



September 8, 2020

TO: All Administrators
 FROM: Carmen Coniglio, Sr. Director, Fiscal Services
 RE: Update on COVID-19 Relief Funds (FAS-21-01)

Dear Colleagues:

As a follow up to the [Guidance Memo](#) on CARES Act funds issued in June, I'm writing to provide three important updates:

1. Update on the CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF)
2. COVID-19 Response Block Grant, and
3. Resource Request Process

Update CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law on March 27, 2020. One aspect of the act was the creation of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). HEERF provides funds to help for emergency grants to students and to help defray costs associated with converting courses to distance education.

Palomar College has been allocated \$3.8 million to provide for Grants to Students and \$3.8 million in Institutional Funds to help cover costs associated with **significant changes** to the **delivery of instruction** due to the coronavirus. In addition, we have been allocated an additional \$521 thousand of CARES – Minority Serving Institution (MSI) funds “to defray institutional expenses, including lost revenue, technology costs associated with the transition to distance education, faculty and staff training, and payroll” arising from the coronavirus pandemic. These funds are intended to ensure that learning can continue for our students throughout the emergency period. Below is the status of the CARES funds:

| Cares Act Higher Education Relief Fund | Performance Period | Fund # | Allocation Amount | Disbursed Amount | Remaining As Of 8/26/20 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Financial Aid Grants To Students | 4/28/20 - 4/27/21 | 74 | \$3,851,431 | \$2,333,250 | \$1,518,181 |
| Institutional Funds | 5/11/20 - 5/10-21 | 12 | \$3,851,431 | \$1,202,922 | \$2,648,509 |
| Minority Serving Institution | 8/3/20 - 8/2/21 | 12 | \$ 521,329 | \$- | \$ 521,329 |

Based on the Financial Aid’s Office published eligibility [criteria](#), approximately 12,965 students are eligible to receive HEERF Financial Aid Grants. As of August 26, 2020, 3,111 students have been awarded HEERF grants. The Fall 2020 Application is available on the student MyPalomar Account. Please visit the [Financial Aid website](#) for additional information.

The College is continually assessing the best use of CARES Act Institutional Funds. Initial funds totaling \$1.2 million were used to reimburse the District for the Spring 2020 refunds associated with the emergency withdrawals and to facilitate transition to distance education in fiscal year 2019-20.

COVID-19 Response Block Grant

The 2020-21 Budget Act provides California Community College districts with federal and state relief in the form of a \$120 million COVID-19 Block Grant. Palomar’s pro-rata share is based on our FY 2018-19 FTES, comprising of \$1.1 million from one-time Proposition 98 funds and \$877 thousand from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), a component of the CARES Act.

The CARES Act requires that the payments from the federal CRF portion be used only (1) to cover **necessary** expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19, (2) incurred between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020, and (3) that were not accounted for in the budget as of March 27, 2020. Expenditure of the federal CRF must be incurred by December 30, 2020. Due to the short timeframe to expend the federal CRF, these funds were utilized first and spent on costs associated with facilitating transition to distance learning (e.g. purchase of lab kits, technological equipment and software for students).

The state portion of the Response Block Grant from Proposition 98 is designed to support student learning, continuity of education, and mitigate learning loss related to COVID-19. State funds must be expended or encumbered by June 30, 2022. Below is the status of the COVID-19 Response Block Grant:

| COVID-19 Response Block Grant | Performance Period | Fund # | Allocation Amount | Disbursed Amount | Remaining As Of 8/26/20 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Federal (Coronavirus Relief Fund) | 8/3/20 – 12/30/20 | 12 | \$ 877,342 | \$ 863,477 | \$ 13,865 |
| State (Proposition 98) | 8/3/20 – 6/30/22 | 12 | \$1,076,948 | \$- | \$1,076,948 |

Resource Request Process

The exceptional requirements of the federal/state relief funding require proper substantiation and tracking of expenditures. Below is the process to access these funds:

1. The **COVID-19 Resource Request Form** can be found on the [Fiscal Services website](#)
2. **Technology-Related Requests:** Route requests to Information Services for approval.

3. **Approval of Request:** Please work with your Dean/Director to assess resource needs in order to effectively operate and serve students throughout the emergency period. The request must be pre-approved by both Dean/Director and Division Vice president.
4. **Form Submission:** Email all COVID-19 Resource Requests to Fiscal Services COVIDFiscal@palomar.edu
5. **Executive Cabinet Approval:** All requests are prioritized and discussed at weekly meetings to ensure that the most urgent needs are met.
6. **Funding Status:** Fiscal Services will notify departments of the funding status and provide the appropriate budget string(s) to use for approved requests.
7. **Purchase Requisition:** Department initiates a requisition. Please notate COVID on the first line of the Description section of Requisition.

Attached is a copy of the PowerPoint presented at the Management meeting on 9/3/20 for additional resource information.