

# Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds Q&A

Last Updated: January 26, 2022



## **Q: What is Federal Emergency Relief Funding?**

A: The federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) was established through the Consolidated Appropriations Act approved by Congress. The student grant portion of these funds are designated to provide financial assistance to students (including students exclusively enrolled in distance education), which may be used for any component of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), or child care. The funds may be available whether or not students currently receive financial aid.

## **Q: Who qualifies for the Federal Emergency Relief Funds?**

A: Under the American Rescue Plan, all students who have attended on or after March 13, 2020 may qualify for funding (including online, DACA and international students). Schools are required to prioritize funding for students with exceptional need. Baker College will utilize the EFC calculated through the FAFSA application process as the primary method of determining exceptional financial need. Students who do not receive funding based on their EFC calculation may speak with a Financial Aid Advisor for additional fund consideration.

## **Q: How much Federal Emergency Relief will a student receive?**

A: The American Rescue Plan emergency grant amounts will be based on the availability of funds, the number of students with an EFC less than 24,000, and the student's calculated EFC. For spring 2021, summer 2021 and fall 2021, awards will range from \$600-\$1200 (based on the student's calculated EFC). For spring 2022, awards will range from \$200-\$725 (based on the student's calculated EFC). It is expected that all federal emergency relief funds will be exhausted in January 2022 and no additional awards will be made.

While we understand that all students are impacted by the pandemic, funds are limited and must be prioritized to students demonstrating the greatest need.

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Students who have additional financial hardship as a result of the Coronavirus National Pandemic are encouraged to contact the Financial Aid Advisors. We may be able to assist students with their financial aid application, a possible financial aid re-evaluation, and/or additional resources (including emergency grant funding).

## **Q: Do students need to apply for these funds?**

A: No. Baker College will award eligible students using institutionally established criteria. Students who have additional financial hardship as a result of the Coronavirus National Pandemic are encouraged to contact the Financial Aid Advisors. We may be able to assist students with their financial aid application, a possible financial aid re-evaluation, and/or additional resources (including emergency grant funding).

## **Q: How will a student know they have been awarded?**

A: Students will receive an email to their Baker College email address with details about their emergency aid awards.

## **Q: How will students receive their funds?**

A: The funds will be processed by financial aid, and will be immediately refunded to students through the refund preference set up with BankMobile Disbursements. Students who have not previously received refunds are encouraged to visit our [BankMobile Disbursements article](#) for further information on this process. If a refund preference is not established, it may take 3 weeks for the student to receive a paper check in the mail for their funds. If paper checks are not cashed timely, the funds will be returned to Baker College and distributed to another student.

## **Q: Do students who are enrolled only in online classes qualify for the Federal Emergency Relief Funds?**

A: Yes. Under recent guidance, all students who have attended on or after March 13, 2020 are eligible for funding.

## **Q: Will funds be available in future semesters?**

A: Future assistance is dependent on the amount of remaining funds available.

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## **Q: Do Graduate Studies students qualify for the Federal Emergency Relief Funds?**

A: Yes. Under recent guidance, all students who have attended on or after March 13, 2020 are eligible for funding.

## **Q: Is a student required to complete the FAFSA to qualify for emergency funds?**

A: Under recent guidance, all students who have attended on or after March 13, 2020 are eligible for funding (a FAFSA is not required). However, colleges are required to prioritize funding for students with exceptional financial need. Baker College will utilize the EFC calculated through the FAFSA application process as the primary method of determining exceptional financial need. Students who do not complete the FAFSA will not be automatically awarded, but may be considered for emergency grant funding. Students who have additional financial hardship as a result of the Coronavirus National Pandemic are encouraged to contact the Financial Aid Advisors ([financialaid@baker.edu](mailto:financialaid@baker.edu) or [989-729-3911](tel:989-729-3911)). They will assist students with their financial aid application, complete a possible financial aid re-evaluation, provide information regarding additional financial resources, or assist students with the application process to request federal emergency grant funding.

## **Q: Will the Federal Emergency Relief Funds result in a reduced financial aid award in the future?**

A: No. Federal Emergency Relief funds are not a consideration for financial aid awarding and will not impact the amount of aid or student loans you qualify to receive.

## **Q: Are the Federal Emergency Relief Funds considered taxable income?**

A: No. Federal Emergency Relief Funds are for unexpected expenses, unmet financial need, or expenses related on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as unexpected expenses for food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, or childcare, are qualified disaster relief payments under section 139 of the Internal Revenue Code. This grant is not includible in your gross income.