Governor Phil Murphy

$68.8 Million in Emergency Assistance to New Jersey Colleges to be Available Through Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund

05/22/2020

A total of $68.8 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds will be available to New Jersey's public colleges and universities to help institutions continue providing high-quality educational services to students amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding from the U.S. Department of Education through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund provided Governors flexibility through an emergency block grant to decide how best to meet the needs of students, schools, postsecondary institutions and other education-related organizations in their states. Given the significant financial burdens that institutions of higher education are facing due to the unprecedented public health emergency, Governor Phil Murphy is focusing the GEER funds on New Jersey postsecondary institutions.

The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) will make this funding available through emergency assistance grants to institutions based on an OSHE-developed allocation formula that considers – among other things – institutional expenses incurred as a result of the pandemic. GEER funds may be used to cover the costs of expenditures incurred on or after March 13, 2020, when a national emergency was declared. More information about how and when institutions can apply will be forthcoming.

"The COVID-19 pandemic upended life on campuses throughout New Jersey. Institutions of higher education will be feeling its financial ripple effects not just for months and but for years to come," said **Dr. Zakiya Smith Ellis, Secretary of Higher Education.** "While we urge the federal government for additional funding that could benefit every student in our state, we are pleased this pool of funding will be dedicated to supporting institutions of higher education and students hardest hit."

The GEER Fund is one of the funding sources stemming from the CARES Act Education Stabilization Fund to support states, schools, and institutions of higher education during the COVID-19 national emergency. These GEER funds are in addition to the $289 million (https://nj.gov/highereducation/documents/pdf/index/NewJerseyCollegestoReceiveMoreThan$140MillioninFedera%20FundsforDirectStudentEmergencyAid.pdf) that New Jersey's public and private non-profit institutions of higher education received through the CARES Act. Additionally, $11.9 million (https://nj.gov/highereducation/documents/pdf/index/collegecaresact.pdf) in funding was distributed to New Jersey's Minority-Serving Institutions, including institutions serving low-income students, to help ensure online learning remains possible for students who may have limited access to internet and other online tools necessary to complete coursework. Similarly, the CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) provides a total of more than $310 million (https://www.nj.gov/education/broadcasts/2020/may/11/CARES%20Act%20Elementary%20and%20Secondary%20School%20Emergency%20Relief%20Funds%20Allocations%2(in relief to New Jersey's elementary and secondary schools. The New Jersey Department of Education is currently accepting applications (https://www.nj.gov/education/covid19/boardops/caresact.shtml) from local education agencies for these entitlement grants.

For more information about the GEER funds, please visit OSHE's fact sheet (https://nj.gov/highereducation/documents/pdf/index/GEERFfactsheet.pdf) and the U.S. Department of Education's website (https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-announces-3-billion-emergency-education-block-grants-governors).

Governor Phil Murphy

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