



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

April 30, 2020

Dear College and University Presidents:

Today we are releasing information on how eligible institutions can access funds provided by Congress under Section 18004(a)(2) and Section 18004(a)(3) of the CARES Act. Section 18004(a)(2) provides grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs), and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) as well as other institutions eligible for the Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP). Section 18004(a)(3) provides additional funds for institutions under Part B of Title VII of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), through the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

With respect to funds under Section 18004(a)(3), we are meeting the requirement to prioritize schools that received less than \$500,000 under other parts of Section 18004 by distributing funds in an amount that, when added to funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) and Section 18004(a)(2), brings each institution eligible to receive funds through FIPSE to an award amount of \$500,000. There is a small amount of funding remaining after bringing eligible institutions up to the \$500,000 award threshold; the Department intends to publish a Notice Inviting Application in the coming weeks so institutions know how to apply for those funds, which will be distributed through a competition. We estimate that approximately \$15 million will be available for the competitive grant program under FIPSE.

Unlike the funds under Section 18004(a)(1) for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students and for an Institution's Costs, the funds provided under Section 18004(a)(2) and Section 18004(a)(3) of the CARES Act, respectively, are not subject to Section 18004(c), which means institutions are not required to use at least 50% of these funds for grants to students. Nonetheless, I encourage you to use as much of these funds as you can to give grants to students. The funds under Section 18004(a)(2) and Section 18004(a)(3) may be used for grants to students for any component of the student's cost of attendance, including tuition, course materials, and technology. However, to receive grants under these sections, students must be eligible to receive Federal financial student aid under Section 484 of the HEA. Students may demonstrate eligibility by completing a FAFSA, by having completed a FAFSA and received an ISIR in the past, or by completing an application designed by the institution in which the student attests under the penalty of perjury to meeting the requirements of Section 484 of the HEA.

Institutions may also use these funds to defray institutional expenses, which under Section 18004(a)(2) and Section 18004(a)(3) may include lost revenue, reimbursement for expenses already incurred, technology costs associated with the transition to distance education, faculty and staff training, and payroll.

While I know you face many challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, I encourage you to use these awards to expand your remote learning programs and build your IT capacity. These activities will help ensure that learning can continue for your students during the Nation's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and strengthen your position to support continued learning in the future.

In order to access these funds, eligible institutions should complete and sign the Recipient's Funding Certification and Agreement for an Award under Section 18004(a)(2) of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund and/or the Recipient's Funding Certification and Agreement for Funds under Section 18004(a)(3) of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (available for download on our Office of Postsecondary Education's CARES Act website (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/caresact.html>) and return it via grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov>). We are attaching to the Certification and Agreement form a data table that will allow you to determine the maximum amount of funding, in total, that is available to you and that you can request when completing this form. Your signing and submission of that document is your acknowledgment and agreement to the terms and conditions of the funding under Section 18004(a)(2) or Section 18004(a)(3) of the CARES Act. After the Department has received the Certification and Agreement and verified the information therein, the funds will then be obligated in order to permit institutions to draw down their funds using the Department's G5 system. **The Certification and Agreement forms must be submitted on or before September 30, 2020 through grants.gov for your institution to receive the funds.**¹

Once again, I am pleased to have been able to move quickly to award funds provided under the CARES Act to meet the needs of both students and institutions as we work together to overcome the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on teaching and learning in our postsecondary institutions. I look forward to continuing to work with you on behalf of America's students.

Sincerely,

Betsy DeVos

¹ This document has been updated on September 3, 2020 to reflect the correct closing date as the Department has announced a reopening of the application period