

Samuel Merritt University - CARES Act Report

Samuel Merritt University has offered emergency funds to students for a number of years. The University received about \$420,763 in CARES Act funds from the U.S. Department of Education for the purpose of emergency financial aid support for students. We have to use that money to help students whose education is directly affected by COVID-19.

Acknowledgment

SMU signed and returned the certification and agreement form to access CARES Act funds. We plan to use the funds to provide the mandated amount of at least 50% of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide emergency financial aid grants to students in addition to the emergency funds that we already award.

Total Amount of Student Portion of Funds

The amount allocated for direct student grants is \$420,763.

Total Amount Distributed as of 5/21/2020

SMU has not spent any of the CARES Act funds yet. We have awarded 220 students a total of \$308,756 in university emergency funds so far.

Estimated Total Number of Students Eligible for Title IV of the Higher Education Act

Based on who submitted to SMU the 2019-2020 Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), there are 2,001 students who are eligible.

Process for Deciding Who Will Receive Awards

SMU will award to some students directly, some as recommended by departments and some by an application process. This will be done on a case-by-case basis. Our first priority is any students who will not finish their degree program because of a delay in getting clinical placements or other degree requirements completed. While we are doing all we can to avoid that, it could happen. Those delays result in an increased cost of attendance for housing, food, transportation. The second priority is students who have experienced a significant drop in their financial resources- they lost a job or a family member who they rely on financially lost a job. The third priority is students who have other types of changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The amount will vary based on the situation and available funds.

Instructions, Directions, or Guidance Provided

Students were directed in email and webinar to complete an application for funds on the MySMU portal. Instructions included this guidance on the types of emergencies covered and SMU priorities:

SMU is offering the following scholarships from all emergency sources:

- **Emergency scholarships for unexpected costs that impede your ability to be successful as a student.** This includes funds to help with temporary housing, food, home repairs, unexpected clinical costs, car repairs that assist a student getting to a job or clinical site, out of pocket medical expenses, child care, etc.

- **Technology assistance for helping students transition to online.** We are repairing or replacing laptops and funding internet access options as needed.
- **Scholarship funds to assist displaced students from preceptor and clinical sites** that prevent or delay graduation

The application asks for the following information –

The screenshot shows a form with two main sections. The first section is titled "Select all emergency situations that apply" and includes a search bar, an "N/A" checkbox, and a grid of 12 checkboxes for various emergency situations: Accident / Theft, Childcare, Clinical/Preceptor Site Costs, Covid-19 Virus Costs, Family Lost Income, Food Insecurity, Healthcare, Housing / Mortgage, Loss of Income, Other, Spouse Lost Income, and Technology Need, and Utilities / Internet / Phone. The second section is titled "How much funding are you requesting?" and includes a text input field and an "N/A" checkbox.

There is a section to describe the emergency situation and a place to upload documentation.