May 15, 2020

**EDUCATION STABILIZATION UNDER THE CARES ACT OF 2020: HIGHER EDUCATION EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND (HEERF) - EMERGENCY FINANCIAL AID GRANTS TO STUDENTS REPORTING REQUIREMENT (1ST REPORT – 30 DAYS)**

The Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) received an award for Education Stabilization under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act of 2020 (CARES Act): Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund - Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students on May 3rd, 2020 in the amount of $1,657,969.00. This amount represents the 50% of the total amount of the authorized award that PRDE received for institutions of higher education under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act. These specific funds were awarded exclusively to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

On April 16, 2020, the PRDE signed and returned to the USDE the required Funding Certification and Agreement. In this document the PRDE assured the intention to use no less than 50 percent of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students. Accordingly, all of the funds received under the *CARES ACT*: *Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund - Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students* will be used for emergency financial aid grants to students ($1,657,969.00). In addition, the agreement required the PRDE to comply with Section 18004(e) of the CARES Act by submitting an initial report (the “30-day Fund Report”) to the Secretary, thirty (30) days from the date of the institution’s Certification and Agreement to the Department. This report will be updated every forty-five (45) days, as required also by Section 18004(e) of the CARES Act.

Accordingly, the PRDE has made available the following information in order to comply with the requirements of the HEERF reporting.

The PRDE identified one thousand three hundred nineteen (1,319) students eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 of the Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act, following the eligibility specifications that govern this statute. The institutions provided to all eligible students the list of eligible expenses under a student’s cost of attendance such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care and childcare to provide guidance to students on the allowable uses of these funds.

Grants to students will be issued on two rounds to the eligible participants. On the first round, the PRDE will issue grant payments to one thousand two hundred ninety-three (1,293) out of the one thousand three hundred nineteen (1,319) students who were identified as eligible, according to the provisions of the CARES Act Section 18004. These payments will be issued through electronic transfers as soon as all the grant accounting procedures are completed in PRDE’s Financial System and also after all documents required from students’ bank accounts are received. As per PR Treasury Department (local regulations), in order to enroll someone to be eligible to receive electronic transfers, there are forms and documents that need to be submitted and recorded accordingly. For those students who were not enrolled in direct deposit, we need to complete the procedures to issue the transfer of the funds.

The second round of grants to students will be issued after the remaining twenty-six (26) student’s cases are successfully resolved, based on the identification of particular issues. The PRDE has already made contact with these students in order to resolve their individual situations, for them to be able to receive this grant. The corresponding funds were reserved for these cases and PRDE’s efforts are towards resolving these matters as soon as possible.

Under the assistance that will be provided; each student will receive $1,200 dollars. As of the date of this report, no payments have been disbursed to students until the procedures described above are completed. The criteria used to process eligible students’ payments were the following:

1. Students are eligible for the Pell Grant, regardless of whether they are using their scholarship.

2. Grant payments will be distributed to students affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 emergency, and who were not exclusively enrolled in distance education courses prior to the emergency.

3. Students must be active in any of the post-secondary institutes ascribed to the PRDE and comply with the following:

1. Students are enrolled in one of PRDE’s institutions that have federal accreditation according to the Program Participation Agreement. Currently, only five (5) post-secondary institutes ascribed to the PRDE have the federal accreditation: four campuses of the Instituto Tecnológico de Puerto Rico (Guayama, Manatí, Ponce and San Juan campuses) and the Escuela de Troquelería y Herramentaje.
2. An active student is defined as anyone who had an active enrollment at the time the COVID19 emergency was declared.
3. The student has complied with the distance education alternative established by the PRDE and with the public policy related to attendance.
4. The student is not a candidate for a total administrative withdrawal.

4. Other eligibility criteria that were considered to exclude students from receiving the award were:

1. Student that have some debt with the USDE in Pell Grant, unpaid student loans, overpayment, among others (Default Codes: 2 – 8).
2. Students not registered with the selective military service.
3. Students that have not responded to V4 and V5 of the Verification audit.

5. One hundred ten (110) were excluded since they were ineligible to receive Pell Grant.

For questions or concerns, please send us an email to [incentivocares@itec.pr](mailto:incentivocares@itec.pr). These will be answered as soon as possible.