

HEERF III American Rescue Plan - Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Fall 2021

Holy Cross continues to provide emergency financial aid grants to students whose lives have been disrupted by the COVID-19 crisis, many of whom may be facing financial challenges and struggling to make ends meet.

In the fall of 2021, grants are being funded by the federal government through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) III, established by the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Students experiencing ongoing challenges with financing their educational costs should contact the financial aid office to speak with a representative regarding opportunities that may be available.

About the American Rescue Plan - Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III

The American Rescue Plan (ARP), which was signed into law in March 2021, provides economic relief in response to COVID-19. Included in the legislation is the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III), which provides funding to higher education institutions across the country to distribute to students with financial need.

Eligible student groups include citizens, permanent residents, international students, refugees, asylum seekers, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, and similar undocumented students. The ARP requires that institutions prioritize students with exceptional need and authorizes grants to students enrolled in both campus and online programs.

ARP funds are in addition to funds previously authorized by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), 2021, and the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020. These grants are separate from financial aid students may receive from the college.

FAQs

Who is Eligible for an HEERF III Student Grant?

Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible for HEERF III funding through Holy Cross:

- Be enrolled in the Fall 2021 term.
- Must demonstrate financial need with preference to students with exceptional financial need as determined by the 2021-2022 FAFSA on file.

If you did not complete a FAFSA, or you are not a U.S. Citizen or permanent resident, financial aid will consider a request for aid using the [2021- 2022 Financial Aid Appeal form](#) (PDF).

Students who meet the following eligibility will be provided an award, NO application is required if you meet these requirements, and you will receive a communication from the College with directions on how to accept your award. The amount of the grant will be determined by considering your Pell eligibility, federal expected family contribution (EFC), and any appeals for financial aid made for the award year 2022. Students with a Pell award will generally receive a sum equal to 25% of the 2021-2022 Pell award amount. Students with an EFC of \$37,500 or less will receive a grant between \$350 and \$500; those with the lowest EFC will generally receive the larger grant. Each criteria will be applied separately and summed to arrive at the total award for each student.

The following students are encouraged to apply for assistance through the application link below:

- Those who did not receive Pell Grants or have an EFC above \$37,500, but who have exceptional need as a result of expenses related to COVID-19; or
- Those who received an emergency grant, but have additional exceptional need as a result of expenses related to COVID-19.

Please direct any questions to financialaid@holycross.edu.

What is the timeline for those who will receive an award without having to file an application?

The awards will be posted in the student billing portal, the week of September 20, 2021. Once awards are posted, students will be sent an email directing them to view the offered award by selecting the TouchNet Billing+Payment link.

- Students will have the opportunity to accept or decline the grant award.
- The offer will remain available until October 23, 2021. Awards not accepted by the deadline will be canceled.
- By accepting the offer, each student is certifying that the grant award will be used for a component or components of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs that arise due to the coronavirus, such as tuition, food, housing, health care including mental health care.

If my circumstances have changed is there more help available?

Yes, if you or your family's income has been significantly reduced due to COVID-19, you may be eligible to submit an appeal. Through an appeal, you have the opportunity to submit documentation showing a loss of income and request that the information on your financial aid application be updated to reflect the actual income received in a more recent or current year.

To see if your circumstances qualify for an appeal, complete a [2021-2022 Financial Aid Appeal form](#) (PDF).

Applications will be reviewed as they are received and may take up to fourteen (14) business days to be reviewed. Due to the limited nature of funds available, we encourage students to apply as soon as possible. Please note even if your income has changed, it may not result in a change in the amount of financial aid you receive.

Will everyone who applies for an additional emergency grant receive one?

We cannot guarantee that all who apply for an additional emergency grant will receive an award due to the limited nature of this funding. Grants will be distributed to students who demonstrate need, with priority given to those with exceptional need, until funds are exhausted.

Do I need to repay this grant?

No. An emergency grant, funded by ARP/HEERF III does not need to be repaid. This grant does not impact or replace any financial aid you may currently receive, and it is a one-time grant.

If I was previously awarded a grant, can I apply again?

Yes, students who were previously awarded emergency grants are eligible to apply again.

What if I currently owe tuition or other expenses?

The full amount of the emergency grants will be given directly to students and will not pay outstanding balances owed unless a student elects to authorize the college to apply the grant the outstanding balance owed. Any outstanding balance remains the responsibility of the student.

If I receive a grant from the ARP/HEERF III Fund, is it taxable?

No. Per the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, emergency financial aid grants under ARP/HEERF III are qualified disaster relief payments and will not be taxable.

How will I receive the grant money?

In order to provide this grant to you in a timely manner, we are asking you to utilize the direct deposit option offered via your TouchNet account.

If you have not created a refund method in TouchNet, please do the following:

- Go to STAR and click on the TouchNet Bill+Payment link
- Go to Refunds
- Enroll in Two-Step Verification
- Click on Set up a new account under Direct Deposit
- Enter the Name on the Account, select the account type, and enter the routing number and bank account number.

- Finally, in the box that begins “Save payment method as...“, name the account, i.e., Mary’s checking, Dad’s checking, Mum’s savings. Do not default to or enter “my checking” as we need to know the name of the account holder.

If you have created a refund method in TouchNet and need to edit either the name of the account or any of the previously entered information, please do the following:

- Go to Star and click on the TouchNet Bill+Payment link
- Go to Refunds
- Go to My Profile
- Click on Payment Profile
- Click on the Settings icon (under Action) of the Payment Method you wish to edit/update/change.
- Click on Edit, this will bring you to the Account Information where you can update the name or other information.

Please note: These are federal funds that are made available for the student’s use. If you do not have a bank account or if the identified refund account in TouchNet is not readily identifiable as your account, the grant will be issued to you via paper check. For students who live on campus or are off campus with access to campus, checks will be sent to their Holy Cross PO Box. For students who are remote with no access to campus, checks will be sent to their home address.

HEERF III ARP Reporting – Institutional Portion

- [March 31, 2022](#) - PDF
- [December 31, 2021](#) - PDF
- [September 30, 2021](#) - PDF

HEERF III ARP Reporting – Student Portion

- [March 31, 2022](#)
- [December 31, 2021](#)
- [September 30, 2021](#)
- **June 30, 2021** - On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan (ARP), Public Law 117-2, was signed into law, providing \$39.6 billion in support to institutions of higher education to serve students and ensure learning continues during the COVID-19 pandemic. Holy Cross acknowledges an additional award of \$2,484,002 for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students and intends to distribute this award in the Fall of 2021 to eligible students who have an exceptional need due to the coronavirus.