



BY THE NUMBERS: Community Colleges and Higher Education Emergency Relief in 2021

The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) provided historic funding to institutions of higher education (IHEs) and their students to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Through HEERF, Congress provided more than \$76 billion in emergency assistance, including one of the largest infusions of support ever provided through President Biden's American Rescue Plan (ARP). The ARP included more than \$10 billion to community colleges. Since the start of 2021, nearly 6 million community college students are estimated to have received direct financial aid as a result of HEERF support.¹

Here's how HEERF helped community colleges and their students in 2021:

HEERF Provided Critical Direct Aid to Community College Students

- In 2021, community colleges delivered **over \$4.5 billion** in emergency financial aid grants to students.
- Nearly one in two community college students received a grant, with a total of **3.5 million students receiving an average of \$1,290 each**.
- Community colleges spent **\$580 million**, or 11% of their institutional funds on additional emergency aid to students.

HEERF Kept Community College Students Enrolled

- **94% of community colleges** said HEERF allowed them to keep students who were at risk of dropping out enrolled by providing financial support.
- **88% of community colleges** stated that HEERF enabled them to keep students enrolled by providing them with computers and internet access.
- **51% of community colleges** (631 institutions) spent **\$540 million** on discharging unpaid student balances.

¹ This total includes the number of students reported to have received funds in 2021 and the projected number of students who will receive funds in 2022. To get the projected number, the Department used HEERF spending data, including spending from student aid funds in 2022, the percentage of institutional funds spent by institutions on additional emergency aid grants, and the average student award. The projected number may include students that received funds in both 2021 and 2022.