

# American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 - Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund III (HEERF III)

## Overview

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) included additional COVID-19 relief for institutions of higher education. This new COVID stimulus bill included \$40 billion, available through September 30, 2023, for higher education institutions and students, using the same Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) model established in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

HEERF III is authorized by the ARP, Public Law 117-2 which was signed into law on March 11, 2021. ARP funds are in addition to funds authorized by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), Public Law 116-260 and the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Public Law 116-136.

The total amount of funds that WIT received from the Department is \$4,812,271 pursuant to the institution's Certification and Agreement [for] Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.

## HEERF III FAQs

### Who is eligible to receive the HEERF III Grants?

The Department of Education has removed limitations regarding student eligibility criteria. All students enrolled during the period of the national emergency may be eligible. Institutions may create their own eligibility criteria as long as they continue to prioritize funding to students with exceptional need, such as students who receive Pell Grants, in awarding emergency financial aid grants to students. However, students do not need to be only Pell Grant recipients or students who are eligible for Pell Grants.

### What are the types of expenses that can be covered by HEERF III Grants?

Eligible expenses for HEERF III funding include tuition, food, housing, health care (including mental health care), course materials, technology, healthcare, and childcare expenses.

### Do I have to repay emergency funding covered by HEERF III Grants?

No. Funding provided as a result of the ARP Act is considered a grant, so unlike a loan there is no expectation that it be repaid.

### Will HEERF III Grants impact my current or future financial aid?

No. Money from HEERF III is not considered financial assistance under federal statute, nor Department of Education regulations. As such, these funds will not impact your eligibility for regular financial aid (e.g., grants, scholarships, loans).

### How will I be notified if I have received a HEERF III Grant?

Eligible students will be sent an email notifying them of their award. Refer to the chart to determine the amount you will receive.

## How do I receive my HEERF III funds?

There is no application needed. The University will automatically issue a grant of to each eligible student based upon their enrollment and their financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. If a student's direct deposit record does not exist, funds will be mailed to the student's permanent mailing address.

## How is the amount of my HEERF III award determined?

While WIT is given the authority to determine how best to distribute these funds to students, institutions are directed to prioritize students with exceptional need. Thus, WIT will be allocating these funds based on the student's enrollment and their financial need as determined by the 2021-2022 Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

WIT will award funds to all degree-seeking students enrolled for the Fall 2021 term on or after November 4, 2021 (students covered by a faculty/staff tuition waiver, a dependent of faculty/staff tuition waiver or a tuition exchange are **not eligible** for this emergency grant aid).

If the University is uncertain that a student has met all the eligible criteria noted above, WIT will make reasonable efforts to determine if the student meets the criteria under HEERF III in cooperation with such student. If such eligibility is not reasonably confirmed by WIT, funds will not be made available under HEERF III to that student.

## Is there help available if my income has changed?

Yes. Please note that financial aid applications for the **2021-22** year require you to report **2019** income information on your FASFA. In cases where this change is both involuntary in nature and substantial in impact, WIT may be able to consider more current information to determine eligibility for additional federal funding. For additional information please visit <https://wit.edu/admissions/financial-aid> or contact [finaid@wit.edu](mailto:finaid@wit.edu)

## How much grant will I receive?

To eliminate barriers and provide needed assistance to students as expeditiously as possible, WIT will be awarding HEERF III Grants automatically to students that met the eligibility criteria noted above based on the chart below:

<b>EFC Range based on FASFA results</b>	<b>Total Dollar Amount per credit hour*</b>
0 to 5,846	\$180 Per Credit Hour
5,847 to 15,000	\$150 Per Credit Hour
15,001 to 25,000	\$100 Per Credit Hour
25,001 to 35,000	\$65 Per Credit Hour
35,001+ and none FASFA filers	\$45 Per Credit Hour

\*Maximum of 12 credit hours per student.

## When will the HEERF III Grants be made available to eligible students?

WIT will disburse the HERRF III Grants to eligible students in mid-November 2021.

## **What will WIT do with leftover student HEERF III federal funds?**

WIT will reserve a small amount of funds and the Financial Aid Office will determine the allocation of those grants based on the greatest financial need of the eligible students until all student federal aid is exhausted.

## **I got a payment from Wentworth in connection with this program. Does this mean my Wentworth account balance has been paid off?**

No. Distribution of the HEERF III grant is made directly to students and not applied by the University toward any outstanding balances that may still be owed by the student. As such, receipt of these funds does not indicate the recipient has satisfied their financial obligations to Wentworth for any debts incurred during the fall 2021 term or any terms prior or in the future. Please check your current account balance to determine what you may still owe.

## **Can I use this money to pay off my Wentworth balance?**

Yes. Wentworth is not authorized to apply HEERF III funds toward any outstanding balances that may be owed by a student. However, once the funds are received as a refund, students may choose to use the funds to pay their outstanding account balance.

## **Is money received from HEERF III considered taxable income?**

No. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has announced that emergency financial aid grants under HEERF III for unexpected expenses, unmet financial need, or expenses related to the disruption of campus operations on account of the COVID-19 pandemic are qualified disaster relief payments under section 139 of the Internal Revenue Code. This grant is not included in your gross income.

## **Who should I contact if I have questions?**

For questions regarding Billing, Payment Plans, & Refunds please contact Student Accounts at [studentaccounts@wit.edu](mailto:studentaccounts@wit.edu)

For questions regarding FAFSA, Scholarships, Grants, Work Study & Loans please contact Financial Aid at [finaid@wit.edu](mailto:finaid@wit.edu)