Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) Report

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF I, II and III) legislation provides funding to institutions for emergency financial aid grants to students whose lives have been disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. Here is Ohio Wesleyan University's report on grants between September and December 2021.

Ohio Wesleyan University acknowledges and assures that:

1) A signed Certification and Agreement was returned to the U.S. Department of Education;
2) At least $2,098,650 will be provided as emergency financial aid grants to students;

Between October 1 and December 31, 2021:
3) $556,250.00 in emergency financial aid grants has been provided to students
4) The estimated total number of OWU students with exceptional need during academic year 2021-22 eligible to participate was 434 and they could receive direct distribution of funds via ACH and check payments or could ‘opt-in’ to have emergency grant funds applied to outstanding balances on their OWU student account, or a combination of the two.
5) The number of students who had received emergency financial aid grants was 313.
6) Representatives from the offices of Finance, Student Engagement and Success, Admission, Financial Aid, and Advancement identified eligible students as those who completed the FAFSA and had expected family contributions (EFCs) equal to or less than $10,000 this academic year to be eligible for federal grant funds made available to Ohio Wesleyan for COVID-19 relief. Students who did not complete a FAFSA this academic year, could submit an email appeal to be considered for this ARPA grant.

7) OWU notified students identified with exceptional need via email that they were the recipients of an emergency financial aid grant as part of the CRRSAA. They were provided guidance regarding 1) allowable uses of the funds (see below), 2) options for distribution (direct distribution and an option to ‘opt-in’ to have their emergency grant funds applied to any outstanding balance on their OWU student account), and 3) where to direct related questions. Students were instructed to login to a unique web page to complete an online form to indicate their election for distribution with application of credits to student accounts and direct payments to students expected very soon thereafter.

Allowable uses of HEERF funds:

- any component of the cost of attendance (such as tuition, room, board, books, supplies, transportation),
- other miscellaneous costs (such as loan fees, child care and dependent care)
- emergency costs that arise due to coronavirus (such as tuition, food, housing, health care, including mental health care, or child care)

Per the IRS, these funds are not taxable.