



CARES Act – Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds Grants

Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act which allocated \$1,160,085.00 in emergency assistance to Southwest Mississippi Community College (SMCC) in the form of funds to be distributed to students and to be used to cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (including eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child care). The CARES Act provides institutions with significant discretion on how to award this emergency assistance to students. Each institution may develop its own system and process for determining how to allocate these funds.

CARES Act funding from the United States Department of Education is to provide emergency financial aid grants (commonly known as CARES Grants) to assist eligible students with expenses related to the disruption of campus activities due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Acknowledgement: Southwest Mississippi Community College signed and returned the Certification and Agreement to the US Department of Education and has used, or 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.

The college administration made the decision to require the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to insure that every student awarded grant funds met the Title IV student eligibility requirements.

SMCC estimates 1,507 students could be eligible participate in the programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Of this number, 1,160 have already completed a FAFSA. Students without a completed FAFSA were contacted by the college and encouraged to complete a FAFSA to become eligible for CARES Act funds. Students were given a two-week period to complete the FAFSA. As of June 22, 2020, the college disbursed CARES Act funds in the amount of \$1,160,085.00 to 1,160 SMCC students.

The College awarded grants to eligible students in the following manner: All eligible students at SMCC received funds based on their enrollment hours of on-campus classes during the Spring 2020 term. No payment was made for on-line classes. Eligible students are receiving \$81.86 per on-campus credit hour for a maximum of 15 hours. For example, an eligible student taking 12 on-campus credit hours will receive \$982.32 (12 hours * \$81.86 per hour). Maximum CARES Act grant amount is \$1,227.90 (15 hours * 81.86 per hour).

Students who did not received funds and believe they are entitled to CARES Act funds may submit a request with supporting documentation as to why they are eligible to the college via email at the following email address: businessoffice@smcc.edu.

August 31, 2020