June 26, 2020

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

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 and for the purpose of providing the first update to the first report prepared and published on May 15, 2020.

Initially, 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. However, the PRDE identified forty-three (43) additional students for a total of one thousand three hundred sixty-two (1,362) eligible students. 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 were issued in various rounds to the eligible participants. As of the date of this report, the PRDE issued grant payments to one thousand three hundred fifty-seven (1,357) students for a total disbursement amount of $1,628,400. These payments were issued via electronic transfers through the PRDE Financial System. At the moment, the remaining five (5) cases are being processed for payment.

PRDE continues to assist in identifying additional cases of students who may be eligible to receive this emergency financial aid.

Under the payments that were made of this emergency financial aid (and those that are pending), each student received/will receive $1,200 dollars. The criteria used to process eligible students’ payments were the following:

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

2. Grant payments were 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 have been 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.