

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) was signed into law on March 11, 2021. Section 2003(7) of the ARP requires an institution receiving funding to provide emergency financial aid grants to students totaling a minimum amount as determined by section 314(a)(1) of Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA). For this purpose, both the ARP and CRRSAA are considered supplemental grant funding laws for the original Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The allotted money was given to the Office of Postsecondary Education as the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, or HEERF.

Faith Baptist Bible College signed and returned the initial CARES Act certification and agreement form to the U.S. Department of Education on May 4, 2020. Subsequently, Faith consented to the supplemental grant funding certification and agreement when it drew down the ARP funds on October 19, 2021, thereby designating its intent to use the ARP funds to provide the mandated minimum amount of \$419,253 for emergency financial aid grants to students.

More specifically, this \$419,253 received by Faith may only be used to provide financial aid grants 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 childcare. In making such financial aid grants to students, Faith must prioritize grants to students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants or are domestic or international students, especially undergraduates, with extraordinary financial circumstances.

Based on published guidance from the U.S. Department of Education at the time the grant funds were received, all students who are or were enrolled in an institution of higher education during the COVID-19 national emergency are eligible for emergency financial aid grants from the HEERF, regardless of whether they completed a FAFSA or are eligible for Title IV.

In addition to the above eligibility criteria, to be considered by Faith for the funds, a student had to be degree seeking, must have been registered during Fall Semester 2021 as of October 20, 2021, and must have been making satisfactory academic progress. Students who paid no tuition were excluded from consideration. The total number of students meeting the eligibility guidelines as described to this point was determined to be 259.

In evaluating the intent of the ARP, that students with exceptional need must be prioritized, Faith administration decided to include only students meeting the eligibility requirements previously described above and who received Pell Grants or had an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) estimate of less than \$30,000 (which is the Faith published annual cost of attendance), or in some cases did not complete a FAFSA. This brought the total number of students who ended up receiving an emergency financial aid grant down to 237.

The methods used in calculating individual grants included weightings based on the Pell Grant amounts, whether the students lived on or off campus, levels of other financial aid, and whether the students were enrolled full-time or part-time. Furthermore, Faith administration made a good faith effort to further review and adjust some individual grants based on the collective current knowledge of Faith college staff most familiar with individual student exceptional need situations. Also, a minimum grant amount of \$250 was established. The result was emergency financial aid grant amounts to these 237 students that averaged \$1,800 and ranged from \$250 to \$3,750 with a total of \$336,503 (80%) being awarded to Pell Grant recipients. The entire emergency financial aid grant of \$419,253 was disbursed to students on October 27, 2021.

An email communication describing the ARP funds was sent to all 237 grant recipients on October 22, 2021. The text of the email is copied below:

Dear Student,

Throughout the Coronavirus Epidemic, the Department of Education has received relief funds to help institutes of higher education and their students with extra financial aid. In early spring, the American Rescue Plan passed what included an additional \$40 billion in relief for institutions and students. This relief fund is known as HEERF III (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund).

The HEERF III relief fund has its own requirements for eligibility. Fortunately, these requirements have had less restrictions than previous relief funds and can now include more of our student body, including our international students studying here!

As with the other HEERF funds, these grants must prioritize students with “exceptional need”. The funds are to be used for any component of a student’s cost of attendance (tuition, room & board, books & supplies, transportation, and any other miscellaneous expenses) for either semester of this school year. It can also include needs, such as health care (including mental) and childcare.

The Financial Aid Office, Business Office and Student Life have worked together to determine which students are eligible for this aid. By receiving this letter, you have qualified to receive some of those funds.

As with the other HEERF grants, **in order to disburse this aid to you, the institution (FBBC) must obtain the student’s written (or electronic), affirmative consent to apply this grant money directly to the student’s institutional account. However, the student also has the option to receive a direct disbursement of the grant in the form of a check.**

To give us your response, please [click here](#) [the hyperlinked Google Form is displayed at the end of this document] and fill out the form to let us know how you want to receive the grant. We want the turn-around time to be done quickly so that you can receive the funds soon, and that you do not forget! Your response is required by **THIS MONDAY, October 25<sup>th</sup>**.

If we do not hear from you by the deadline, a check will automatically be issued to you and placed in your student mailbox. Online only students’ checks will be mailed to the address we have listed on your Populi account.

Please do not delay in responding! Let us thank the Lord together for the way He continually provides for our needs!

In His Service,

*Alice Bunjer*

*Financial Aid Director*

Faith Baptist Bible College & Theological Seminary

*Google Form:*

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ - YES! Please apply my HEERF III funds directly to my student account.

\_\_\_\_ - No. Please issue my HEERF III funds in a paper check to me.