

Emergency Aid Programming Checklist

COVID-19 has presented institutions of higher education with immediate communication challenges. Given the availability of CARES Act funding, Trellis Company has created easy checklists for institutions to assess their infrastructure and readiness for administering emergency aid programs.

NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR EMERGENCY AID PROGRAMMING

- Establish an emergency aid lead and support committee
- Take inventory of campus stakeholders to engage for implementation, decision-making, and promotion
- Understand what current emergency programs exist on campus
- Establish a streamlined program to cross-train professionals to increase counseling capacity for students and assist with increased student communication volume
- Develop a centralized communication plan to promote the program and the eligibility requirements
- Design an accessible student application that captures necessary data for reporting purposes
- Establish a process for aid disbursement and engage relevant system owners
- Assess the relevant approval bodies (have multiple) and develop controls to ensure appropriate awarding
- Design a data collection tool to track recipients and information needed for reporting and assessment
- Provide an internal reporting mechanism and prepare for required external reports

INSTITUTIONAL READINESS ASSESSMENT

Campus-wide Awareness and Leadership:

- Are the necessary implementation partners aware of the CARES Funding and its requirements? This should include Student Affairs, Financial Aid, Sponsored Programs, Information Technology, and Business Services as a baseline.
- Has a campus executive-level champion been named to lead the implementation of the CARES Act funding?
- Has the campus appointed a staff lead for the administration of the CARES Act funding?
- Has the campus lead appointed a committee to assist with the development of criteria and to assist in the development of any checks and balances necessary for administering the funding?
- Has the campus developed a list of partners that are necessary for promotion of the program to ensure that it reaches all eligible students?
- Has the campus set up a defined email address and/or phone number for questions about the funding?

APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

- Has the campus developed an understanding of the amount of aid available and the potential need on campus?
- Has the campus developed a rubric or prioritization of eligible criteria for the funding?
- Has the campus established a funding methodology to determine the amount allocated to each student?
- Has the campus developed an [accessible student application](#) that can be accessed, and submitted, digitally?
- Has the campus drafted the application questions?
- Has the campus identified what, if any, supporting documentation will be needed within the application process?
- Has the campus identified the team that will be responsible for reviewing the applications?
- Has the campus identified the team that will be responsible for providing decisions on the applications?
- Has the campus developed a records retention policy for documentation related to the submission of the application and decision?

DISBURSEMENT

- Has the campus determined how to communicate the funding decision to students?
- Has the disbursement vehicle been set up for students to receive the funding? Are there systems in place to access students' updated account information? If checks will be mailed, is there a system to validate addresses? For unbanked students, will there be disbursement options that allow them to utilize the funds?
- Are controls in place to authorize the fund disbursement based on the decision from other campus stakeholders?
- Are there documentation and records retention protocols in place for the funding disbursement?
- Are there data streams available to send completed data to a centralized place for program assessment?

POST-DISBURSEMENT

- Has the campus established a lead office for relevant ED reporting requirements?
- Has the campus established an assessment timeline?
- Has the campus developed an on-going communication process with students that receive emergency aid support?
- Has the campus documented the policies and procedures related to the emergency aid program?
- Are there additional support services that are in place to support students?
- Has the campus appointed a lead to develop a long-term emergency aid program?