CARES ACT TOWN HALL

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Wednesday, May 6, 2020

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The Global Pandemic...

• “Virus is the great equalizer, it doesn’t discriminate” but systems / people do
• Exposed systemic inequities, realities / cracks
• Colleges are prototyping at scale, dreaming big, doing impossible things
• Culture of care / belonging / community in a heart-forward, compassionate, and kind way
• Continue to center our response in the student / employee experience
• Student equity as an organizing principle
• If the crisis has taught us that we can do X, how can we sustain this in a non-crisis context?
Student Financial Stability
How can we structurally support students in addressing the broader life challenges that affect their ability to focus on and complete their educational goals?
How can we **structure** luck by design and not by chance?
Sample Basic Needs

- Food
- Housing
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Healthcare / Mental Health
- Legal services
- Tax preparation
- Substance abuse counseling
- Domestic abuse support

Maslow Rewired (Pam Rutledge)
Four Strategies to Strengthen Student Financial Stability

1. Understand Student Needs
   ✓ Existing data sources / Benefits Screening Form

2. Organize and Connect Supports
   ✓ Student Services Syllabus / Bundling Services

3. Connect Partner Supports to Students
   ✓ Bring to students

4. Ensure Students Access Supports
   ✓ Normalize services / Single (Human) Point of Contact
CARES Act
CARES Act Overview (1) ...

- April 9th Memo from Dept. of Education
- $14B Overall, $12.6B to colleges using formula that is 75% Pell enrollment, 25% overall enrollment
- “At least 50 percent must be reserved to provide students with emergency financial aid grants to help cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.”

✓ This $$ stream coming first
CARES Act Overview (2)...

• Funds must be used to “cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus (including eligible expenses under a student’s cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare).”

• Colleges encouraged “to prioritize your students with the greatest need, but at the same time consider establishing a maximum funding threshold for each student to ensure that these funds are distributed as widely as possible.”
CARES Act: Distributing Emergency Aid for Students (1)

• Prioritize:
  ✓ Quick and Easy
    • Short student-friendly application with fast review and distribution
  ✓ Student-Centered
    • Do not ask students to "perform their poverty" or have lengthy explanations
    • Marketing and Outreach – EXAMPLE: Calling campaigns facilitated by employees who can't fulfill their normal work duties from home
    • Connect other supports (e.g., unemp insurance, SNAP, advising, counseling)
  ✓ Equitable
    • Protect against another entitlement for the middle / upper middle class that misses those who would benefit from it the most
CARES Act: Distributing Emergency Aid for Students (2)

• High-Level Questions for Colleges:

1. What supports are currently most critical to your students? (e.g., food, tech / learning resources, housing, childcare)

2. What supports are you already offering?
   • Such as food pantry / dining services (EXAMPLE: curbside contactless pickup), support for unemployment insurance + SNAP, emergency grants, referral to community resources, technology supports (laptop, internet access), case manager

3. What related efforts already exist (e.g., emergency aid program, financial stability committee / team)?
High-Level Questions for Colleges:

4. What capacity at the college exists for this implementation?

5. How can you document this process? What should be documented?

6. How can this direct assistance to students be part of a larger strategic effort around sustaining student financial stability and supporting educational success?
CARES Act: Distributing Emergency Aid for Students (4)

• Key Decisions:

1. Which basic needs will be prioritized? (Food, technology / learning materials, childcare, etc.)

2. What is the $ range of grants?

3. How will it be awarded? Lottery? First come, first served? Selection criteria? (e.g., need, near-completers, underrepresented populations)

4. What information from the student do you want to know?
CARES Act: Distributing Emergency Aid for Students (5)

• Key Decisions (cont.):

  5. What is the application submission and review process?
  6. What is the timeline?
  7. Who decides if / how much aid will be awarded?
  8. What will be documented? How? How often?
  9. Will there be phases?
  10. Who can lead this effort? Which individuals / departments need to / can be involved?
CARES Act: Distributing Emergency Aid for Students (6)

- Example: Montgomery County College
  - 6-question student application: Name, ID, advocate's name + email, $ amount, rationale
  - Criteria: financial need based on FAFSA eligibility + additional knowledge in case the student didn’t file
  - Need reviewed and verified by an advocate (e.g., faculty, staff) and FA office
  - Average award: $600 (range $75-$2,000)
  - Awards: vouchers to online bookstore for learning resources; Target gift cards for food assistance; checks to landlord for housing assistance; direct account credit for tuition and fee assistance
  - Students also receive a list of referral services for longer-term support
Student Emergency Assistance

We are receiving many requests for assistance from our students, a clear reflection of the struggles millions of Americans are enduring, but these are our students in our community and it brings the whole crisis to our doorstep. Please consider supporting our emergency fund—to keep our students on track for the future they still believe in and are working hard to attain. View stories of emergency support already provided to MC students.

*There have been 1,012 awards made amounting to $417,231.* Of those 1,012 awards, 261 awards are for food assistance. View stories of emergency support already provided to MC students.

To request financial assistance, click the button below and complete the form.

STUDENT REQUEST FORM

To donate, click the button below and select “Student Emergency Assistance” as the Area of Support.

GIVE NOW
CARES Act: Distributing Emergency Aid for Students (7)

- https://www.nasfaa.org/covid19

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Web Center

This web center has been created to keep NASFAA members and the financial aid community updated on pertinent news related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). This web center is updated daily with new items marked as *NEW*.

NASFAA Articles & Statements

- *NEW* Vehicles for Higher Education Act Rewrite Narrow as Congress Develops More Aid Packages
- *NEW* ED’s Internal Watchdog Releases Plan to Oversee Billions in COVID-19 Relief Funding
- Consumer Groups Sue DeVos Over Student Loan Wage Garnishment
- Poll the Pros: When Are Financial Aid Office Staff Expected to Return to Campus?
- NASFAA Board of Directors Has Decided to Cancel 2020 National Conference in Las Vegas
- NASFAA to Maintain Operational Continuity During HQ Closure

See All NASFAA COVID-19 News Coverage
CARES Act: Distributing Emergency Aid for Students (8)


- Key principles
- Common implementation challenges
- Examples / Designs
- Ways to fundraise to grow your emergency aid program
CARES Act: Distributing Emergency Aid for Students (9)


Providing Emergency Aid to College Students in a Time of Crisis

Evan Weissman and Julia Schmidt

APRIL 2020

The U.S. Department of Education is currently providing more than $6 billion for colleges to disburse directly to students as flexible emergency aid under the

• Considerations / Strategies
• Resources
Contact

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