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EDUCATION

How much money will you and your college get from Congress' coronavirus relief bill?

BY JIMENA TAVEL

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House Speaker Nancy Pelosi mostly praised the bipartisan work before lawmakers approved the \$2.2 trillion rescue package for the U.S. economy and health system on March 27. She did take a moment to call out senators who objected to one benefit. BY C-SPAN

College students in Florida who are struggling to make ends meet to continue their studies amid the novel coronavirus public health crisis will soon be able to get some federal dollars to do so.

That's thanks to the \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security — CARES — Act, approved by Congress on March 27, which allocated [\\$30.75 billion for an "Education Stabilization Fund,"](#) split between K-12 and higher education, according to the American Council on Education.

Post-secondary institutions got about \$14 billion. The stimulus bill indicated that approximately 90% of that, or about \$12.6 billion, would go straight to colleges and universities, requiring them to give at least half, roughly \$6.3 billion, to the students directly, said Carrie Warick, the director of policy and advocacy at the [National College Attainment Network](#).

Nearly two weeks after lawmakers passed the CARES Act, the Department of Education announced Thursday it dispersed the funds to schools across the country, according to [a letter from Secretary Betsy DeVos to college and university presidents](#).

But only the half that is for students — \$6.3 billion for emergency aid grants — became immediately available.

“We are prioritizing this funding stream in order to get money in the hands of students in need as quickly as possible,” DeVos wrote.

Students will be able to pay for “expenses related to the disruption of campus operations,” like paying for WiFi at home, buying a laptop or books, finding a place to live and covering health charges incurred if a student or a loved one was diagnosed with COVID-19, Warick said.

The DOE indicated it will have guidance in the coming weeks on how colleges and universities can spend the other half of the money that they will eventually get.

The remaining \$1.4 billion or so of the total \$14 billion fund for higher education will be split into different buckets, including some directed to minority-serving institutions.

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DISTRIBUTION OF THE FEDERAL FUNDS

To distribute the money, the Department of Education used a formula specified by Congress, based on student enrollment: 75% on the full-time enrollment of Pell Grant recipients and 25% on the full-time enrollment of students who don't receive Pell Grants. The calculation excludes students who were already exclusively online.

Schools have a lot of leeway to decide how to hand out the funds to students, Warick said. The only requirement is for students to spend the money on food, housing, course materials, technology, healthcare, child care or others costs incurred due to the pandemic.

However, DeVos encouraged universities and colleges to prioritize students with the greatest need. It was recommended the schools established a maximum funding threshold for each student “to ensure that these funds are distributed as widely as possible.”

According to a spreadsheet provided to the Herald by Ben Miller at the Center for American Progress, 254 schools in Florida will get funding. Florida's total is fourth behind California, Texas and New York — half of the state's \$740 million must go to students.

The University of Central Florida tops the list at about \$51 million. It's followed by Miami Dade College with about \$49 million, Florida International University with about \$38 million, the University of South Florida with about \$34 million and the University of Florida with \$31 million.

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Nationwide, Arizona State will receive the most with about \$65 million, trailed by Penn State with about \$55 million and Rutgers with about \$54 million. No. 4 on that list is UCF, and MDC is No. 5.

In total, about [\\$9 billion will go to public institutions](#), while about \$2.5 billion will go to private, nonprofit institutions, and \$1.1 billion will go to private for-profit institutions, according to NCAN.

Colleges and universities can sign an agreement online and will get the funds as early as the middle of next week, Warick said. Then it's up to how fast institutions can move to transfer the money to students.

Schools are still figuring it out. The University of Miami, which will get roughly \$8 million, and MDC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

According to press release sent Friday, FIU is “currently working on a plan and application process for students to access these grants” and expects to have details by the end of next week.

WILL THE FUNDS BE ENOUGH?

In mid-March, universities and colleges across the country started shutting down their campuses and migrating to remote learning in an effort to mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Many have announced they will keep their classes online through the summer and some fear they will have to do it past the fall.

This has caused a financial storm, as some schools have decided to issue prorated refunds to students for fees like housing, dining and tuition.

That, coupled with the expectation the enrollment numbers will drop significantly in the fall, has higher education institutions looking at a bleak future, Warick said.

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Will the CARES Act funding be enough? It's too early to tell, but some officials seem to think it won't be.

“I cannot yet tell you whether it's enough,” said Warick. “But I know some of the top higher education associations were asking for \$45 billion and they only got \$14 billion. So what we're hearing from some higher education associations is that this is not enough.”

In her Thursday letter, DeVos encouraged institutions that might serve an affluent population of students, to share.

“If you determine that your institution's students do not have significant financial need at this time, I would ask that you consider giving your allocation to those institutions within your state or region that might have significant need,” she wrote.

HOW MUCH MONEY WILL FLORIDA COLLEGES GET?

Here are the top 50 Florida universities and colleges and the amount of funding each can access as early as next week.

The [list released by the Department of Education](#) includes all U.S. schools.

	Institution	Overall	Of which must go to students
1	University of Central Florida	\$51,071,250	\$25,535,625
2	Miami Dade College	\$49,074,737	\$24,537,369
3	Florida International University	\$38,301,957	\$19,150,979
4	University of South Florida	\$34,839,748	\$17,419,874
5	University of Florida	\$31,046,411	\$15,523,206
6	Florida State University	\$29,339,828	\$14,669,914
7	Valencia College	\$27,682,203	\$13,841,102
8	Broward College	\$27,154,901	\$13,577,451
9	Florida Atlantic University	\$22,429,874	\$11,214,937
10	Keiser University	\$21,190,626	\$10,595,313
11	Palm Beach State College	\$18,933,435	\$9,466,718
12	Florida Career College	\$17,303,589	\$8,651,795
13	Hillsborough Community College	\$16,262,267	\$8,131,134
14	Florida State College at Jacksonville	\$14,500,515	\$7,250,258

15	Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University	\$13,051,325	\$6,525,663
16	St. Petersburg College	\$12,813,482	\$6,406,741
17	University of North Florida	\$11,770,196	\$5,885,098
18	Florida Gulf Coast University	\$11,143,620	\$5,571,810
19	Indian River State College	\$9,553,094	\$4,776,547
20	Full Sail University	\$9,445,834	\$4,722,917
21	Florida Southwestern State College	\$9,178,997	\$4,589,499
22	Eastern Florida State College	\$8,816,361	\$4,408,181
23	Seminole State College Of Florida	\$8,150,059	\$4,075,030
24	University of Miami	\$8,139,089	\$4,069,545
25	Santa Fe College	\$7,859,449	\$3,929,725
26	Tallahassee Community College	\$7,763,584	\$3,881,792
27	Daytona State College	\$7,681,731	\$3,840,866
28	Nova Southeastern University	\$7,157,194	\$3,578,597
29	University of Tampa	\$6,941,444	\$3,470,722
30	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	\$6,845,716	\$3,422,858
31	University of West Florida	\$6,801,388	\$3,400,694
32	Bethune-Cookman University	\$6,648,501	\$3,324,251
33	Pasco-Hernando State College	\$6,574,907	\$3,287,454
34	Polk State College	\$6,116,050	\$3,058,025
35	Pensacola State College	\$6,004,939	\$3,002,470
36	Florida National University	\$5,884,598	\$2,942,299
37	College of Central Florida	\$5,063,707	\$2,531,854
38	Barry University	\$5,027,398	\$2,513,699
39	State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota	\$5,023,266	\$2,511,633
40	Southeastern University	\$4,820,567	\$2,410,284
41	Saint Leo University	\$4,579,587	\$2,289,794
42	Southern Technical College	\$3,873,252	\$1,936,627
43	South Florida Institute Of Technology	\$3,625,271	\$1,812,636
44	Florida Institute of Technology	\$3,607,645	\$1,803,823
45	Stetson University	\$3,578,583	\$1,789,292
46	St. Johns River State College	\$2,997,937	\$1,498,969
47	Miami International University of Art & Design	\$2,762,168	\$1,381,084
48	Flagler College	\$2,708,794	\$1,354,397
49	Rollins College	\$2,692,112	\$1,346,056
50	Northwest Florida State College	\$2,530,500	\$1,265,250

Source: U.S. Department of Education

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