

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) III American Rescue Plan (ARP) FAQ

1. What is the HEERF III Student Emergency Aid?

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) (Pub. L. 117-2). The ARP appropriated approximately \$39.6 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) and represents the third stream of funding appropriated for HEERF to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, NSU was allocated \$10,000,096 in HEERF III grants for emergency student aid. NSU will distribute half during the Fall 2021 semester and the other half during the Spring 2022 semester.

According to ARP and guidance from the Department of Education (DOE), the following factors were used to determine student eligibility to receive emergency aid funds:

- Institutions must make financial aid grants to students, which can 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, healthcare (including mental healthcare), or childcare.
- The ARP requires that institutions prioritize students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants or other types of exceptional need, and authorizes grants to students exclusively enrolled in distance education.
- Students must be enrolled at NSU on or after the date of the declaration of the national emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic: March 13, 2020.

2. Who is eligible for the funds?

Students who are enrolled in the Fall 2021 semester at NSU. Additionally, the ARP requires that institutions prioritize students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants or other types of exceptional need. NSU has defined exceptional need for the purpose of these funds based upon two student populations:

- Group 1: Students eligible for need-based financial aid during the Fall 2021 semester.
- Group 2: Students, not in Group 1, eligible based upon exceptional need after completion of the HEERF III grant survey.

3. Do I need to complete a FAFSA to receive a HEERF III Grant?

No, HEERF III grants are distributed to all students enrolled at Norfolk State University meeting the above eligibility criteria, regardless of whether they completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or are eligible for Title IV.

4. What are the types of expenses covered by the HEERF III grant?

HEERF III grants may be used for any component of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that are due to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as tuition, food, housing, healthcare (including mental healthcare), or childcare.

5. How will NSU distribute the HEERF III student emergency funding and how much will I receive?

As a result of the guidance, NSU will award HEERF III grants from the ARP to the following groups of students, and under the following conditions:

- **Group 1:** Fall 2021 NSU students eligible for a need-based financial aid will receive \$1,088 grant award by Friday, November 12, 2021. A notification email will be sent to each eligible student and no additional action is required by the student to receive the HEERF III grant.
- **Group 2:** Fall 2021 NSU students not in Group 1 with exceptional financial need may apply to receive \$1,000 by completing the HEERF III grant survey. Each eligible student will be sent the survey that must be completed no later than November 14, 2021. Qualifying students will receive \$1,000 no later than Friday, November 19, 2021.

Note: Students who receive an award from Group 1 are not eligible to apply for an additional award as part of Group 2.

6. I did not receive an email notification HEERF III grant award, what should I do?

If you did not receive an email by close of business on Friday, November 12, 2021, and you believe you meet the eligibility requirements listed in question 2, please contact the Financial Aid Office at financialaid@nsu.edu or call 757-823-8381.

7. What is the timeframe to receive the HEERF III grant and how will I receive the distribution?

- **Group 1:** Students will receive a distribution award of \$1,088 through direct deposit no later than, Friday, November 12, 2021, if you have banking information on your student account. If you have not set up direct deposit through your student account (MyNSU), please do so as soon as possible to avoid any delay in receiving your distribution. If you have direct deposit set up, please confirm that the bank account is still active and where

you want your payment to be deposited. Log into your student account through MYNSU to verify your banking information. If you prefer not to provide your banking information through MYNSU, a paper check will be processed. The Student Accounts Office will contact you with instructions on when to pick up your check from the Cashier's Office.

- **Group 2:** Students will receive a distribution award of \$1,000 through direct deposit no later than, Friday, November 19, 2021, if you have banking information on your student account. If you have not set up direct deposit through your student account (MyNSU), please do so as soon as possible to avoid any delay in receiving your distribution. If you have direct deposit set up, please confirm that the bank account is still active and where you want your payment to be deposited. Log into your student account through MYNSU to verify your banking information. If you prefer not to provide your banking information through MYNSU, a paper check will be processed. The Student Accounts Office will contact you with instructions on when to pick up your check from the Cashier's Office.

8. Will the HEERF III grant funds affect other financial aid already received?

No, HEERF II grant funds will not reduce your financial aid package.

9. When will the Spring 2022 HEERF III grants be distributed?

The Spring 2022 HEERF III grants will be distributed in February 2022 to NSU students enrolled in the Spring 2022 semester. The amount of the Spring 2022 may be different from the Fall 2021 distribution based on number of eligible students.

10. I already received the HEERF III award for the Fall 2021 semester, but I have additional expenses, can I apply to receive additional HEERF III funding?

No, due to the limited funding NSU received and the need to assist as many students as possible during the Fall 2021 semester, the maximum amount a Group 1 student can receive is \$1,088 and the maximum amount a Group 2 student can receive is \$1,000.

11. Is the money I received from the ARP in the form of a HEERF III Grant taxable income?

It is our understanding based on information from the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) that HEERF III Grants awarded to students under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) are not included in student's gross income.

In addition, HEERF I funds awarded under the CARES Act and the HEERF II funds awarded under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) are not included in student's gross income.

According to the IRS website (see link below), emergency aid granted to students due to COVID-19 pandemic is not taxable.

[Emergency aid granted to students due to COVID is not taxable | Internal Revenue Service \(irs.gov\)](#)