

ED Offers More ARP Support and Advice on Spending

April 4 Deadline for HEERF Supplemental Support Grants

Colleges and universities have until April 4 to submit applications for supplemental funding under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF). In a [February 3 notice](#), the Department of Education (ED) sets priorities for which institutions may apply to receive almost \$200 million in additional funding to help those with the greatest unmet needs stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. This new round of funding, set aside by Congress when it passed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) in March 2021, is known as Supplemental Support under the ARP or SSARP for short.

SSARP funds may be used for direct student support or to help institutions respond to public health needs, address students' basic needs, and expand programs. In the funding announcement, ED also encourages schools to support continued enrollment and reenrollment of students, forgive students' institutional debt and quit withholding transcripts.

ED laid out five priorities for SSARP funding. These are designated as absolute priorities, meaning that no applications will be accepted from institutions that do not fit one of the designated categories.

Absolute Priority #1.

Any institution that did not receive Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) (a)(1) funding because (a) it was included in ED's allocation table but missed the application deadline or did not submit a complete application under the correct grants.gov funding number; OR (b) it could have been eligible for (a)(1) funding but was not in the allocation table because it did not report student data for 2018/19 in IPEDS.

Absolute Priority #2.

Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) or Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) grantees that did not receive ARP (a)(2) funding, or were underfunded, due to technical errors or application issues, are newly eligible, or because they are branch campuses.

Absolute Priority #3.

Institutions whose ARP(a)(1) allocation was underfunded or not funded because their student and/or Pell enrollment was undercounted due to an institutional merger or a change in the effective date of their program participation agreement.

Absolute Priority #4.

Community colleges and rural institutions with (1) a high

percentage of low-income students (50 percent or more of degree/certificate seeking undergrads received Pell grants), and (2) a 4.5 percent or greater decline in student enrollment from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020.

Absolute Priority #5.

Institutions serving a high percentage of graduate students (90+ percent) as they would have been underfunded since the ARP formula utilized the number of Pell grant recipients which are restricted to undergrads.

The [ED resource page for SSARP](#) provides instructions for applying and links to relevant documents.

Using HEERF Funds to Meet Basic Needs

College and university administrators who are still deciding how best to use unexpended coronavirus relief funds should review a [new set of FAQs](#) published by ED on January 20. The document offers ideas and examples of how institutions around the country have attempted to alleviate strains on students by supporting housing, food, childcare, mental health, and other basic needs.