on the College website. The information can be found at www.polk.edu/admission-aid/financial-aid/cares-act-emergency-grants. This guidance was further revised on August 31, 2020, requiring the information to be updated on a quarterly basis.

4. Polk State College distributed *CARES Emergency Financial Aid Grants (CARES grants)* through an online application process. The College's *CARES Act* Committee, comprised of representatives of the Student Government Association, Academic Affairs, Student Services, and Business Services, established a simple application process that minimizes hurdles to eligible students receiving *CARES* aid and ensures that College staff are able to distribute the aid without undue delays.

5. *CARES* funding was completely allocated as of January 7, 2021. Polk State College distributed $3,058,025 to 4,247 students during the spring, summer and fall 2020 terms and spring term of 2021.

6. *CARES g*rants were increased from $500 to $1000 beginning on August 25, 2020. The fixed amount per term was determined based on the number of students who received Pell and subsidized loans under Title IV in the fall 2020 term.

7. Prior to posting the *CARES Act* Emergency Grant information on the College website, College personnel directly emailed *CARES grant* information and the application to students who had received Pell or subsidized loans under Title IV in the fall 2020 term to make sure that students with the most need had priority access.

   a. This approach balanced the objective to distribute *CARES Act* Emergency Grants as quickly as possible to eligible students most in need while ensuring transparency and accountability in the process, and maximizing but not overburdening institutional capacity.

   b. Distributions began May 13, 2020.

8. CARES grant applicants were required to have a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on file to verify that they are eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. In addition, to be eligible for a *CARES Act Emergency Grant*, a student must:

   a. Be enrolled in or accepted for enrollment in a degree or certificate program.

   b. Be enrolled in at least one course that was offered in a face-to-face or hybrid delivery format prior to the coronavirus public health emergency.

   c. Have a certified need of funding for eligible expenses incurred as a result of disruption to College operations and related to the coronavirus, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, healthcare, and childcare.

   d. Students enrolled in classes for a program that was offered exclusively online prior to the coronavirus public health emergency were not eligible for a *CARES Act Emergency Grant*.

9. *CRRSAA* grants were awarded beginning January 21, 2021. In Quarter 1 (January-March 2021) Polk State College distributed $997,150 by providing $350 awards directly to 2,849 Pell eligible students. Approximately 4,000 students at Polk State College are eligible to receive *CRRSAA* Emergency Financial Aid Grants.

10. Students were given information on eligibility requirements and the application process as described above using email, phone contacts, postings on the college website, and notification in Canvas, the College's learning management system.