

CARES Act Minority Serving Institution (MSI) Grant

Palo Alto College received additional CARES Act funding as a recognized strengthening minority serving institution (MSI). Eligibility for MSI funds include:

1. Institutions must be designated as eligible in FY 2020 for titles III and V programs
2. Must have an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 25% Hispanic
3. 50% of degree students are receiving need-based assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act or have a substantial number of enrolled students receiving Pell Grants and have low educational and general expenditures.

REPORTING PERIOD: July 2, 2020 through August 1, 2020

Institutional Acknowledgement:

Palo Alto College signed and returned the Certification and Agreement to the U.S. Department of Education on June 18, 2020, and intends 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.

Amount of Student Emergency Aid Grants received:

Palo Alto College has received \$210,712.00 from the U.S. Department of Education pursuant to the institution's Certification and Agreement for Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund-Minority Serving Institutions (MSI). Recipient may use this award to defray expenses incurred by Recipient, including lost revenue, reimbursement for expenses already incurred, technology costs associated with a transition to distance education, faculty and staff trainings, and payroll ("Recipient's Expenses"). Recipient also may use this award for grants to students for any component of the student's cost of attendance, as defined under Section 472 of the HEA, including food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care ("Student Grants" or "Student Grant").

Amount of Student Emergency Aid Grants Disbursed:

Currently \$0 funds have been distributed from the CARES Act MSI funds due to continuing to distribute remaining funds from the primary CARES Act Emergency Relief funds. We anticipate starting to distribute MSI funds in early Fall.

Estimated Number of Students Eligible to Receive Emergency Aid Grants:

The estimated total number of Palo Alto College students eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is 5,196.

Number of Students Receiving Emergency Aid Grants:

Currently \$0 funds have been distributed from the CARES Act MSI funds due to continuing to distribute remaining funds from the primary CARES Act Emergency Relief funds received. We anticipate starting to distribute MSI funds in early Fall.

Institutional Methodology:

Palo Alto College developed the following methodology to determine which students are eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants and the amount students are to receive under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act:

Palo Alto College's approach has been revised several times due to vague instructions from the Department of Education and the late notice that students had to be Title IV eligible to receive CARES Act funding. Because this is "Emergency Aid" we were originally going to have the front line to receiving funds be through our Advocacy Center, where students could be case managed and provided with additional tools to get through the COVID-19 event. When we were notified that students had to be Title IV eligible, we had to shift so that students would apply through the Student Financial Aid Office for funding after their Title IV eligibility was confirmed.

An electronic application was developed that students would complete to request funds. Based on Department of Education guidance, documentation of an expense was requested but was not mandatory. On the application, students requested funds and also signed a certification stating that the funds were for expenses that were the result of a disruption in their education due to the COVID-19 event.

The application was placed online in a pre-fillable pdf that was submitted electronically to a priorityaid@alamo.edu inbox where Financial Aid staff began to work them from the queue in mostly date order.

Working collaboratively with the Advocacy Centers a rubric was developed of what an appropriate award would be for different categories of expenses. The rubric was to be our guide for awarding decisions.

Palo Alto College utilizes the BANNER Student Information System. CARES Act awards to students are disbursed to the student account and then refunded directly to the students. The entire CARES Act award is passed through to the student, with no existing balances impacting the refund.

From this point forward, we are monitoring the fund usage to be able to assist students throughout the fall of 2020.

Information to Students on Emergency Financial Aid Grants:

Any instructions, directions, or guidance provided by the institution to students concerning the Emergency Financial Aid Grants. All information provided to students is found on our website at alamo.edu/studentemergencyaid.